**Consolidated Democracy in Ghana West Africa**

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*Presented at*

*26th Annual Illinois State University Conference for Students of Political Science*

*Normal, IL*

*April 27, 2018*

Abstract:“ Why is Ghana a successful democracy when other West African countries are not?” This paper argues that the Ghanaian democracy system has thrived amongst a region where democracy has not done so well. It has been noted that democracy makes countries peaceful, provide citizens the most freedom, and provide them with opportunities for self-development which is clearly desirable for most countries. If Ghana is a democracy and the rest of West Africa is not, even if they are a democracy, they are not as stable as Ghana, what is it about Ghana that makes it a successful democracy? The paper looks at the role of the institutions, civil society, the influence of the Western world, the role of individual leaders, the role ethnic interests amongst others. The paper argues that the country’s back and forth movement from and to democracy as well as the leaders of the country, the institutions made available in the country are the main reasons Ghana is a consolidated democracy today. This research is important so that if we may, we could help other countries attain a democratic status also. Ghana can be used as a study case even for future reference to see the variables it has that has made its democracy so successful. It will be important to also look at Ghana to see if the democratic system is actually aiding the country or not; this way we know if it is truly desirable. For these reasons this research topic is significant.

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POLS 415(Senior Seminar)

9th December 2017

 Why is Ghana a successful democracy?

It has been vastly noted that democracies are peaceful, providing their citizens with the most freedoms and opportunities. Democracies ultimately help make the world a peaceful place. They are associated with high levels of economic development. Democratization should seem desirable for most countries. If Ghana is a democracy and the rest of West Africa is not with the exception of Senegal , Cape Verde Nigeria who are not as successful, what is it about Ghana that makes it a successful democracy? Knowing this, we could help other countries seeking to democratize. Ghana can be used as a case study to identify the variables that has made its democracy so successful. As a case, Ghana also helps us understand what the real benefits of democracy may be.

 There are 17 West African countries including the island of Saint Helena namely: Nigeria, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Mauritania and of course Ghana. This region for multiple reasons has not been able to have a stable democracy thrive with the exception of Ghana

This paper will begin with a standard definition of the outcome of interest, democracy and how it applies to Ghana ,the next section will provide a literature review of what other scholars have had to say about this topic. The paper will show that the following factors were important in shaping Ghana’s democracy: past events, the role of institutions, role of civil society, the influence of the West, good leaders and also the simple memories of past experiences. [Perhaps then state which of these you think was MOST important?]. After this I will demonstrate that Ghana is indeed a successful democracy (without which the research would be futile), by examining elections in the years 2000 .

Then the paper will talk about the successes of the country to find out if it is really headed in the direction of development for it will be ineffectual to start to discuss a country and its achievement in democracy when their status has not actually helped them in any way whatsoever. To end, the paper will look at what others have to say about the topic.

 Defining Democracy in Ghana

 First, it is important to make sense of the concept “successful democracy”. Democracy itself is literally, rule by the people. The term is derived from the Greek word *dēmokratiā*, which was coined from *dēmos* (people) and *kratos* (rule) in the middle of the 5th century BCE. An even more in-depth definition of democracy is it is a form of government, where a constitution guarantees basic personal and political rights, fair and free elections, and independent courts of law. Another definition is it is a government structured with separation of powers, provided basic civil rights, religious freedom and separation of church and the state. A successful democracy would then be a democracy that is consolidated and has been able to stand the test of time, has all the concepts of democracy in its module and has it in high quantities. That is to say if Ghana is a successful democracy then the concepts such as freedom, political rights and the rest are present in high levels.

 Some popular indicators of a democracy include the presence of political parties, governance by a constitution (rules), elections where the people of the country are able to exercise their franchise, freedom of the press, and judicial independence. For instance, Freedom House uses criteria that foucsses on freedoms and civil liberties. They assess the freedom of the media considering three broad categories: the legal environment, the political environment, and the economic environment. For each methodology question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment. A country or territory’s final score (from 0 to 100) represents the total of the points allotted for each question. A total score of 0 to 30 results in a press freedom status of Free; 31 to 60 results in a status of Partly Free; and 61 to 100 indicates a status of Not Free.” That being said, as of 2017, Ghana was scored 33 and Senegal who are also a democratic nation were scored 47. Nigeria was scored 51 although they a democracy also. This is evidence to the fact that although there might be democracies in the area, they are not as successful as that of Ghana. So what makes the difference in Ghana? More evidence to this is the economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index. Over-here, a clear comparison can be made and this will reveal that, in the Western part of Africa, it is only Ghana that has a successful democracy (but not the only democratic nation there is in this region)

By these standards, Ghana can be seen as a democratic nation indeed.

