CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE ROAD TO *KRONTI NE AKWAMU*: GHANA’S 2008 ELECTORAL EXPERIENCE

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This article explores how civil society united around a common mission to abate tension and avoid violent conflict during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. Despite widespread international recognition of the success of the 2008 elections, the lesser-recognized story is just how tense the elections became, particularly in the final run-off vote to select the new president. While the 2008 elections showcase the institutional advancements in Ghana’s Electoral Commission (EC) since the return to democratic rule in 1992, there remain institutional shortcomings, which enabled tensions to rise to nearly uncontrollable levels. The behavior of Ghana’s two main parties: the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) showed that democratic political culture has failed to be fully embodied despite repetitive democratic elections. The behavior of the parties commanded that a trusted mitigating force outside of the politicians and Ghana’s EC emerge to uphold the electoral process. Ghana’s civil society, more specifically a broad-based coalition named the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) stepped in to fortify and support Ghana’s fragile democracy during the 2008 election period. Civil society contributed greatly to the ultimate peaceful transfer of power from former NPP President John Kufuor to the current President John Atta Mills, of the opposition party, the NDC. Through qualitative interviews, this article seeks to understand where the tension during the electoral cycle came from and the response and reaction from Ghana’s civil society, which allowed for a peaceful, free and fair election
outcome to be achieved. The 2008 elections prove that both civil society and democracy are present and possible in Africa. The 2008 Ghanaian election gives Afro-optimists ample reason to celebrate, and yet, as the story dictates, there remains critical challenges within the political culture and fragile institutions that if left unattended could bring violence during future elections and halt Ghana’s journey toward *kronti ne akwamu*, which means “democracy” in Ghana’s Akan language.
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Map 1: Regions of Ghana
Introduction

I believe Ghana is destined to become one of the first, if not the first African nation to break away from the failure trap. Ghana is destined to set a new trend for the African success story. I still believe this, now more than ever. But there are factors that divide us as a country, which may stall this ambition for some time.


On December 28, 2008, Ghanaian voters exercised the “power of the thumb” when they elected their third president since the return to democratic rule in 1992. John Atta Mills of the opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), defeated the incumbent party candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) with a slim margin of just 40,000 votes or just 0.4% of the total vote. The opposition’s win was a surprise for both Ghanaians and the international community, who had been monitoring the campaign closely throughout the year (Hoffman 2009). The election was extremely competitive between the two major parties, as is shown from the narrow margin of victory, and yet the Ghanaian voice prevailed as 72% of registered voters came out to cast their ballot.

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1 Because no candidate achieved 50% of the vote in the first round on December 7, 2008, a second election or run-off was held between the top two contenders on December 28, 2008. When the results came back it was so close that some feared the incumbent would or was tampering with the returns. To ease pressures, the Chairman of the Electoral Commission met with the candidates from the NPP and NDC and they all agreed to hold a final vote in Tain on January 2, 2009. The Tain constituency had not participated in the run-off due to complications in delivery of voting materials. I have referred to December 28, 2008 as the day the President was selected, because it was mathematically impossible for the Tain election to alter the results despite its important role of releasing pressure by providing time to settle disagreements and issues of transition (to be discussed more in depth in Chapter 4 on Civil Society).

2 Ghanaians vote with their thumb, and therefore it has come to be regarded as the power of the thumb. The Electoral Commissioner confirmed Ghana’s growing confidence in democracy when he said, “At the very least they [Ghanaians] understand the power of the thumb and if they don’t get what they want [from politicians] they can vote them out.”

3 According to official statistics provided by the Electoral Commission of Ghana, 69.52% of all registered voters voted in the first round (with 2.37% rejected ballots). In the run-off election, 72.9% of registered voters cast a vote, and rejected ballots decreased to 1% of the total votes cast. The voter turnout in 2004
E. Gyimah-Boadi writes of the 2008 elections, “these exceptional events have confirmed Ghana’s place as a beacon of hope for democracy in Africa.” The elections re-invigorated the quest for democracy throughout the region along with congealing the pattern of multi-party democracy in Ghana. The Fourth Republic has emerged as the longest uninterrupted period of democratic rule in Ghana and the transition between parties was only the second consecutive peaceful handover of power in Ghana’s history of independence.Until now, no previous Ghanaian republic was ever able to survive to a second election without military intervention (Morrison 2004, 439). The fact that Ghana held its fifth consecutive election followed by a peaceful transition of power from one party to another is both an important symbol of hope in Ghana’s history and also a unique experience on a continent where elections have often provoked conflict and violence.

Both the former president John Kufuor (of the NPP) and the NPP candidate eventually accepted the results issued by the Ghana Electoral Commission (EC). They accepted the results within 24 hours of the announcement, but not without a flurry of behind-the-scenes mediation by key actors from civil society (Gyimah-Boadi 2009, 144). The importance of civil society and its role in the 2008 election will be discussed in more detail throughout this paper. The acceptance of results, however, is a critical and often unachieved component of electoral success, particularly in Africa. In the end, the 2008

was a record high of 85.1% of voters. There was a push to clean the registry for the 2008 election, which is one potential reason for a reduction in the 2008 election turnout compared to 2004.

5 The Fourth Republic began in 1992 and received its name as it is the fourth civilian-led government in Ghana’s history since independence in 1957. The previous three republics were all interrupted by military coups.
Ghanaian election made history not only because both international and domestic electoral observation missions lauded the exercise as free, fair, and generally peaceful, but also because it occurred amidst anxiety and tension rooted in Ghana’s own political history and the dire context for democracy throughout the continent.  

As the election year opened, the world was watching Ghana closely in light of recent violent election experiences in other African nations. Particularly fresh on the minds of Ghanaians, especially those interviewed, was the violent electoral experience almost a year earlier in Kenya in which 1,500 people died and more than 700,000 were displaced from their homes due to the violent aftermath of a rigged election (Long 2010, 2). The violence in Kenya had come as a surprise on the heels of strong economic growth and was a ‘heartbreaking disappointment’ (Miguel 2009, 6). Considering the incongruity of Ghana’s final election outcome compared to those of other African nations, it is not surprising that scholars, foreign governments, development organizations and donors alike have and should view the case of Ghana as proof that democracy and peace are both compatible and achievable on the continent.

A deeper look at the Ghanaian case reveals, however, that there was a great deal of anxiety and tension throughout the electoral period and many of those interviewed feared that Ghana would break apart over the elections. To declare the final results, it

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7 I refer to the transition as peaceful, because there was not a loss of life, but it should be recognized that the transition was not without problems. Actors from civil society were instrumental in mediating the transition and concession privately between the two candidates. Additionally, following the NDC’s takeover of power, there has been a plethora of what some have referred to as “witch-hunts” against former NPP ministers and party members, which are alleged retaliation against the NPP’s mistreatment of NDC members when NPP came to power following the 2000 election.

8 See examples of elections in December 2007 in Kenya, April 2007 in Nigeria, March 2008 in Zimbabwe, and most recently the murder of an incumbent party presidential candidate in Ethiopia to the Madagascar coup of March 2009, which was the fourth military coup in Africa in eight months (NYTimes.com May 14, 2010)
required not one, but two additional election exercises before John Atta Mills of the NDC could be declared the next president of Ghana. The tension leading up to and during the run-off period has been overshadowed by the fact that the elections ended peacefully, but as one of the three election reports released by domestic observation missions points out: “Election 2008 will go down in the history books of Ghana as one of the most intriguing, closely fought and tension-filled elections” (Christian Council Report 2009, 4).

Ghana’s road to *kronti ne akwamu*, which means “democracy” in the local Akan language, was hindered by weaknesses in the development of democratic political culture. First, the anxiety surrounding the run-off election was in great part due to an incredibly acrimonious relationship between the two major parties. Both major parties having spent two terms outside of power under the Fourth Republic realized the great stakes tied to winning the 2008 election. This electoral contest showed that the Ghanaian presidency has become a sought after ‘prize’ due to the winner-takes-all nature of Ghanaian politics. Both the NDC and NPP had been victimized and criminalized by the other when out of power, and therefore the 2008 election was perceived as a “life and death situation” for the NDC and NPP (CDD-Ghana and CODEO 2009, 3). The populace perceived the desperation of the parties and many explained that they had feared the parties would stop at nothing, including the use of force, to win the election, which only exacerbated the tension surrounding the election.

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*Kronti ne Akwamu* is a term for democracy, duality of the essence of life, compositeness, and complementarity. It encapsulates a system of governance with decentralized political authority and different branches of government that complement each other. This is the name of a series of lectures hosted by the Center for Democratic Development – Ghana. The explanation appears in a print copy of a lecture by Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, "The Challenges to Conducting Free and Fair Elections in Emerging African Democracies: The Case of Ghana," in *Kronti Ne Akwamu Series* (Legon-Accra: Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), 2009).
The efforts of civil society became necessary because the major political parties grew desperate in the final days of the election to maintain or seize power; there was a great deal of skepticism that the rules of democracy would be followed.\(^\text{10}\) This desperation led the parties’ distrust the work and integrity of Ghana’s electoral commission. The Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) emerged as a movement from civil society that intervened during this tense period. The CFI initially came together, at first informally, following the voter registration exercises in June and July of 2008 when tension mounted over snags in the process, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four. By late August, the coalition of civil society organizations formalized their relationship under the name of the CFI, and the work of this coalition was instrumental in the preservation of democracy and peace.

In addition to the role of civil society, this paper examines how Ghana’s EC proved its independence during the 2008 election. It will also elucidate on the many improvements that have been incorporated into the electoral process since Ghana’s return to democratic rule in 1993. Despite a great deal of pressure from the political parties, the Ghanaian EC maintained its independence despite desperate behaviors of political parties. It must not be overlooked that while the EC was critical to the success of the 2008 election, even the Chairman of the EC acknowledges that it was civil society that stepped in to mediate conflict allowing the EC the liberty to continue its work.

\(^{10}\) By rules of democracy, I am referring to what Wolfgang Merkel defines as respect for: the electoral regime, political rights, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the effective power to govern (2004, 36).
Furthermore, the media coverage of the elections was inundated with scandals and accusations between the parties and against the electoral commission. While Ghana has enjoyed great media liberalization since its return to democracy, the media has also contributed to tension and created obstacles to the work of the Ghana EC. There is the beginning of a critical debate in Ghana between allowing total freedom of speech and yet controlling the media from escalating tension. Many interviewees felt the media contributed to the tension, and Ghana nearly reached the ‘brink of conflict’ during the final days of the elections.