 Some disagree that Ghana can be classified as a democracy. In *Progress and Prospects*, *G.Crawford* argues that because of some weak systems in Ghana, it is not right to call it a consolidated democracy. He goes on to talk about the limited political influence of civil organizations and the fraught election that occurred in 2012, the marginalisation of women and the supremacy of the executive branch as well as the inequalities amongst the society in terms of the economy of the country. To add to his point, the whole West Africa has acquired “a reputation as the coup d’état belt of the African continent” (Olukoshi 2001: 1) which proves that there is instability in West Africa and thus has halted the development of the region this explains why West Africa is perceived as the world’s poorest region (IRIN 2005). In contrast to this, a large body of literature already exists on this topic and they can be broken down into subheadings to make them easier to understand. In light of that how can we measure democracy? The graded scale is what I would use to measure democracy especially in this case as opposed to the dichotomous way by just categorizing them into democratic countries or non-democratic countries. This is so because there are certain countries that do not fall into all the indicators of democracy but still have some characteristics of democracies this way we can see that there are countries that are more democratic than others.

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Literature Review: What Explains Democracy?

The literature on democratization suggests a wide range of possible explanations for success. Those explanations include the explanation of past events and how it has affected Ghana today (any other county whose democracy is being measured), the role of institutions, role of civil society, the influence of the West, good leaders and also the simple memories of past experiences that have shaped where the country is today. With these, they explain how democracy is attained.

 Past Events

I believe this is an important part to look at as it shows the history of the country being looked at and shows how they obtained their democratic status. The book *Turning Points in African democracy* by Lindsay Whitfield gives a summary of what Ghana used to be like after they attained independence in 1957. The country became popular for being the first sub-Saharan country to attain independence however their popularity declined as they started facing economic problems. Their problems were also coupled with an unstable political system. With three different unsuccessful republics and a number of military coups, the country finally had a stable republic that is the fourth republic that commenced in 1993 under the leadership of Jerry John Rawlings. Although people have said that the first election was not fair he won the presidency and stepped down after his second term of office. J.A Kufuor ( Herein after Kuffour) took over with an opposition party (NPP) which became the evidence of Ghana’s democratic consolidation as it was not popular for African countries to have a successful transition of power to another political party.

 The role of institutions

The 1992 constitution has been listed as a reason also behind the consolidation of democracy in Ghana. The constitution out rightly listed the powers allocated to the executive branch, the judiciary and the parliament. The NPP also made sure to avoid interfering with the judiciary matters which shows the importance of checks and balances. The freedoms and rights spelled out by the 1992 constitution is also what is being used by the country today. Osei, Anja also talks about the 2012 elections and the role of the Judiciary. Most often, we take for granted the importance of a strong judiciary and its relevance to a democratic nation. The fact that the Judiciary was supreme and had enough power to look into the discrepancies the 2012 election brought and make a final decision that was respected and implemented by all.

Role of civil society

Other scholars argue that the civil society of Ghana is the reason the country is a consolidated democracy. The existence of NGOs have also been listed as a reason behind the country’s status as they serve as ways to aid political activism. This is adduced from Kwame Boafo Arthur who states that the interest for politics of the country grew after these institutions were made that the voter turnout for the 1996 presidential election was over 70% when the previous election year had only a little over 50% of voters showing up. Their confidence of the system was boosted in other words.

The influence of the West.

The article *From nation-building to entrepreneurship: the impact of élite return migrants in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by* Savina Ammassari talks about the return of migrants to Ghana and their influence on the country as a whole. They bring back the ideals and ideas of the West to help the country. Currently in Ghana there is an association called the homecoming summit which meet with the migrants and discuss ways they believe the country can be improved. Other scholars also say that Rawlings was forced out of office by the West because they refused to give him the loan he desired should the county remain under his autocratic rule. *The Elites and Democracy in Ghana. African Affairs by Osei, Anja* also highlights the importance of the elites to the country. The article talks about the fact that the country once being disunited making them not so useful, but with the unity of the elites as mentioned by J.Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood in their book *Comparative Politics* they state that the elites became very important assets to the country.