While much of the dialogue surrounding the Ghanaian election has focused on its successes, my focus is to identify the challenges faced during the 2008 election year and to illustrate how Ghanaians overcame them. In the introduction, I will present a background of my methods of investigation, key definitions, and a review of the literature critical to this discussion of democracy and civil society in Ghana. Next, in Chapter One, I explore the history of political formation in Ghana, emphasizing the formation of the two main political cleavages, the Nkrumah tradition and the Danquah/Busia tradition. In Chapter Two, I introduce the two major political parties, the NPP and NDC, expounding on how they emerged from Ghana’s political history and their role in Ghana’s

11 At one point between the first and second round of voting a hit list was leaked to the media; the list included many top NPP officials. The NDC vehemently denied having created the list and said that the NPP had undertaken a campaign to paint the NDC as a violent party. Yet the general secretary of the NPP said not to downplay the threats because: “People who are known to be sympathizers of the NPP are already getting death treats over the phones and text message...we are warning our people that this is a party that has a culture of violence and that should any NDC candidate become president of this country, NDC thugs would be emboldened to unleash such violence and intimidation and threat against our people,” he said. (MyJoyOnline). Friday, December 19, 2008). When I spoke with the General Secretary in August 2009, the entire conversation was about the violent ways of the NDC and the re-emergence of a secret military squad under the NDC, which he felt was a sign the country was headed toward a military-like regime.
democracy. In addition, this chapter discusses the minority parties, the CPP and PNC, and their role in the 2008 election. Throughout the chapter, I show the persisting weaknesses in the culture of political parties and the impact on the 2008 election outcome.

In Chapter Three, I turn to a discussion of the role of the EC in the 2008 election as well as the various improvements in electoral management that have taken place since the inception of the Fourth Republic. Fundamental to this discussion is the fact that the Ghana EC is an independent body as it proved during the 2008 elections.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I address the critical role of civil society in promoting democracy, verifying the work of the EC, and mediating between political parties, the populace, and the EC. I conclude by arguing that the organic pro-democracy movement that emerged from civil society during the 2008 elections was a critical variable contributing to the peaceful outcome of the election and have further consolidated Ghanaian democracy.

Research Methods

I conducted an ethnographic study in Accra, Ghana between June and August of 2009. The body of research includes 32 open-ended interviews with leaders from civil society and religious groups, members of the media, researchers, political candidates and parliamentarians, party representatives, and representatives from Ghanaian democratic
institutions, namely the EC, the Ghana Peace Council (GPC) and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE).\textsuperscript{12}

My initial research question sought to uncover why the polls leading up to the 2008 elections had wrongly predicted the incumbent, the NPP, would win the 2008 elections. The answer seemed rather straightforward that the polls were poorly conducted and/or biased and that people were mistrustful to accurately report their support for the opposition. Right away interviewees talked about persisting weaknesses in the democratic process that caused tension surrounding the 2008 elections. Consequently, I re-oriented my research to find out how the Ghanaian elections had arrived at a peaceful outcome as opposed to the violent election experiences in Kenya and Zimbabwe (CDD-Ghana and CODEO 2009, 4). My altered research questions became: \textit{What caused tension during the 2008 election in Ghana? And how was tension abated and violence avoided during the elections?}

In order to answer these questions, I employed two distinct ethnographic research methodologies: participant observation and qualitative investigation. The initial phase of research, observation, took place during my first two weeks in Accra when I observed and assimilated to Ghanaian culture. I gained valuable insight into the relational aspect of Ghanaian culture and learned that in-person communication was by far the most effective method of contacting potential interviewees. This knowledge was valuable to the success of the next phase of my research; the in-depth interviews.

\textsuperscript{12} For more detail on my research methodology please see Appendix 1, and for a full schedule of interviews, please see Appendix 2.
The interview phase entailed data collection from both scripted and open-ended interviews as well as collection of primary documents such as: press releases, newspaper archives, official and unofficial polls, and election observation reports. I attended several lectures on Ghanaian politics and a press conference about the CODEO Election Observation Report release at the Center for Democratic Development in order to make connections with the key players involved in democracy-building activities in Ghana.

Definition of Key Terms

The most important concepts for this paper are the following: democracy, elections, civil society, and institutions. The most basic definition of democracy comes from the Greek etymology of the word meaning ‘rule by the people’ (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 10). In contemporary terms, elections have become the mechanism by which people rule themselves. Therefore, elections are democracy. This does not go without saying that democracy, in and of itself, requires broader societal structures and values in order that an election gives true voice and representation to the people. In this vein, democracy can be viewed as a continuum, but the benchmark to enter this realm in its most basic form is the exercise of competitive, peaceful, free, and fair elections. As Lindberg writes: “In a nutshell, elections will more often than not, be the way to democracy” (2006, 20).

Naturally, the next definition relevant to this paper is that of elections. This is a fairly straightforward concept in that elections are an institution of democracy in which people choose leaders and dispose of old governments through the act of voting as opposed to the use of violence or force. As Lindberg rightly asserts: “elections are…an institutionalized attempt to actualize the essence of democratic rule of the people by the
people” (Lindberg 2006, 1). Again, this corroborates the idea that elections are not in and of themselves the embodiment of democracy, but one of the fundamental mechanisms to provide people to rule themselves.

Elections are of particular contention in Africa due to the violent electoral experiences that have taken place over the past 50 years on the continent. This is not to say that there may not be a better, more suitable format for universal participation in decision-making in the future. In fact, I think it is likely that the very societies that currently struggle with elections have the greatest potential to become the future innovators should a new form of shared decision-making emerge.

As Yves Fauré writes, “one cannot really talk of an established democracy if elections do not enjoy the active support or enthusiasm of civil society (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 207). The main argument in this paper is that civil society in Ghana supported and contributed to the democratic-ness of the 2008 elections. For the purposes of my argument, I define civil society as “voluntary associations and organizations formally outside of the state and political parties that have united over a common set of objectives.” This paper explores the role of a particular segment of civil society in Ghana that has organized itself around the issues of good governance, democracy, and peace. The final definition is that of institutions. Institutions can be defined as they are by Bratton and Van de Wall as:

Sets of constraints on behavior in the form of rules and regulations; a set of procedures to detect deviations form the rules and regulations and finally, a set of moral, ethical and behavioral norms which define the contours that constrain the way in which the rules and regulations are specified and enforcement carried out. (1997, 40)

This definition includes practices such as: clientelism, patrimonialism, and tribalism, but for the purposes of this paper I simplify their definition. I focus primarily on the formal
arrangements, rules and regulations provided through constitutionally created institutions such as the EC, NCCE, GPC, and the court system. It must, at a minimum, be acknowledged however that there are a host of informal institutions at play in the milieu of Ghanaian politics, but the focus of this paper will be the formal democratic institutions mentioned above, specifically the Ghana EC.

**Literature Review**

There is a raging debate in African political literature on the prospects for democracy as a viable form of government. The debate ranges from what has become known as Afro-optimism, which views democracy as possible in Africa based on a Western legal-bureaucratic model of governance\(^\text{13}\) (Lindberg, Lindberg and Morrison) to those that view the transition to democracy as problematic, which limit the prospects for democratic consolidation on the continent (Bratton and Van de Walle) to the Afro-pessimists that argue democracy is fatally susceptible to and incompatible with the backward, traditional, informal and patrimonial characteristics that have emerged from both colonial and historic legacies in Africa (Chabal and Daloz).

Staffan I. Lindberg argues that democracy is possible in Africa and that repetitive elections have a democratizing affect. Lindberg argues, “that democratic qualities tend to improve with repetition of de jure participatory, competitive, and legitimate electoral cycles…” (Lindberg 2006, 84). Ghana, having now undergone five consecutive and

\(^{13}\) While there is no clear definition of the Western legal-bureaucratic model of democracy; it is assumed that the use of elections, rule of law, and the development of institutions to support democratic rule, freedom and liberty are all inherent to the Western style of democracy. However, this claim warrants further thought and consideration as democracy and the use of legal structures to protect and to solve conflict are now common far beyond the West (also a hazy concept) to the point that neither legal nor democratic structures can be considered entirely western (consider the cases of India, Indonesia, and Japan).
uninterrupted presidential elections, in many ways demonstrates how “successive electoral cycles allow actors to gain experience and become habituated to electoral institutions, probably in terms of both learning and adaptation” (Lindberg 2006, 73). The drastic improvements in electoral management in Ghana over the years is a clear indication of this argument as is Ghana’s increased freedom of the press, and the development of human rights groups and rule of law.

In addition to these positive advancements in democratic qualities of society, it appears that in Ghana, the political actors have also learned how to evade the rules of democracy (a more detailed discussion is included in Chapter Two). The behavior of political parties did, however, warrant an organized response from civil society, which led to an increase in the mobility and scope of civil society, and therefore improved democracy.

Chabal and Daloz provide the counter-argument to that of Lindberg in that they question the possibility of rule by the people through democracy in Africa. They see African society and its links to patrimonial and clientelism as incompatible with democratic rule or elections. They argue that as long as individuals continue to align themselves based on protection and basic survival, they are coerced rather than free to

14 Political actors in Ghana have learned the ‘rules’ of democracy and how to bypass them for their own political gain. One interviewee present at Inter-Party Advisory Council meetings talked of how parliamentary candidates urged the EC Chairman to advance the schedule of voter registry prior to when candidates have been announced in order to avoid candidates having to pay constituents to register. He said the rationalization (only later shared by the parliamentary candidate) was that the cost of running and paying bribes, is too high. The good news is that despite political actors behaving in non-democratic modes, the Ghanaian electorate has wised up to the ‘power of the thumb’ and secrecy of the vote, therefore, realizing that acceptance of a bribe doesn’t necessarily tie them to vote accordingly. While the rules and intricacies of democratic elections are becoming more widely understood in Ghana by political actors and supporters alike and civil liberties have improved since the initial transition, it was only with the expertise, organizational capacities, and personal relationships that the elections of 2008 had an acceptable outcome.

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choose leaders and participate democratically. This paper supports the Lindberg argument that democracy is possible and as the electoral process improves and Ghanaians are educated as to the process, they become more engaged and able to freely choose leaders through elections.

Connected to the debate about the prospects for democracy in Africa is the discussion regarding the role of civil society in democratization. Contrary to the view of Africa as backward, traditional and without a civil society (see Chabal and Daloz), sectors within Ghana’s civil society proved to be both pro-democracy and organized during the 2008 elections.

Classical modern thought regarding civil society is rooted in two predominant views. On one side are Marx, Hegel, Smith and Ferguson who saw civil society as an extension of the power divisions already found in the state and the market producing malevolent consequences for society (Amanor 2008, 629). For Marx, civil society and the state are both bourgeoisie cooptations of the masses (Mamdani 1996, 14). Hegel viewed civil society as malignant in its contribution to increased conflict and inequality. Marx and Hegel differed in that Hegel saw the state as critical to mediate the conflicts that arise from the market and civil society; Marx, on the other hand, viewed both the state and civil society as negative in that neither truly allowed the common man to participate.

Alexis Tocqueville provides a counter view of civil society. He sees civil society as a necessary counterbalancing force to both the state and the market. He views civil society ‘as a cohesive voluntary associational life’ (Amanor 2008, 629) that is separate from both the political and the economic. He is joined by Gramsci, Polanyi, Parsons, and
Habermas who share the view that civil society is composed of community and voluntary associations that provide critical channels for solving problems that emerge from the state and the market. This modern conception of civil society designates a clear separation of civil society from both politics and the economy. The modern interpretation of this view of civil society further sees it as a channel for developing democratic principles and values (Mamdani 1994, 15).

Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato introduce civil society as the ‘third realm’ and make a strong connection between civil society and democracy. The Cohen and Arato view of civil society as positive for democracy is particularly relevant in the case of Ghana. They argue that “while total democratization of the state and economy cannot be their goal, civil society itself, as Tocqueville was first to realize, is an important terrain of democratization, of democratic institution building” (16). During the 2008 elections in Ghana, civil society organized around the promotion of peaceful elections, and in working towards this goal they contributed to deeper understanding and participation in the democratic process.

Cohen and Arato’s systematic theory places civil society in the center of the democratic experiment, and in the case of the 2008 elections in Ghana, this certainly was the case. They argue that “without active participation on the part of citizens in egalitarian institutions and civil associations, as well as in politically relevant organizations, there will be no way to maintain the democratic character of the political culture or of social and political institutions” (19). The education of Ghanaian citizens on their rights and responsibilities was paramount to the peace efforts put forth by Ghana’s civil society. It will become clear in subsequent sections of this paper that civil society in
Ghana not only contributed to developing democratic values, but played an instrumental role in upholding the democratic process, holding leaders accountable for their actions, and improving participation levels in democracy, which all support the thesis that civil society is contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Ghana.

While Ghana deserves its status as a beacon of hope within the African democratic for the obvious reasons such as five consecutive and peaceful elections, undeniable improvements in the democratic quality of elections, the freedom and protection of critical institutions such as the media and the EC, but perhaps more importantly because Ghana shows how an active civil society complements the building of democracy.

Ghana provides an empirical case to support the views of Afro-optimists and also to support the argument that civil society can be positively linked to democracy-building. Throughout this paper, I seek to disprove that civil society does not exist because society was never emancipated from the state (Chabal and Daloz), but rather that civil society can be found and further, it has supported democratization in the case of Ghana (Lindberg and Cohen and Arato).

Now I will turn to the history of political formation in Ghana beginning shortly before Independence.
Chapter One: A Historical look at Ghana’s Political Formation

Ghanaian parties are important because they have remained stable through four republics, mediating a range of changes in political liberalization, economic status, state-society relations, ethno regional conflict and international issues.

-- Morrison, 2004, page 421

Ghana declared its independence from Great Britain on March 6, 1957 led by Kwame ‘Osagyefo’ Nkrumah, who ushered in an era of hope for development and democracy; Ghana’s independence and attempt at democratic governance were considered part of the first wave of democracy in Africa (Lindberg 2006, 9). Nkrumah served as the country’s first elected leader starting in 1960 under the Convention People’s Party (CPP), which had split off from the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) founded by JB Danquah. Together Nkrumah and Danquah had pushed for independence under the UCGG, and then went on to compete against each other in the founding election of Ghana’s First Republic. These two men founded competing ideologies that have influenced and shaped Ghana’s political parties and history since Independence.

This chapter explores two phenomenon of Ghana’s independent political history: the alternation between military and civilian rule and the persistence of two main political cleavages. Of the past 60 years, nearly half has been under military rule. One of the common characteristics of military rule in Ghana has been the banning of political parties as a repressive condition of authoritarian control. As a result, historically party names may have changed, but the two main political ideologies have centered on those of

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15 Osagyefo means redeemer in the Twi language. Twi is widely spoken in the Volta region, which has served as the stronghold of the NDC party throughout the Fourth Republic.
Nkrumah and Danquah/Busia. The core supporters and main beliefs found in these two rival political cleavages has persisted through countless military and civilian turnovers, and the strong rivalry between the two persists today.

The Danquah/Busia and Nkrumah cleavages are rooted in both regional and ethnic support blocs, and yet their behaviors have differed very little when either bloc has retained power. Elected political elites from both sides are guilty of looting the state coffers throughout Ghana’s history, and this demoralizing behavior has led to five military coups. Ghanaians often welcomed a forceful takeover of power as opposed to democratic elections because they were so disillusioned by the lack of progress under civilian rule.16

While neither the Nkrumahist, the Danquah/Busia enthusiasts, nor military control have been able to sever Ghana’s tradition of corrupt governance, the movement emerging from civil society to mobilize the electorate to participate in democratic governance provided a positive counter-balance to the corrupt behaviors of political parties in Ghana. The following section traces the political formation and transfer of political power since Independence in Ghana. Furthermore it explores how Ghana’s prominent political traditions have maintained solid support bases despite repeated military interruption and the intermittent illegalization of political parties since independence.

16 The first military coup in 1966 wrested power from Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP. It will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter, but people felt he had too much power as he had already banned political parties and created a one-party state. The third military coup, which took place in 1981 led by Lt. Rawlings, removed Dr. Hilla Limann (also to be discussed in more detail later in the chapter). The public reportedly welcomed the military coup because people felt elected officials were abusing their power in order to enrich themselves on state resources (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 243).
Ghana’s original political rivalry occurred between the father of independence Kwame Nkrumah and the founder of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), JB Danquah. The UGCC attracted merchants, businessmen and professionals (Lindberg and Morrison 2005, 566) and grew to represent a liberal economic perspective that aligned with the business sector it attracted. Nkrumah emerged from a populist, state-interventionist perspective as opposed to JB Danquah and later Kofi A. Busia who pushed a liberal mercantilist perspective with just a ‘twinge of interventionism’ (Lindberg and Minion 2005, 566). The two main cleavages can be found in the major parties and some of the smaller ones that competed in the 2008 elections. This section focuses on how these cleavages developed, who supports them and why an intense and at times violent rivalry persists between adherents the two perspectives.

While J.B. Danquah helped found the UGCC, Nkrumah served as its head in 1947. The two men worked together for independence with the motto of “self government in the shortest possible time.” By 1949, this had become insufficient for Nkrumah who broke off from the UCGG and formed the CPP with the motto of “self government now.” Danquah and Nkrumah came to form the original blocs from which Ghanaian political parties have been rooted since then. The CPP set itself apart by garnering the support of lower professionals, clerks, teachers, the unemployed, rural workers, women, servicemen, ‘school-leavers’ and other non-elites around the

17 (Lindberg Democracy and Elections 10, Lindberg and Minion, Morrison 424). The NDC, a democratic socialist party, is linked to the Nkrumah socialist tradition (though the NDC sometimes denies it) and the liberal governance and market economy-based perspective of the NPP is traced back to the Danquah-Busia tradition (Morrison 2004, 423).

Nkrumah, under the flag of the CPP, was the elected leader of Ghana from 1960 to 1966. What began as a period of hope for Ghanaian and African independence turned out to be an era of disillusion and demoralization. Under Nkrumah, the constitution was changed to make the CPP the only legal party in a one-party state. Leaders took advantage of their political power to garner resources for themselves, while the public was urged to put the nation ahead of their own wages to support the country’s development agenda.

The opposition parties initially merged together under the United Party (UP) to oppose the troubling characteristics of corruption and repression emerging from Nkrumah’s rule. Shortly thereafter-political parties were officially banned altogether. 18 What started as Ghana’s first democratic experiment, turned into a paranoid, repressive, dictatorial regime in just a matter of years. Ghana has since undergone five military coups under much of which political association was banned. The following section illustrates the many different civilian and military parties that have ruled Ghana since Nkrumah’s reign.

_A Rivalry Embedded in Force_

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18 Nkrumah first passed the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in 1957, which prohibited the creation of parties based on race, region, or religion, which forced all opposition parties to unite under the United Party (UP), but following the 1960 election, recognition of the UP was dissolved and several opposition leaders were held under the Prevention Detention Act of 1958. By 1964 a referendum passed making Ghana a one-party state. (Lindberg and Minion 2005, 567).
The beginning of political control seized through force began in 1966 when Nkrumah was removed from power in a military coup alleged to have been backed by the United States. Following the coup, the CPP was banned and its members were forced to operate underground or flee to other parties for decades until they re-emerged alongside the People’s National Congress (also a CPP derivative party) in the 1990s.

After several years of martial rule, the Second Republic began with legislative elections in 1969. Professor Kofi Busia was elected Prime Minister from the Progress Party (PP). The contest for power was highly competitive between Busia who attracted supporters from the dominant Akan ethnic group, where Danquah had previously been popular, and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) led by a former Nkrumah minister who was widely supported by his native Ewe populations of the Volt region. The reign of civilian rule was a short-lived affair, however, lasting only until January 1972.

The transfer from military control to civilian rule that opened the Second Republic was seen as ‘historic genius’ throughout the continent, but almost immediately it became apparent that the “ills of the Nkrumah era still existed under the PP government and the army therefore had no option but to intervene” (Goldsworthy 1973, 9). Because Busia was unable to connect with broad coalitions of society, the economy stagnated, and his government failed to break away from the corrupt patterns of the earlier Nkrumah government, he was removed in a bloodless military coup just two years into his rule. Colonel Ignatius Acheampong, who led the coup, defended it on the tenet that the Busia

---

19 Busia’s government had reportedly alienated students, civil servants, farmers, unions, and even the armed forces.
government had badly mismanaged the economy (Goldsworthy 1973, 9) and the media as well as the public appeared to welcome the change.

The military took control of Ghana yet again from 1972 through 1979 until Nkrumahist Dr. Hilla Limann of the People’s National Party (PNP) was elected president. The Third Republic lasted a short two years, from 1979 to 1981 and suffered from a weak government and slow-moving economy. Mid-level army Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, perhaps one of the most polemic characters from the past 30 years of Ghanaian politics, seized power this time in a bloody military coup that included the public execution of eight prominent military leaders and former heads of state. Rawlings touted the direct links between his vision for the country and that of Nkrumah (Lindberg and Minion 2005) and found much of his support from the Nkrumah bloc and former CPP party. He went on to rule the country as a military leader from 1981 through 1992 and as a civilian-elected leader from 1993 to 2000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republic Name</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Years of Rule</th>
<th>Type of Rule</th>
<th>Political Party Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Republic</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah</td>
<td>Convention People’s Party (CPP)</td>
<td>1960-66</td>
<td>Civilian One-party State</td>
<td>1964 ban on political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brigadier A.A. Afrifa</td>
<td>National Liberation Council (NLC)</td>
<td>1966-69</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Republic</td>
<td>Kofi A. Busia</td>
<td>Progress Party (PP)</td>
<td>1969-72</td>
<td>Civilian Prime Minister</td>
<td>Political parties re-introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Col. I.K. Acheampong</td>
<td>National Redemption Council (NRC)</td>
<td>1972-75</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Col. I.K. Acheampong</td>
<td>Supreme Military Council (SMC)</td>
<td>1975 – 78</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Political parties banned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Republic</td>
<td>Dr. Hilla Limann</td>
<td>People’s National Party (PNP)</td>
<td>1979-81</td>
<td>Civilian President</td>
<td>Political parties re-introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings</td>
<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John A. Kufuor</td>
<td>National Patriotic Party (NPP)</td>
<td>2001-09</td>
<td>Civilian President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Atta Mills</td>
<td>National Democratic Party (NDC)</td>
<td>2009-current</td>
<td>Civilian President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under international pressure and rising domestic unrest, military Lt. Jerry John Rawlings initiated the return to democratic rule. He lifted the ban on political parties just
six months prior to the date set for the Fourth Republic’s founding election in 1992. Some believed the last minute constitutional provisions gave Rawlings’ party; the military-run PNDC later turned civilian-led NDC, an unfair advantage in the founding election. When Rawlings re-introduced political parties, he did, however, prohibit political groups from using names and slogans of the past. Hence the NDC emerged from the PNDC/Nkrumah bloc and was rivaled most closely by the NPP emerging from the Danquah-Busia cleavage.

While the 1992 elections were the inception of what has become Ghana’s most peaceful and democratic reign of rule, it was an imperfect election in that there was significant protest and even a boycott of parliamentary elections from opposition parties, namely the NPP. Overall, the legitimacy and voter turnout were extremely low, at just 29% of the total vote (Lindberg 2006, 87). Yet, the 1992 election laid the foundation from which democracy-building activity has occurred over the past two decades.

An important development for democracy was the recognition and protection of political parties in the 1992 constitution, which spurred an era of significant political liberalization for Ghana. While the constitution finally made parties legal, it also included protections from legal punishment for members of Rawlings’ PNDC-military party. Unfortunately, Ghanaian political actors have taken advantage of this precedent and often exploit both legal and constitutional mechanisms of protection before leaving office. Prior to 1992, dissatisfaction with the state often resulted in a military takeover,

20 Lindberg and Morrison 2005, 567, Bratton and Van de Walle 1994, 482, Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 172. Rawlings is alleged to have begun to outline the transition process to democracy as early as 1987, but due to both internal and external pressures including: donor countries, the global economic crisis, and popular unrest in Ghana, he sped up the process. (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 170)
but since the inception of the Fourth Republic the vote has remained the favored mechanism to settle political conflict, albeit the process is still manipulated and abused to protect personal and party interests.

The Fourth Republic has proven to be the longest period of civilian rule in Ghana, accompanied by an opening to political formation unparalleled in Ghana’s independent history. The Fourth Republic has outlasted prior attempts at democracy perhaps due to a backdrop of political liberalization that occurred simultaneously throughout the African continent. This period of return to democracy in Africa has been coined the third wave of democratization (Lindberg 2006, 52 and Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 35). It appears that despite the historic rivalry between the two main political cleavages of Ghanaian politics, there is a growing push from the populace, predominately from civil society groups, against military intervention, which has contributed to the democratic continuity of Ghana’s Fourth Republic.

Since independence, Ghanaians have witnessed continual interchange between military and civilian rule. The effect is that there is a persisting perception that force has been and can again be used in lieu of elections to solve political conflict. In addition to fears of violence rooted in historical experience, both the NPP and NDC have dominated Ghanaian politics since the inception of the Fourth Republic. Their intense rivalry is rooted in the historical relationship and animosity between the Danquah/Busia and Nkrumah political formations. The next chapter will further explore the two major parties

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22 During the period from 1989 -2003, 44 of 48 sub-Saharan African countries held multi-party elections Lindberg 2006, 14 and Lindberg and Morrison 2008 and 2005). Many attribute the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall with sparking the movement of political liberalization in Africa who had long served as a ideological battleground between the United States and Soviet Union (Lindberg 2006, 118; Bratton and Mattes 2009, 3; Lindberg and Morrison 2005, 567)
vying for the 2008 Presidential seat, as well as the CPP and PNC, two smaller parties that made positive contributions to the democratic process despite their poor showing in the 2008 contest. Furthermore, it will explore the tactics utilized by the political parties, tactics carried over from the historic tango between authoritarian and democratic rule, and the implications of such behavior on democracy.
Chapter Two: The Parties and Tactics of 2008

*The big men who hold power continue to ‘eat’ much as the goat does, ‘where it is tethered.’*

-- Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, page 278

Not only have two main political cleavages persisted over the past 60 years, but also the self interested, anti-democratic behaviors that are characteristic of Ghana’s political elite. Ghana’s main parties, despite their origins rooted in independence, have failed to develop and fully embrace democratic values and still attempt to undermine the electoral process for interests outside those of the nation. In addition, perhaps as a result of the continual banning of parties throughout Ghana’s history, it appears that the current parties suffer from weak internal structures that limit their overall democraticness. The gaps in the democratic political culture of Ghanaian parties created a great deal of tension during the 2008 elections. Morrison writes that “Ghana parties have the greatest deficits in organization and resources, abated only by the media and the electoral commission” (2004, 439).

The 2008 elections reflect both the historical genes of and weaknesses of Ghana’s political parties. This section explores the supporters, behaviors and platforms of Ghana’s modern political parties. This chapter provides a foundation for the larger argument of this paper: that the behaviors of Ghana’s political parties threatened democracy and warranted the emergence of a neutral, pro-democracy mediating force was needed in order uphold democracy in the 2008 election. This alternative voice came from Ghana’s civil society and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.
The election was held on December 7, 2008 and was considered free, fair and peaceful, but because no party was able to capture the majority, a second election was required to decide the president. The eight parties that had presented candidates: the NDC, NPP, Convention People’s Party (CPP), People’s National Convention party (PNC), Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), an independent party, Democratic People’s Party (DPP), and the Reformed Democratic Patriots (RDP) were reduced to the top two. As mentioned previously, the NPP had been caught off guard by the results of the first round and the NDC appeared to be energized by its unexpectedly strong performance. The period between the first and second round (held on December 28, 2008) was a flurry of campaign activity, which exploited the rivalry and desperation to maintain or regain power by both parties.
Table 2: List of Parties, Candidates, and Total Votes Received During the December 7, 2008 Ghanaian Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Number of Total Votes</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New Patriotic Party (NPP)</td>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>4,159,439</td>
<td>49.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. National Democratic Congress (NDC)</td>
<td>John Atta Mills</td>
<td>4,056,634</td>
<td>47.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Convention People’s Party (CPP)</td>
<td>Papa Kwesi Nduom</td>
<td>113,494</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. People’s National Convention (PNC)</td>
<td>Edward Mahama</td>
<td>73,494</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Democratic Freedom Party (DFP)</td>
<td>Emmanuel Ansah-Antwi</td>
<td>27,889</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Independent</td>
<td>Kwasi Amoafio-Yeboah</td>
<td>19,342</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Democratic People’s Party (DPP)</td>
<td>Thomas Ward-Brew</td>
<td>8,653</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reformed Patriotic Democrats (RPD)</td>
<td>Kwabena Adjei</td>
<td>6,889</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,671,272</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana

The Campaign

The overwhelming feeling during the 2008 campaign was *a re si sem*, which means “a need for change” in the local Akan language (Bennett Interview). This sentiment did not necessarily represent a movement away from the predominant ideologies of Nkrumah and Danquah/Busia, but rather a changing of the guard. Change did not favor the incumbent party, the NPP, who presented Nana Akufo-Addo as their candidate. Akufo-Addo campaigned on a message of continuity and efforts to build upon the work of the past eight years with the slogan: “we are moving forward.” He

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23 The President at the time, John Kufuor of the NPP, was not running for re-election as he had already served two four-year terms as president in 2001-2004 and 2005-2008.
faced the challenge of engaging the support of the entire NPP party, including the president, without invoking or appearing to use the incumbency advantage, which was difficult due to the watchdog role of civil society, observation delegations, and the press, who were all watching.

The NDC presented former Vice President and three time presidential candidate, John Atta Mills as their candidate, and used the slogan: “a change for a better Ghana” (Christian Council Election Report 2009, 11). The NDC capitalized on the electorate’s desire for change, which shows an emerging pattern in Ghanaian democracy that after two terms in power, the ruling party should change. Many of the smaller parties, particularly the third and fourth most popular parties, the Convention People’s Party (CPP) and the People’s National Convention Party (PNC) also urged voters to vote for change in 2008.

The campaign messaging about change was neither innate to Ghanaian politics or an innovation of the 2008 election. The President of the United States had campaigned on the internationally recognized slogan of “Change We Can Believe In.” And during the 2000 election in Ghana, at which time the NDC under Rawlings had been in power for eight years, the then opposition party, the NPP, campaigned on the need for change as well and won.

Many interviewees pointed out that after eight years in office, change is both healthy and inevitable when it comes to politics. As one interviewee put it, politics is like water – when it has been sealed in a plastic pouch for too long, it does not matter how strong the plastic is, the water goes bad and needs to be changed (Prince Interview). Overall, it appears that people were generally fed up with the NPP and its failure to
improve the average Ghanaian’s life, despite much advancement with the overall economy. In 2008, Ghanaians were looking for change; the NDC realized this and capitalized on the opportunity.

Despite emerging patterns that appear to limit parties to two terms in power, the pre-election polls generally predicted the NPP to win. But the NDC had worked hard since the previous election and was determined not to lose a third consecutive challenge for the presidency. The NPP, on the other hand, had grown complacent and arrogant. They were depending on the advantage of the incumbency and the fact that the NDC was linked to violence as assurance that the NPP should and would retain power. In the end, the Ghanaian people let their voice (through their vote) be heard despite last efforts by both parties to gain power through anti-democratic means.

Minor Parties with Major Influence?

Before looking more in depth at the supporters of the NDC and NPP as well as the behavior of the parties in 2008, there are two smaller parties that were relevant to the 2008 election. The first is the CPP party a relic of the Nkrumah era. The party presented the charismatic Papa Kwesi Nduom as their candidate, and there were hopes that the CPP would finally make its comeback by offering a realistic alternative to the NDC and the

24 A CODEO election observer and Muslim religious leader explained that the NDC was saying to voters: “you who must rise up, must wake up,” which meant that it was time to stop letting the government take advantage. It played on the fact that the NPP leaders appeared to be living well, yet the Ghanaian populace was not ‘feeling any cash in their pockets.’ It also alluded to the fact that the NPP had campaigned on lowering fuel prices, but had failed to do so while in power until December of 2008, and these last minute efforts came off as a desperate and cheap attempt to win over voters. The NDC called attention to the NPP tactics as insulting to the Ghanaian public. Sheikh interview.

25 By anti-democratic behavior, I refer primarily to attempts to manipulate the electoral process such as: use of intimidation through macho men squads, bussing in of foreign voters, encouraging registration of minors, creating doubts about the independence of the Electoral Commission, conducting negative campaign messages around ethnicity, personal qualities and historical military connections rather than policy platforms.
NPP. These hopes were dashed, however, when Nduom was only able to capture 1.34% of the total vote, eliminating him in the first round of voting. The 2008 election results show that the CPP is only a minor contender in Ghana’s national politics today, and yet this was not always the case.

Once eliminated, the minority parties had to decide to whom they should pledge their support. The CPP did not officially back either the NDC or the NPP in 2008, because as a CPP party representative explained, “as a party we suffer a label that we don’t stand on our own. It is a perception that exists about us. So to kill that perception, we stood on our own.” Although the CPP did not officially back the NDC, the party’s messaging about a need for change echoed that of the NDC, and therefore they joined forces in an informal alignment with the NDC.