Memories of Past experiences

As stated by Kwame Boafo-Arthur, the past experiences under military dictatorship is too recent especially in the memories of Ghanaians to allow this opportunity of exercising their political freedoms and civil liberties to be eroded away. They have also come to the conclusion that a bad civil administration is even better in terms of guaranteeing their liberties than a military regime. Adebayo Olukoshi (1999: 461) notes that “the alternative to bad civilian government is not military rule but better civilian government”. The 2002 Afrobarometer survey also concludes that the people of Ghana attach a liberal meaning to democracy that it gives the citizens a voice and as they have tasted what that felt like, they would not want to move back to their old ways that is to say the country has tasted peace and would not support any regime that would want to take that from them. Like J.Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood said, it is very difficult for a country that have been democratised to become democratised. And although it may have happened in the past with a couple of countries, it is extremely rare.

Good leaders

George Ayittey’s article *What Ghana can teach the rest of Africa about democracy* touches on all the points above but only adds luck and so does Machiavelli. He explains this as Ghana having good political leaders including Kofi Annan who served as the United Nations Secretary General from 1997 to 2006. Kwame Nkrumah and arguably J.J Rawlings who was willing to give up power to start off Ghana’s journey into democracy. And all the presidents of the nation who were not power drunk and were willing to give up when they had to.

The above all works to prove that Ghana is a successful democracy

My final argument is that Ghana is a successful democracy because of particular factors, however, some of these factors created the democracy but other factors made it last, some of them were also not relevant to the country’s success. My research work will therefore plainly list out factors that lead to democracy and others that help it become consolidated. It would therefore be essential to look at other countries that started as a democracy but ended up elsewhere. Ghana could even be used as a case study in this aspect, as in the past they used to be a democracy and lost their status and came back to autocratic rule.

Cases: Ghana’s experiences with Elections

 The transition into the fourth and current republic of Ghana started in 1992 and was headed by the same person who put the third republic to an end through a military coup. It seems this governance is here to stay. Why did the other three republics not work as much as this one has? It will also be helpful to look at some key years that prove that Ghana is a successful democracy.

1992 and 1996 elections

 Ghana officially entered their consolidated democracy era in 1992 under the leadership of Jerry John Rawlings. Although this were not the first election Ghana held, t was the first under the fourth republic of Ghana which is the democratic republic we speak about in this paper. The parties that participated in the elections included the National Democratic Congress( herein after NDC) which was led by Jerry John Rawlings (the head of state at the time). Dr. Hilla Liman’s People’s National convention( herein after PNC), previously overthrown by a coup d’état headed by Jerry John Rawlings, was the second major party. The participation of Dr. Hilla Liman (herein after Dr. Liman) shows the genuity of the elections and although he did not win because he had lost popularity. Dr. Liman participated along with Albert Adu Boahen who was the then flag bearer of the NPP (the current party in power). Jerry John Rawlings won the elections amongst four other parties, NIP and PHP being the other two. The elections were successful even though it was said that the Head of State who became president (Jerry John Rawlings) rigged the election. Others say that he won because he had the advantage of being the Head of State and was someone the people knew. To them the “devil they knew” was better than the “angel they did not know”.

Rawlings was voted into power again in 1996. The participation in this election was higher. Three parties had candidates for the Presidency: the NDC, the NPP and the PNC.

Why did Ghana make this turn towards democracy? The leadership of Jerry John Rawlings, as stated above, was one of the reasons Ghana entered democracy. Foreign pressures and influence forced him to do so (the influence of the West). So it was the interaction of these two factors that mattered most. The international community was not willing to send funds to the country again if he did not revert Ghana to the democratic nation it used to be before. Rawlings was the one who through a coup d’état stole power from Dr. Hilla Liman during the third republic of Ghana. This is interesting because it was this very man that had taken power from the military and made Ghana organise its elections for Dr. Hilla Liman to become president in 1979. That is how he helped start the fourth republic of Ghana as well as the third republic. His leadership has taken Ghana to where it is today. He did not seem to care that should he make the country a democracy again, he would end up as an ex-president of the country. He is an example of the leadership needed to help foster democracy.

A second factor is the memories of past events, which made the country also want to shift to democratic ruling. Under the leadership of Jerry John Rawlings during his military rule, there were curfews set in the country so that businesses had to close very early. There was a reduction in private owned businesses and the country almost became communist. Most shops and businesses had become the governments because a lot were seized. It was the intention of the president to manage it in order to make sure that the citizenry were not cheated. He was of the perception that the private owned business especially business men were cheating the public by buying something at a low price and selling it at an expensive price. Most of these businessmen were exiled and some arrested. With this deterrence, the country eventually experienced famine. The dreadful experience made them aware that that military rule was not desirable and thus did not want to end up in those dark times again. The civil society did not really have a role to play in these elections because it just came out military rule and the interest for politics had not grown. Later we will come to find out that the interest for politics will grow. It was also in this period that a lot of institutions came into existence, the 1992 constitution that is in use to date was birthed in this era, the parliamentary and supreme court branches gained back the full maximum power they had initially.

2000 elections

 There was an increase in voter turnout this year as the president had finished his term of office. A new president was going to be elected. The incumbent party the NDC was being led by John Evans Atta Mills, who was the running mate of Jerry John Rawlings from 1997 to 2001. He was well known to the people but lost to Kuffour the flag bearer of the NPP during the 1996 elections. The turn of events and the smooth transfer of power to the new party portrayed how the democratic system had been consolidated. There was a higher turnout of voters and which is also evident to the fact that the people of Ghana had started gaining confidence in the democratic nature of their politics. Because of the novelty of these elections, being that the president at that time could not participate in these elections, there were more parties competing for presidency. PNC participated again, CPP, the party founded by the first president of Ghana joined the race too. NRP a new party headed by Augustus Obuadum Tanoh participated also and were able to garner 78,689 votes. GCPP and UGM were also new parties that joined the race. The elections were generally free and fair. The institutions began working at this point and thus facilitated the smooth transition of power. The leadership of Jerry John Rawlings was exemplary also as he willingly handed over power to Kuffour. The institutions also began working at this point as there were specific seats allocated to the parties according the number of votes they garnered. At this point the past experience of being a democratic nation for the past few years had become desirable and for that reason they did not want to leave it. The Civil society helped consolidate the democracy as there was a growing interest in the politics in the country. The international community did not really play a role in the consolidation of democracy except for the institutions they made later.

2012 elections

The 2012 elections was the most interesting even though 2008 was also. In 2008 the president at the time, Kuffour had ended his term of office too and a new president had to be elected. The NDC took power under the leadership of John Evans Atta Mills after run-off elections which also goes to show the effectiveness of the electoral system of Ghana. The elections were very effective so much so that it raised interest for African and international election reformers. This was so because the first round had the NPP which was headed by the current president of Ghana Nana Akufo Addo leasing but because they had not crossed the 50%threshold had to go for re-elections amongst the two parties that would later become the two major parties in Ghana that is the NDC and the NPP. John Evans Atta Mills won the runoff elections and took power from the opposing party smoothly. He lost his life in July 2012 the year of the elections. The Vice president at the time, John Dramani Mahama became the president of Ghana the very day the president died and that act also shows the consolidation of Ghana’s democracy, that during a period like that, a dictator did not take it upon himself to steal power but the working institutions put in place made it possible for the Vice president to be sworn in as president that very day. He became the automatic flag bearer of the NDC and led them during the 2012 elections. He ended up winning the elections, amidst a lot of allegations that he had rigged them. The NPP took the matter to the supreme court for the issue to be investigated which also proves that the institutions of the country are working. The NPP did not take power by force but went through the right institutions to make sure that the allegations against the NDC were false. The court process took a while and it was finally declared that the NDC had not rigged the elections. Nana Akufo Addo called the president at that time minutes after the verdict to congratulate him on his victory which goes to show the good behavior of the leaders of the country. In 2016, the NDC lost power to NPP again although it was their incumbent year. All through the history of Ghana, the incumbent president has never lost power but this was the first time something of this sort was happening. The 2016 elections were special because a lot of the voting systems were changed to make sure that it will not be said that the elections were rigged once again. With over a million vote difference the NPP were declared victorious as they had also passed the 50% threshold. There was a smooth transition of power once again to the NPP that only shows that Ghana has become used to the democratic system and relies on it for their politics. It is safe to say that the fourth republic of Ghana is here to stay.