While the CPP was unable to capture a substantial portion of the presidential vote, the party remains popular in both Western and Central regions where it attracts farmers and rural fisherman (Nelson Interview). The CPP was criticized internally for its lack of coordination between the presidential and parliamentary campaigns, and yet the party was still able to win a seat in parliament in the Western region. Member of Parliament (MP), Samia Nkrumah, is the daughter of the late Kwame Nkrumah and occupies the lone CPP seat in Ghana’s parliament. Because the CPP was unable to garner a

26 See Appendix 4 for more detail on regional support of the CPP.
27 Interview with Nelson/Kabila show that the CPP suffered from ‘skirt and blouse’ according to a CPP party member and parliamentary candidate, which simply means efforts between the presidential campaign and those of its parliamentarians were not well coordinated.
28 Evidence of new political alliances emerging in Ghana are shown in that Nkrumah’s office is housed in the complex of a development organization led by a member of the PNC. The owner of the building explained that the space he provides is often used as an informal meeting place to bring together parliamentarians and party leaders (from different parties) to discuss issues out of the spotlight. See Sully interview.
substantial national base of support during the 2008 election, the future survival of the party may depend on alliances or mergers with other parties.

The People’s National Convention (PNC), founded by ex-president Dr. Hilla Limann is a potential future ally for the CPP and also emerges (along with the NDC and CPP) from the Nkrumah tradition. The PNC is a center-left party that considers itself to be less extreme than the CPP (Sully Interview). A PNC party staff person said discussions between the PNC and CPP regarding a future union have come down to a petty disagreement over the party symbol that would be used if the two were to merge (Henry Interview).

In 2008, the PNC presented presidential candidate Dr. Edward N. Mahama, who was eliminated in the first round of elections when he came in fourth position with a mere 0.87% of the total vote. While the PNC was not expected to win the presidency, the PNC has strong regional support, albeit in less populated areas, but this still gives the party seats in parliament. The PNC is most popular in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. As a party member and active civil society leader explained, the PNC won two seats in the 2008 election and the difference between the majority and the minority party in parliament is also just two seats, giving the PNC leverage on the parliamentary level (Sully Interview).

Another party member said that the PNC is the ‘laughing stock’ of Ghanaian politics, but that the PNC exerts influence at the presidential level as well. He said:

There are two very strong parties emerging, which are nearly at par with each other. What has deluded them is that the slightest decrease in votes

29 See Appendix 5 for more information on regional support of the PNC.
by the very small parties is what can make or break their [the major parties] reaching 50% of the vote (Sully Interview).

After being eliminated from the presidential race in the first round of voting the PNC held a conference to decide which candidate to support. The vote was tied 19 to 19, and the PNC chairman, Dr. Mahama, urged party members to go with their own intuitions, but that the party would not formally back either the NDC or the NPP. In 2000, the PNC had publicly backed the NPP and some party representatives expressed frustration that they did not receive any benefit for their public declaration of support. The same dissatisfaction regarding follow through and respect for smaller parties by both the NDC and NPP was voiced from representatives of the CPP party as well.

Maintaining a multi-party system increases and secures democratic rule and yet today Ghana is beginning to resemble a two-party rather than multi-party system at least at the presidential level. It will be interesting to see whether an alliance of minor parties can provide a viable alternative to the hegemonic power of the NDC and NPP in future elections. Both the NPP and NDC have exhibited various abuses while in power, undemocratic behaviors during electoral periods and intolerance toward other parties, and it appears the CPP and PNC have yet to offer a viable alternative to the dominant parties under the Fourth Republic.

On Hegemonic Rule: the NDC and the NPP

The relationship between the NDC and NPP has been one of animosity,
vindication and violence.\textsuperscript{31} Therefore, it is unsurprising that intolerance between the two parties had a negative impact on the 2008 elections. As a professor and researcher at IDEG remarked:

\begin{quote}
The NDC and NPP are cat and mouse entities in the political domain to say the least. They do not have the best relations and it can be traced back to the period of the PNDC [military regime lead by Jerry Rawlings from 1981 through 1992]. They have not trusted each other since that era (Kwame Interview).
\end{quote}

However, if you look at the base of party support, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the NDC and NPP may not have existed in name but are found in the political cleavages of Nkrumah and Danquah/Busia, each of which has been guilty of removing the other from power forcefully. As a result, the intolerance between the two major parties contaminated the 2008 election, particularly around the run-off and as the public awaited the announcement of the results. People feared the parties would yet again take matters into their own hands rather than follow through with the electoral process.

The 2008 election confirmed the NPP and NDC as Ghana’s two dominant parties.\textsuperscript{32} The competition in 2008 was noted for its intensity, which was further degenerated by the recent discovery of oil and an awareness by both the NPP and the NDC of the difficulties associated with being the party sidelined and out of power.\textsuperscript{33} The

\textsuperscript{31} The infamous June 4, 1979 execution of 8 ministers by Rawlings contributes greatly to the anger, distrust between the two parties. In 2009, the NDC government reintroduced June 4\textsuperscript{th} as a public holiday causing a great deal of disgust amongst human rights advocates and of course the NPP who emerged from the same networks of several of the men executed.

\textsuperscript{32} The NDC led the Fourth Republic under elected President Jerry John Rawlings from 1993 to 2000 and the NPP led Ghana under President John Kufuor from 2001 to 2008.

\textsuperscript{33} The transition of power between the NDC and NPP was problematic in 2000 and went without ever properly being addressed or rectified. Now it appears similar transition problems are emerging from the new Mills administration. In 2001, the NPP publicly fired high government officials by radio upon taking power. Before leaving office President Kufuor upped the salaries of public officials and then quietly pushed a retirement package through parliament that provided him with six gas-filled cars with drivers to be replaced every four years, offices and residences in Accra with gyms, three professional and personal
tension and bitterness between the NDC and NPP was evident throughout the entire electoral process, but particularly noticeable late in the electoral cycle. The elections may have ended peacefully this time around, but intolerance between parties and attempts to manipulate the process pose serious challenges to the continuity of Ghanaian democracy.

Who Are the Dominant Parties?

The NPP was founded on the principles of rule of law, individual liberty and respect for human rights (Interview De Rocha, Gyimah-Boadi 2009, 139-140). The NPP falls within the Danquah-Busia political tradition and is associated with a liberal ideology based on free markets. The connection between the NPP and the Danquah-Busia tradition is evident through a look at the voting bases of the main Danquah-Busia parties and those of the NPP today (Lindberg and Morrison 2005). Its supporters, much as its leaders, tend to be professionals, businessmen, intellectuals, merchants, and urban populations (Morrison 2004, Jonah 2004, Lindberg and Minion, Kelly 2005). The NPP is perceived as a party of capitalists known for having an elitist style (Morrison 2004, 424). In comparison to NDC voters, the NPP attracts a voting base that is less impoverished, more literate, less agricultural and generally more urban-based (Jonah 2005, 8).

The winner of the 2008 presidential election was the social democratic NDC party who ran in the opposition. The NDC is widely known for its ties to its founder and former military leader Lt. John Jerry Rawlings, who emerged from the Nkrumah sphere assistants, a pension, 45 days of yearly vacation, entertainment expenses to be paid by the state, and $1 million in seed money to start a foundation. Such packages are used as a bribe to motivate leaders to adhere to the term limits laid out by the constitution. The bad political behavior did not end when the NPP left office either. Upon taking office, Mills dissolved all government boards on January 27, 2009 in a public press conference, and has since continued to seize vehicles of former NPP ministers in a series of witch hunts. (Democracy Watch 28, 1-5)
of Ghanaian politics. Today the NDC is seen as a working class and agricultural party that appeals to rural farmers, fisherman, urban workers, and teachers. In juxtaposition to the NPP, the NDC tends to attract supporters who are less literate, more impoverished, less urban, more rural, and less professional than the NPP (Jonah 2005, 9).

Both the NPP and the NDC each have a ‘world bank’ of support. For the NDC, the Volta region is their stronghold. Volta is predominately populated by the ethno-linguistic group known as Ewe. The NPP’s ‘world bank’ or stronghold of voters is located in the Ashanti region, which is predominately populated by members of the umbrella ethnic Akan grouping (Jonah, Morrison, Lindberg). Strongholds are important to the fabric of the Ghanaian election story because they are where the ‘funny business’ occurs when it comes to manipulating the electoral process.

The presence of strongholds populated by specific ethnic groups has caused some to believe ethnic voting occurs in Ghana. However, interviewees perceived ethnicity to become a factor during the 2008 electoral period only when the tension had already reached an alarming level, but not as a direct cause of the tension. As Hoffman shows in his argument against ethnic voting in Ghana, the Ashanti and Ewe represent less than 30% of the total population in Ghana. To further discredit the ethnic voting argument, a study from Lindberg and Morrison on voting behaviors in the 1996 and 2000 election in Ghana shows that Ghanaians are mature democrats. The majority of survey respondents said they vote based on evaluative rationales rather than ethnic, clientelistic or proxy voting behaviors.34

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34 The 2008 study from Lindberg and Morrison showed that in 1996, only 10% of respondents reported voting based on clientelism or proxy voting and in 2000, this number was just 14% of survey respondents.
While the party supporters and regional strongholds of the NPP and NDC show

clear linkages to both the Danquah/Busia and Nkrumah legacies. This may become less
important as democracy consolidates in Ghana. There are signs that Ghanaian voters are
becoming better democrats, perhaps more so than the politicians themselves, as they are
employing evaluative mechanisms for choosing leaders. Likewise leaders need to clean
up their act to remain relevant to voters in future elections.

Selection of Major Presidential Candidates: Signs of a Retarded Democratic Culture

One of the few advantages of being in the opposition party was that the NDC was
both able to select their candidate much in advance of the election and with relative ease
and cohesion. The NDC held their party primary convention on December 21, 2006
nearly two years in advance of the presidential election. Professor John Atta Mills was a
natural selection having served as Vice President to Lt. Rawlings and also having
competed against John Kufuor in both the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. Mills
was selected with 81.4% of the total votes cast and the party accepted without
hesitation.\(^{35}\) The NDC had more than two years to unite behind Atta Mills and to
develop a campaign strategy to win power back from the NPP (Gyimah Boadi 2009,
141).

The NPP, on the other hand, had a great deal of difficulty when it came to
selecting their presidential candidate for the 2008 election. They held their primary
convention in December 2007, which was nearly a year after that of the NDC. Nana

Contrarily 85-90% reported having voted based on mature democratic criteria such as performance of the
government and policy platforms.\(^{35}\)

http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/NewsArchive/news_details.asp?t=mg&id=VFZSSmQwNTZaM2c9&menu_id=1&sub_menu_id=0
Akufo-Addo was selected from 17 handpicked aspirants, eight of whom were cabinet members at the time. A professor of Ghanaian politics said, “There was so much competition for positions within the party that many people who wouldn’t normally contest came forward in order to get their share of the pie” (Kwame Interview). The NPP primary created great divisions internally within the NPP, which was recognized by both civil society and the public. It even caused some members of parliament to abandon the party altogether and to run on independent tickets.

According to the election report released by CODEO, the NPP congress was characterized for ‘high-handedness’ and ‘vote buying,’ showing that behaviors to manipulate voting were taking place within parties, in addition to inter-party political contests. It is documented in the CODEO report that at one point the vote at the NPP convention had to be stopped because a supporter of one of the candidates was distributing money and mobile phones to delegates, which disrupted the voting exercise.