 Analysis

 The arguments raised in the literature review do not all necessarily apply to Ghana but most do. Some of the theories explain how Ghana went back to a democracy but do not necessarily explain how Ghana has remained a consolidated democracy after all these years. A good example of this would be the influence of the West argument. Indeed the West have influenced Ghana in many ways. It is speculated that it is because of the threat-like agreement Jerry John Rawlings had with the US that he was forced to make Ghana a democratic nation after ruling for about ten years already. Because the US and other Western countries threatened to discontinue sending the country of Ghana aids, he was forced to revert to the democratic ways of the country. This explains how democracy was started once again but does not explain how democracy has become consolidated in the country. The argument that Ghana got lucky and has good leaders can suffice but is not a very strong point. It would be deranging and discouraging to other countries to base the success of Ghana on sheer luck. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is deeply revered all over Africa and the world at that and he happens to be the first president of Ghana, indeed he was the person that pushed Ghana to attain independence at a very early stage thus making the country the first to attain independence in sub-Saharan Africa. It can be easily said that, just as Ghana has gotten Dr Kwame Nkrumah in the past , they continue to get great leaders that only help consolidate the democracy. It cannot be taken from any of the leaders in Ghana that emerged during the fourth republic that they have played a part in the success of the democracy but to say that they are the sole reasons or even major reasons would also not suffice. Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo has refused to end his tenure of office and he can be seen as an example of what countries should not be hoping for. If there were the institutions in place, Laurent Kabila would not be able to do as he pleases. In other words, a system might actually force a leader to become a good one. So many people in various countries can attest to the fact there have been leaders in their various countries that the country could have done without but they did not destroy the country’s democracy as to take them into a system of autocracy or any other system that is not democratic. The argument being made here is that the institutions define the work of the leader and he may be forced to behave in a particular way others may see as great leadership.

 When a specific country has lived in a particular way, it is said that they get used to living that way especially if it benefits their interest and thus find it difficult and almost impossible to leave that way of living to another. This is why it is difficult for a democratic nation to go back into autocratic rule. Although this argument is very convincing, the country we are looking at is an outlier of this very theory. Ghana has gone back to democracy and exited more than once and so have a lot of the West African countries and so the argument of the memories of past experiences does not really hold.

You could enter a table in here to evaluate each of the arguments. For instance:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Factor | 1992 and 1996 elections | 2000 election | 2012 election |
| *Good Leadership* | Yes |  |  |
| *Past Experience* |  |  |  |
| *Memories of the Past* | Yes |  |  |
| *Western Influence* | Yes |  |  |
| *Civil Society* |  |  |  |
| *Institutions* |  | Yes | Yes |
| Outcome: | Democracy Improves | Democracy Improves | Democracy Improves |

Arguments for other countries:

 What lessons can other West African countries learn?

Although not explicitly stated, sources have hypothesised that Colonisation has a major effect on the democratisation of a country. They say that colonisation was bad and that colonisers were after what was best for themselves and not the people they were colonising.Eventhough this is true, they believe that some colonisers are better than others. When Democratic Republic of Congo is taken into consideration, The book *Why do Nations Fail* by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson state that the Belgians destroyed the country and created extractive institutions that are still present today. The Berlin Conference which divided Africa into different countries is also the reason there are landlocked countries in Africa and thus depend on their neighbours for sustainability. With that being said, being with these arguments in mind will conclude that the British are a better colonising power than the other colonizers. However, there are other West African countries that were colonized by the British. It has been mentioned that these African countries are not a democracy because of the effects of colonisation on the region. Because of the tropical diseases of West Africa at the time it was very difficult for the Westerners to settle in that region unlike the Southern part of Africa like South Africa were the Europeans settled and made their home leading to the apartheid . West Africa was nicknamed the graveyard of the white man because of the rate at which they were killed by the diseases. The British in particular had to find a way of exerting their power in an area where there was no rule of law like among the Igbos in Nigeria and other places. They made paramount chiefs through which they could get to the people and these continued to affect the people even after they had attained independence. The United Kingdom did not want to lose Ghana to the Soviet’s after the country’s independence and so they did everything necessary to make sure that they helped Dr. Kwame Nkrumah when he needed them. The prime minister at the time Kenneth Macmillan threatened to even resign should the queen not visit Ghana because they were afraid of her safety. He asked the President of the United States John F Kennedy to make necessary donations to the big project the President of Ghana was embarking on the Volta lake project that would give Ghana the power it needed to make their dream of exporting aluminum a success. This shows how the British were helpful but does not necessarily explain the consolidation of democracy spoken of today. Ghana is an exception to this case and thus colonisation cannot be taken as a reason for the unsuccessful rate of democracy in the region.