The NPP convention foreshadowed a pattern that repeated itself during the race for the presidency: spending money in Ghanaian politics no longer guarantees a vote in support. Businessman Allan ‘Cash’ learned this lesson as he vied to bear the flag for the NPP. Cash spent a great deal of his own money on his bid for the presidency, and yet he still did not win. He was the favorite of President Kufuor and many saw Akufo-Addo’s nomination as indicative of a rift between the president and the NPP candidate.36 Both the maturing of the Ghanaian voter and the degradation of political culture by the parties themselves were critical components of the 2008 election experience and its eventual peaceful outcome.

36 John and AEP Interviews.
Election Year 2008: Actions of the NPP and the NDC

The first round election was held on December 7, 2008.\textsuperscript{37} No candidate received the majority or “50%+1” of the vote required by the constitution to win. The day was relatively peaceful and calm despite some anxiety, and the results were announced by the EC within the 72-hour window allotted according to the constitution. It must be noted, however, that the polls leading up to the election were reporting that the incumbent NPP had a comfortable lead, and many of those interviewed said the NPP was ‘complacent’ and ‘arrogant’ leading up to the first round of voting. The closeness of the results therefore came as a surprise to both the major parties particularly the NPP who had expected to win outright.

Table 3: First Round Election Results from Ghana’s December 7, 2008 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Total Votes</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>4,159,439</td>
<td>49.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Atta Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>4,056,634</td>
<td>47.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama</td>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>73,494</td>
<td>00.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa Kwesi Nduom</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>113,494</td>
<td>01.34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results from the Ghana EC

Many interviewees stated that the then ruling party, the NPP, was surprised to have failed to win the first round of elections and the NDC was taken off guard by how well they had performed. It appears the NDC gained momentum going into the second

\textsuperscript{37} Official results from the Ghana EC are as follows: NPP: 49.13%, NDC: 47.92%, PNC: .87%, CPP: 1.34%, and four additional candidates each receiving less than half a percentage of the vote. Total voter turnout was 69.52% and the percentage of spoilt ballots was 2.37%, which raised some concern and targeted efforts to educate the populace on proper voting procedure between the first and second round. However, if you look at voter turnout from the 2004 election it was 85.1% and spoilt ballots were 2.13%. The decrease in voter turnout could be attributed to attempts to cleanse the voter registry of duplicate and illegal voters, and the increase in the percentage of spoiled votes in 2008 by the Electoral Commissioner as having to do with a misunderstanding in the voting procedures in rural areas of Ghana.
round. There was a great deal of tension that existed during the interim period between the first and second round of voting. The second vote held on December 28, 2008 was not without isolated incidences of violence and manipulation as had been the December 7 vote. Of particular concern were claims by the NPP that their polling agents were not allowed to enter polling stations in Volta region. The accusation was that NPP agents were accused of being ‘aliens’ and ‘strangers,’ and were kept out of Volta polling stations. Many later blamed the NPP for failing to sufficiently police the polling stations and this could have impacted the outcome.

During the 2008 elections, the NPP, as the incumbent party, was viewed as arrogant, over-confident, flashy, and corrupt despite its many laudable accomplishments while in power.\textsuperscript{38} The NPP candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo, boasted the prudent economic management, macroeconomic stability, economic growth rates, the increase in infrastructure development, progress in alleviating poverty, development of social welfare programs such as the NHIS, and the youth employment and school feeding programs of the Kufuor administration (Gyimah-Boadi 2009). The achievements, however, of the previous NPP administration were overshadowed by a glut of scandals involving top NPP brass that went unpunished by the NPP administration.\textsuperscript{39}

The NPP is perceived to have spent a greater amount of money on their campaign and the voters took advantage of the NPP’s flashy spending habits. Several interviewees

\textsuperscript{38} Sully on arrogance and disconnect with the people, John on scandals, Ben on arrogance, scandals and opulence, Ruby on overconfidence, Inusah on corruption and out of touch, Awudu on scandals and desperation, Simon on corruption, Gerry and Seth on disconnect with people.
\textsuperscript{39} Ghana@50 debacle, president’s son purchasing multi-million dollar hotel, excessive spending during the primaries, allegations of nacre-trafficking, a cocaine scandal involving an MP, a married NPP minister impregnating a woman in Canada while at a conference and not being punished, internal party problems, acrimony during the presidential primaries that caused MPs to go independent (Gyimah-Boadi 140, John Interview)
pointed out that for the 2008 election, it was the voters who deceived the politicians rather than vice versa. As one election observer and civil society technocrat commented:

The NPP ran a flashy campaign with beautiful work that was new to the people. Such sophistication in political campaign adverts had not been seen before, but the people seem to have been repulsed by the amount of money being spent amidst poverty. There was talk of the ‘moneyocracy’ and confirmation that despite the push of Western ideas, people still have their values and their modesty.

People accepted gifts (t-shirts, food, etc) and showed up to rallies in great number, but just as was shown in the NPP convention, gift acceptance did not guarantee a vote.\textsuperscript{40} People did not feel they were prospering on a personal level and the perception was that the opulence of the NPP campaign proved that state resources were being used inappropriately. Overall, this contributed to a general consensus that the NPP was out of touch with the population, and further it appears in 2008 it was the voter who fooled the politicians rather than the other way around.

In addition to extravagant campaign spending and endless stories of scandal and corruption, the NPP is alleged to have grown overconfident, which resulted in ill preparation and desperate attempts to garner votes during the period between the first election and the run-off. As many interviewees confirmed, Ghana elections are won and lost at the polling station (John Interview). What this means it that elections are set up so that party representatives are allowed to be present to monitor all electoral activities, but

\textsuperscript{40} One anecdotal story to demonstrate the flippancy of the voters was that one interviewee observed an NPP convoy going down the road blaring the NPP music and as they passed, people standing on the side of the road started singing along and doing the hand gesture of pointing forward, but once the convoy passed a group of people switched hand signs to the circling motion for change used by the NDC and CPP. Many interviewees referenced campaign songs and rallies as being fun and that leading up to the election people showed up in large numbers for the social aspect and fun of the campaign activities.
the NPP did not ‘do their homework.’\textsuperscript{41} Considering the closeness of the results, a failure to be present at the polling stations could have impacted the outcome. It appears the NPP may have been able to make a case against the NDC in terms of fraud, but their lack of preparation, their fear the NDC would use violence mixed with other blunders in the final days of the election, prevented the NPP from putting a legitimate case together against the fraud committed by the NDC.

The NDC, on the other hand, is closely associated with its founder, Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. Rawlings is a polemic character in Ghanaian society, as one interviewee said, you may hate him, but you know he can’t go away (Sheikh Interview). The era under Rawlings control became known as a period of disregard for human life, liberty and property, and it remains an indisputable fact that the NDC party was formed and nurtured around the charisma of Rawlings. The NPP attempted to paint Atta Mills as a puppet of Rawlings and also to exploit Rawlings’ military legacy to discredit the NDC during the 2008 campaign.\textsuperscript{42} The NPP tried to exploit the perception of the NDC as a party that will “do things with violence” rather than a party of democrats.

Despite its colored history and connection to Rawlings’ PNDC, the NDC is perceived to have won the 2008 contest because they were more “in touch” with the people than the NPP. The NDC is viewed as having conducted a significant amount of on-the-ground campaigning, while the NPP is associated with hosting big extravagant rallies. Many interviewees voiced dissatisfaction with the way in which the NPP was

\textsuperscript{41} Some interviewees felt the NPP did not pay attention to whether their polling agents had been bought off and that their lack of presence at polling stations allowed for intimidation tactics to be used by other parties. This was a problem in the Volta region, the stronghold of the NDC, specifically.
\textsuperscript{42} Of particular controversy was Rawlings orchestration of the infamous and violent political execution of eight prominent military leaders and former heads of state on June 4, 1979.
conducting business while in power. Voters were discouraged by excessive spending on a new presidential palace as well as the last minute efforts by the NPP to drop fuel prices and to free imprisoned taxi drivers – voters felt that these were cheap efforts to “buy” their votes at the last minute. The excessive campaign spending by the NPP was damaging because people saw the wealth as coming from the state at a time when the ordinary Ghanaian felt that they did not have “cash in their own pockets.” The NDC was very successful in bringing attention to the scandals and corruption of the sitting NPP government and feeding the dissatisfaction of the electorate.

In the days following the December 28 run-off vote, many felt Ghana was on the brink of breakdown. What occurred during this period will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four on Civil Society. Critical, however, to the discussion on party behavior is that the run-off was too close to call and a tiebreaker vote was scheduled for Tain. The vote in Tain became known as the “third election” or the “kingmaker” election (Christian Council Election Report 2009, 29). The announcement seemed to break the tension (discussed in Chapter Four) as it shifted the focus from the announcement of results to the pending vote. The chairman of the EC had met with both parties to make the decision to go to Tain, and he says that both parties agreed. He described the NDC as disappointed, yet agreeable because they were confident they would win based on the fact

43 After the December 28, 2008 run-off, the NDC had 50.13% of the total vote and the NPP gathered 49.87% of the total vote; neither party captured the constitutionally required 50+1. Tain is a small district created in June 2004 comprised of 53,890 voters in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The Tain district was unable to participate in the December 28 run-off vote due to “political violence” between party supporters, which resulted in the burning of the district Electoral Commission office on December 12, 2008. Due to the closeness of the run-off and the fact that there was no clear winner, the EC scheduled a vote in Tain for January 2, 2009. In order for the NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo to win the presidency from the vote at Tain, he would have had to get votes from 45,799 (85%) of the total voters. From: “Tain, the final theatre for the presidency.” MyJoyOnline, 1 January 2009: http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/200901/24529.asp.
they had won the Tain seat in the first round. The NPP was still holding out hope that they could win or at the very least it would give time to investigate claims of fraud in the Volta region.

At this juncture, the behavior of the NPP became particularly desperate. While both parties are viewed as having pulled out all the stops and having participated in fraudulent activity, the NPP actions are reported to have turned voters off (Emmanuel Interview). In the days following the run-off, the NPP was viewed as acting in a particularly desperate manner when they filed an ex parte injunction in court to prevent the Chairman of the EC from announcing the election results. The story of the injunction was accidentally leaked to the media, and the shifty efforts of the NPP only strengthened public opinion against them (Sully Interview). After word of the injunction reached the press, prominent NPP leaders spoke out against the attempt to file an injunction against the EC because “it raises an awkward constitutional issue and if it comes out would not be good for the party nor the country.” (Da Rocha Interview).

To add insult to injury, the NPP decided in the end not to participate in the Tain election despite its initial agreement to do so. The NPP sent the message of “No Volta, No Vote.” (CODEO Report 2009, 104), and withheld party agents while encouraging

44 Fraudulent activity includes but is not limited to: bussing voters from one region to the next, paying and bringing in both minors and foreigners to vote, buying local election officials, giving out monies and goods in exchange for votes, etc.