 Another important point is, leaders find it difficult to leave power because some of them become power drunk and others fear for their lives. Think about it, the presidency is the highest office, there is no job higher than this, so some leaders find themselves reluctant to leave just because they do not think there is a job out there for them anymore, although a lot of leaders do not admit to this, it has been speculated that this is indeed the case. For some presidents, because of how they treated and misused the office, the fear that their names and reputations are on the line. Should another take office, they are at risk of being jailed and even being killed depending on the laws of the country. In Ghana, three heads of State were killed upon the assumption of power by Jerry John Rawlings for syphoning the money of the country after they had all organised their coups and sent Ghana out of the democratic status temporarily. Democratic republic of Congo is a very good example of this, where the president is afraid of leaving power, for various reasons like being afraid of losing his life, his status is the reason why his family is still well to do so he cannot afford to leave office just like that.

 To prove that the nation Ghana has a consolidated democracy, we can look at the just ended elections of the country. They spent about $18 per person during the elections when the standard amount for most countries is about $4 per person. The country spent all of that money to make sure that the elections would be very free and fair like it was supposed to be. The ballot boxes were transparent, there was a biometric registration of people and the votes were duplicated so that there would be no possibility of cheating. The ruling party at the time was the NDC and as in most cases (many countries) had the chance of coming out victorious. They had enough money to buy their way through in terms of bribing the people to stay in power because they were the incumbents and yet they lost. This shows that money was not or is not a factor in terms of winning an election in Ghana. It is a success story because of these factors. Adding on to that, the institutional strength of the electoral commission of Ghana and its independence is admirable to this date. They are not biased and help to make the elections free and fair.

It may also be relevant to talk about the Ashanti Kingdom of Ghana as being a reason the country has a consolidated democracy today. This empire was the strongest of the country prior to the emergence of the Europeans. They were so strong that other empires sought for protection from the Europeans. The British and the Asante had many wars because the Asante’s refused to be suppressed by the Europeans. It may be relevant to talk about the Ashanti empire in the sense that a strong government was not novel to Ghana prior to the emergence of the Europeans and so after they left, it was easy to govern ourselves. This however does not explain why the country is not under a strong dictator like the Empire is under the Asantehene (the king of the empire)

 The elites of the country are taken into consideration for being one of the reasons Ghana is a consolidated democracy today. An educated elite tend to adopt Western cultures and it can be noted world wide that democracy is a western phenomenon. It can not be found unfortunately the influence the elites of the country had on their politics. The famous big six of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) of Ghana were elites that pushed for the self governance of the country. They were not successful but have been recognised because the first president of the country was a member. As stated above, it is not clear how the elites of the country help the country today as there are no records of their participation.

 A research result I have found is that, Ghana is indeed a successful democracy and has helped their economy by fostering peace but has not necessarily helped them immensely in their economics. The facts should be updated Ghana has attained the status of a middle income country as of 2010 and continues to grow at a rate of 7% per year as of 2005. The poverty rate fell from more than 56% to 24% from 1992 to 2013 which shows the growth of the economy too.

Why you should pay attention to this paper is as of 1992 Ghana has been gradually coming out of poverty and as has been proven political instability affects a country’s economic growth drastically. The people cannot go about their daily activities when they are constantly being threatened with bombs and gunshots all day.

Conclusion: The fourth republic of Ghana that started in 1992 is successful because of the past events that set the tone for the consolidation. Path dependency also goes to show that the country has had a series of events in its past that is exclusive to only them and that sets them apart from other West African countries, the first difference is the fact that Ghana was colonised by the British who put certain institutions in place for the country. Unlike the French colonies who till today have to seek approval of the French before a president is elected. The leaders that have come and gone in Ghana have left certain legacies that help elevate Ghana to its current status. For instance the first president of Ghana sort for help from the international community to make certain projects that continue to help Ghana today like the Volta river project. The head of state, Ignatius Kutu Acheampong is the reason Ghana switched from driving on the right to the left. In summary all the leaders who were either presidents or head of States had a major role to play in the consolidation of power today. An individual that cannot be forgotten in the history of the country is the person who ushered the country into its fourth republic; Jerry John Rawlings, if this man had stayed in power and thus become a dictator, Ghana would not be where it is today. Power drunkenness is a major reason why there are a lot of countries in Africa today that do not have a successful democracy. The institutions the country has is also a major reason for the success of their democracy with an effective parliament as well as a strong judicial system checks and balances and separation of powers are effective and thus contribute to the status of the country. Should there have been thoughts that Ghana does not have a consolidated democracy, this paper has proved otherwise and shown that the country has an admirable democratic system .

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