45 NPP party representatives mainly cite security as the reason for not participating at Tain. The then President Kufuor allegedly started out toward Tain, but turned back at the last minute. Some speculate that the ruling administration had lost control of the military at this point and therefore feared for their safety. A prominent leader within the NPP said, “the NDC are not people to take lightly unless you want it to turn into a bloody battleground. There were rumors that NDC sent to Tain various thugs and machomen. I can’t say if it’s true, but in the face of the threat, I am not sure why there were not polling agents, the truth is that seat is not normally ours….Tain is a remote place and Rawlings was there with his ideologues, and it was not worth risking life to go there.” (See IEA interview). He goes on to say, “It is important that both sides realize that putting the country in confusion is a benefit to no one.” Other interviewees spoke of how the police/military checked everyone entering the district, and several NPP vehicles and government vehicles were found to possess weapons. See CHRAJ Report and CODEO Reports.
voters not to exercise their franchise. The NPP cited security concerns on the ground and it is reported that both President Kufuor and NPP candidate Akufo-Addo turned back after having started out for Tain on the day of the election.\textsuperscript{46} The co-founding chairman of the NPP denied that the NPP had told people not to vote in Tain, however, he acknowledged there was little chance the NPP would win the election based on Tain. He said it was remote, and people knew Rawlings was there. Therefore, it did not make sense to risk lives over it. He also stated he was close to the president and that the president was “frozen.”\textsuperscript{47}

While the motivations are not entirely clear, what is documented is that while there were NDC party agents widely present, the NPP was almost completely absent with the exception of one party agent from the NPP that showed up to a polling station, but is reported to have left before the close of the day.\textsuperscript{48} It is alleged that the NPP let “the last constituency go because they had wrongly gone to court. They should have challenged the work of the EC after the election, but they took it to court first. They realized that they had made a mistake and thought that backing out would have stopped the election” (Gerry and Seth interview).

The inauguration and handing over of power from the NPP President, John Kufuor, to NDC’s John Atta Mills took place on January 7, 2009. Nana Akufo-Addo was present at the event to symbolize his recognition of Atta Mills as Ghana’s next president. Though Akufo-Addo accepted the election results, he did not concede to the NDC. The behind-the-scenes mediation that helped maintain peace will be discussed in further detail

\textsuperscript{46} (see MyJoyOnline: \url{http://news.myjoyonline.com/elections/200901/24552.asp})
\textsuperscript{47} Da Rocha Interview.
\textsuperscript{48} CODEO Report.
in Chapter Four on Civil Society. A CODEO board member said, “we were all very relieved when it was over. If you didn’t give in, it wasn’t easy and it was painful and hard, but the consequences would have been worse.” (Gabiana Interview).

*Trends from 2008: Bad Behavior, Bad Politics?*

The 2008 election experience illustrates that there are still gaps in the democratic culture and behaviors of major political parties in Ghana. Weaknesses in party organization and behavior emerged at every stage of the electoral process and from the inside out. From the selection of candidates, to campaigning, and to behaviors at the polling stations, intolerance and intimidation have been and remain the norm behaviors of Ghana’s dominant parties.\(^{49}\) Buying of votes\(^{50}\) and registration of minors and foreigners will undoubtedly become more difficult as the electorate ‘rises up and wises up’ to the electoral process.\(^{51}\) The 2008 experience also showed that the Ghanaian voter, civil society, and existing democratic institutions are becoming stronger, more knowledgeable of what to expect, and are seeking ways to hold parties accountable for their actions. In

\(^{49}\) Machomen are large muscle men hired by parties to hang around the polling stations in order to intimidate voters. An observer from IDEG recounted this story from the 2008 election: “I took a minute off [from observing] to go back to IDEG where an information hotline had been set up to collect, manage and feed information to the press. While I was away apparently a group of machomen arrived and an official when I returned told me ‘we are in trouble, they are going to steal the ballot box.’ We had to call the police who were at the police-monitoring center and persist until they arrived. This happened during the main election and the police were very well organized and non-partisan, because they could not afford to be partisan because too many people around were watching and talking.’” (Kwame Interview)

\(^{50}\) The head of the Christian Council attended the Inter-Party Advisory Council meetings as an observer throughout the 2008 election cycle. He said that at one particular IPAC meeting, the members of parliament (MPs) present asked the Electoral Chairman to push forward the opening of voter registration before the selection of the MPs. They did not give their reasoning and so the Chairman refused to change the electoral calendar. Only later did the observer learn that MPs no longer want to have to spend the money to get people out to register, because with the secrecy of the vote it does not necessarily guarantee a vote, but also because it is becoming unaffordable. (Fred Interview).

\(^{51}\) Sheikh interview regarding how NDC told voters to “rise up and wise up” to the ploys of the NPP and not fall for cheap tactics such as a last minute lowering of gas prices despite high world prices, etc.
2008, they voted out the NPP because they were dissatisfied and selected the party that seemed more in tune with their needs.

Because the presidency is a highly sought after ‘prize’ it encourages anti-democratic behaviors from political actors and parties. As a member of the West African Network for Peace said:

Both parties were bent on winning. By that I mean they would do anything, anything to win. The one in power didn’t want to go out and those out of power wanted in. They both had experience being out of power, and because in Ghanaian politics are winner takes all, there was a lot of tension around the transition and being out of power -- a lot of tension from unkempt promises to each other from previous administrations. The last administration, the NPP, didn’t keep promises to the NDC and it appears that the NDC is now doing the same thing. This is where we need to work as civil society and religious organizations to focus on transition (Fred Interview).

While the main political cleavages have proven to be robust in surviving several republics, the 2008 experience shows the destructive consequences of an on and off history of criminalizing political parties and alternation between civilian and military rule. The 2008 experience exposed internal weaknesses of party organization and a lack of respect on the part of the parties themselves for the rules of democracy.

A representative from the Ebert Stifting Foundation whose work promoted a transparent and open relationship between political parties and the EC pointed out that: “the turnover rate is so high in parties that the parties are not building up the party talent.”52 There appears to be an opportunity to enrich the democracy in Ghana through strengthening democracy within parties. Stronger, more democratic parties may be better equipped to campaign and govern effectively in the future.

Unfortunately, the indications since the 2008 election are showing the same

52 Samuel Interview.
patterns of malicious treatment and intolerance persisting between parties since the NDC took power in January 2009. The continuing feud between the current administration and former President Kufuor has been public and well documented internationally. As the editors of *Democracy Watch*, a publication put out by the Center for Democratic Development-Ghana said, “the real test of democratic statesmanship is in how those who hold power use it in dealing with their friends and foes.”

While the Fourth Republic has been applauded for its longevity, stability and peaceful elections, the 2008 experience demonstrates that the political parties in Ghana have yet to fully embrace democracy. As Staffan Lindberg points out, “democracy can be installed without democrats, but it cannot be consolidated without them.” (279). He says that political actors must learn to ‘love’ democracy, before it can truly become the only game in town. Still there is much work left to turn bad behaviors and bad politics into a genuine love of democracy in Ghana.

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53 Democracy Watch 28 2009, 2.
Chapter Three: On Institutions

Elections are taking on a new meaning within the African political context (and) may eventually provide the key to establishing an African-derived formula for constructive political participation.

--Naomi Chazan (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, 141)

Ghana lives up to its reputation as a beacon of hope for democracy because it has shown significant progress in building institutions and creating a solid foundation for democracy since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1993. The Ghana Electoral Commission is considered one of the best across Africa led by Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan since 1993. Ghana’s EC is set up as an autonomous electoral management body, and yet its work is meant to be supplemented and supported by additional constitutionally-created bodies such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Ghana Peace Council (GPC). The 2008 election showed that Ghana’s EC requires the support of other institutions to carry out its work, but the lack of resources and perhaps

54 Seala Interview.
55 The EC was inaugurated in August 1993, following the passage of the Electoral Commission Act of 1993 (Act 451); this Act was passed following deep mistrust regarding the first civilian election of the Fourth Republic in 1992. (Democracy and Political Participation, 58). The current EC Chairman, Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, initially served on the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) as well as working on drafts for what eventually became the current Ghana constitution (Afari-Gyan 2009, 1).
56 Shaheen Mozaffar provides guidelines as to how to classify electoral management bodies (EMBs) in Africa. His framework suggests that “four related variables are likely to affect the choice of EMBS in Africa's emerging democracies: (1) the institutional legacies of colonial rule; key indicator (2) the political legacies of postcolonial authoritarian regimes; (3) ethno political cleavages defining the power relations and institutional preferences of key political actors; and (4) the resulting political negotiations over the institutional design of the EMBS as reflected in their relative autonomy from the government” (2002, 90). In addition, he states that: “Electoral Governance in African democracies fits within a three-fold typology of (1) non-autonomous EMBS located within the formal government bureaucracy, (2) semi-autonomous EMBS located within the formal government bureaucracy but under the supervision of an autonomous body established specifically for that purpose, and (3) autonomous EMBS otherwise also known as independent electoral commissions” (Mozaffar 2002, 90).
57 The NPC is still in the process of being officially adopted into the constitution.
willingness has limited the capacity of these mechanisms to sufficiently foment the efforts of the EC.

Democratic Bodies Born of the Constitution

The NCCE was created to increase voter education, but it is not perceived to be a very successful nor effective institution. Several interviewees seem to think more could be done by the NCCE and that limited resources have prevented its effectiveness. The NCCE has offices and staff throughout the country, but as one CODEO observer pointed out the work of the NCCE is often seasonal due to a lack of resources and that voter education should be continuous and not simply an activity conducted during election years (Sheikh Interview). Ideally, the NCCE would continually educate voters; however, it currently does not.

The Ghanaian system is set up so that voters hold a large amount of responsibility for ensuring a transparent and fraud-free electoral process, but if voters do not realize it, they cannot fulfill their duties and the system becomes compromised. Ghana’s parties have used both poverty and ignorance to manipulate the democratic process. In 2008, an example of this occurred during the voter registration exercise. It is the responsibility of community members, not the registration employee, to challenge alien or minor voters, but many people are either uninformed or afraid to carry out their civic responsibilities, which has time and again proven to compromise the integrity of the electoral process in Ghana’s democratic history.

58 Alien voters refer to the bussing in of foreigners or people from other regions to vote illegally. Minor voters are those under 18 years of age.
Another example of inadequate voter education occurred during the first round of voting when there was confusion in regions of the North\(^5^9\) on how to vote. Typically Ghanaians vote by stamping their thumb, hence the significance behind the slogan the “power of the thumb.”\(^6^0\) Many voters thought that the ink put on the forefinger to prevent multiple voting was supposed to be used to cast their vote. When people entered the voting booth, the ink had already dried, and their finger left no mark on the ballot. This confusion led to a high rate of spoilt ballots in the first round.\(^6^1\) After looking into the reasons behind the rate of spoilt ballots in the North, the EC along with the media started a campaign to explain proper voting procedures (Kwadwo Interview), which lowered the rate of spoilt ballots in the run-off vote.\(^6^2\) The total rate of spoilt ballots in the first round was 2.37%, which could have made a difference in the outcome of the extremely close election. This attests to the importance of the work by the NCCE to improve democracy through voter education.

Despite the efforts of the NCCE, there still appears to be a general lack of understanding in basic voting procedures not to mention civic responsibilities in Ghana. In this sense, civic and political participation appears to be somewhat of an elite and exclusionary activity. This claim is further confirmed by a 2008 AfroBarometer report that shows that many Ghanaians report never having engaged in civic activities. Of those

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\(^{5^9}\) Northern regions include: Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions.

\(^{6^0}\) Ghanaians vote with their thumb, and therefore it has come to be regarded as the power of the thumb. One interviewee said, “At the very least they [Ghanaians] understand the power of the thumb and if they don’t get what they want they can vote them out.”

\(^{6^1}\) In terms of spoilt ballots, there were 3.57% in Northern, 4.17% in Upper East, and 5.05% in Upper West regions. These numbers were significantly higher than the national average of 2.37%. Data comes from the official election results released from the EC.

\(^{6^2}\) In the second round of voting spoilt ballots decreased in these three regions significantly to 1.71% in Northern, 1.98% in Upper East, and 2.10% in Upper West regions. Overall, the national average of spoilt ballots was decreased to 1.0% of ballots cast.
asked, 43% reported having never attended a civic meeting and 46% said they had never joined others to raise issues (Bratton and Mattes 2009). Perhaps even more indicative of the elite group that dominate politics in Ghana are the statistics that show less than 10% of Ghanaians have reported attending a democratic or protest march, less than 25% believe citizens are responsible to ensure that parliamentarians do their job, and less than 28% believe citizens are responsible to ensure that the president does his job (Gyimah-Boadi 2009, 144). This data is an affront to democratic governance.

There is clear gap in the civic education being provided and that which is necessary. Several interviewees, including NCCE staff members, claim that the NCCE was under-resourced and therefore limited in conducting educational activities around the 2008 election. However, it seems the NCCE was able to use resources to conduct a poll projecting the NDC to win the election (Kabila Interview), which makes one wonder whether or not they are truly under-resourced or chooses to use their resources in other ways. In 2008, education efforts of the NCCE were augmented by efforts from civil society, members of the media, and religious organizations, who realized the unmet need for education and viewed voter education as a mechanism to counter-balance efforts by political parties to manipulate the electoral process.

Another institution developed to build democracy, but also said to be under-resourced, is the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). It was created in the constitution to investigate and take cases that violate human rights and freedoms. Considering Ghana’s historical legacy of repressive military authoritarian regimes, the CHRAJ is an important facet of civilian democratic rule. It is an attempt to break away from a past of disrespect for human life. While the CHRAJ is viewed as "one
of the most effective and vital such institutions on the African continent being unafraid to speak out and criticize the government when necessary.”\textsuperscript{63} they too appear to lack resources, have a limited ability to respond to complaints and require, but do not always receive the cooperation of security institutions to enforce their court rulings (Christian Council Election Report 2008).

\textit{Ghana’s Electoral Commission}

Beyond the CHRAJ and the NCCE, the Ghana Electoral Commission (EC) is arguably the most effective and well-developed institution in the 2008 Ghanaian election story. Ghanaians feared that the 2008 elections would lead to violent protest like those in Kenya. The independence of the EC in Ghana proved to be a critical difference from that of the EC in Kenya. As opposed to the Kenyan EC, where the power is concentrated in the executive,\textsuperscript{64} the Ghanaian constitution creates a legal framework that gives clear and sovereign authority to the EC. The key offices have tenure, the EC has control over hiring, and the chairman can propose ‘subsidiary legislation to enhance its work. Moreover while the parliament must approve the EC budget, the organization is independent with checks from the judiciary and the auditor general (Afari-Gyan 2009).

The current Chairman of the EC was put in place by the NDC government in 1992 and has served under both NDC and NPP governments. While both major parties accused the EC of bias during the 2008 election contributing to tensions, it appears that it may also have reinforced the democratic process. As one interviewee says, “it is a good thing at the end of the day, when both sides are accusing you of favoring the other - it

\textsuperscript{63} Open Society Institute Network 2007.
\textsuperscript{64} Seala Interview.
proves your neutrality” (Ruby Interview). According to the Chairman himself, the EC is based on both transparency and verifiability, which is ensured by process rather than the people employed by the EC. He did say that it is impossible to ensure that EC workers on the ground remain neutral, as that is the responsibility of the parties and their polling agents. The accusations against the EC from both parties throughout the 2008 campaign appear to have been political strategy, but post-fact there is general consensus that the EC is a fully independent body.

The independence of an electoral management body has reinforcing effects on democracy, according to Lindberg. The staff of independent electoral management bodies realizes that their careers and status are linked to the upholding of the rules of the game, and therefore a legitimately independent commission such as that in Ghana has pro-democratic tendencies (2006, 108-9). There is evidence that Lindberg is correct, as there have been significant improvements in electoral management, which has improved the quality of elections since the creation of the Ghana EC in 1993. Because the EC is closely watched by civil society, held up as exemplary throughout the continent and charged with its own human resources management responsibilities, the temptation to capitulate in favor of either party has diminished over the years.

Ghana’s most important achievements since it’s most recent return to democracy are undoubtedly related to electoral management. Some examples include the following: after the 1992 founding election, ballot boxes were made transparent rather than opaque; party polling agents were introduced; and the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC) was created to engage parties in dialogue with the EC following the NPP boycott of the 1992 election. In addition, there was a demand for voter identification cards prior to the 1996
election, and as a result urban populations received photo IDs and rural populations received thumbprint IDs. By 2000, there were photo IDs universally available (Awudu Interview). Following the 2008 election, civil society and the EC have been discussing the need to improve the registration process\textsuperscript{65} through electronic registration, which the commissioner believes will be in place by the 2012 election. Electronic registration will enable the EC to eliminate multiple voting and dispel the controversy surrounding party manipulation of the register (Kwadwo Interview). As an IDEG political researcher noted: “everything to do with elections and violence begins with the register.” (Ruby Interview).

One of the main innovations of electoral management in Ghana is the Inter-Party Advisory Council. The IPAC is a non-statutory body that provides a standing forum for political parties and the EC to meet on a regular basis. IPAC meetings allow the EC to explain the electoral process and give parties the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns. An environment is created that allows everyone to work together to solve problems; civil society and donor organizations are permitted to attend, but cannot participate in IPAC meetings, while the media is not allowed. No official minutes are kept during IPAC meetings; according to the Chairman, any party can call an IPAC meetings at any time.

In 1996, the EC and political parties developed a code of conduct for political parties through the IPAC. The code of conduct was introduced during the 2000 election (Open Society Institute Network 2007). Unfortunately, though, the IPAC lacks the legal

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\textsuperscript{65} Overall, the new voter registration exercise was deemed ‘inadequate’ in the election observation report issued by CODEO. The violence, unpreparedness, and chaos of the exercise not only served as warnings of the behaviors to be expected from the upcoming elections, but also provided political parties with an opportunity to create doubt around the work of the EC. The voter registration exercise will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Four on civil society.
mechanisms to enforce the code of conduct and interviewees complained that the parties do not abide by it.

The IPAC has succeeded in opening communication and allowing the commissioner and the parties to get to know each other. The Chairman said he has come to expect what will be said by the two major parties, but he touts the value of participation by smaller parties because as he says they “are the intervening factor oftentimes between the NPP and NDC” (Kwadwo Interview). A criticism of the IPAC is that “consensus has not always emerged, suspicion and mistrust surrounding the work of the commission have not completely dissolved, a sense of common ownership of the electoral system and process has not emerged and controversy over election outcomes persists” (Afari-Gyan 2009). More important than its limitations is the fact that the IPAC opens dialogue between critical agents in Ghana’s democracy, and perhaps over time trust and transparency will emerge. To improve the effectiveness of the IPAC, the Chairman said he would like to see civil society organizations permitted to participate in future IPAC forums rather than sit on the sidelines.

While there have been many notable changes made in electoral management since Ghana’s return to democracy, perhaps the most important achievement of the EC is attaining ballot secrecy. Throughout the 2008 election period, it was confirmed that Ghanaians believe in the power of the thumb. The Commissioner joked about a poster he saw that said, “Who says politicians are afraid of money? They should be afraid of thumb power.” A researcher looking at spoilt ballots in Ghana from the CDD-Ghana said:

You can go to the community prior to Election Day, you can buy up the voter card, you can send their children to school, you can bury their dead for them hoping that in doing that, and you will get their vote. But the day comes and they decide. Because it is so secret a process, they know
you will not know how they voted and only god will know. Therefore, I will vote the way I feel I should vote. I may be wearing your t-shirt and go and vote differently. That is what is great about our system (John Interview).

However, the secrecy of the ballot is not meaningful unless people fully realize it; that requires voter education. As Lindberg and Morrison rightly state, “a secret ballot box is a secret ballot box and as long as that fundamental right is ensured, vote-buying politicians have few possibilities to control whether the voter honours the bargain” (2005). Despite the secrecy of the Ghanaian ballot, political parties continued to employ vote-buying tactics in 2008, which attests to the need for continued voter education. The secrecy of the ballot may in the future dissuade politicians from attempting to buy the vote, but unless people understand the importance of a secret ballot, fraudulent practices commonly used by Ghana’s political parties, will continue to threaten the integrity of electoral outcomes and diminish the power of the thumb.

Both the Chairman and others interviewed are adamant that Ghana still has work to do toward solidifying democratic values and processes. The most pressing issues are clearing up the chaos and controversy over electoral activities such as that of registration, improving voter education, and reducing the numbers of spoilt ballots. However, all of these efforts will be in vain should there be no improvement in the behaviors exhibited by political parties and supporters. Improvements in electoral management must be accompanied by the “abatement of intolerance, the improvement of Ghanaian political culture depends on it.” (Gyimah-Boadi 2009, 150).

In terms of conflict resolution, the importance of the independence of the EC cannot be overemphasized. As Morrison explains, “the independence of the Electoral Commission allows it to assume tasks that routinely cause interparty conflict.” (2004,
While interviewees gave the EC some credit for prevention of violence, the commissioner said the EC was not part of diffusing tension, but was available to monitor the system. Instead, it “was civil society and religion-based organizations that managed conflict.” Therefore, managing tension required an additional third party to mediate between the EC and political parties. This came from civil society and will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter Four: Civil Society

In Ghana, civil society provides a haven for democracy. It is growing much more engaging and competes in the role of opposition with the government. Civil society picks up the slack for the government and is therefore with power. The voices of the masses are expressed through civil society.

--Seala Interview

According to political scientist Sherri Berman, civil society can be both detrimental to the development of democracy or a potential deterrent from it. During the 2008 elections, Ghana’s civil society proved instrumental to the democratic process. Amidst heightened anxieties and more general doubts about the validity of elections in Africa, Ghana’s civil society provided a trusted alternative force to the anti-democratic behaviors of political parties and eliminated doubts about the neutrality of the EC. The civil society coalition known as the CFI, scaled up efforts at a critical juncture in the electoral process to ensure a peaceful election outcome.

Since the 1980s, Ghana has seen the emergence of a “strong associational culture and a vibrant civil society” (Ninsin 2007, 5). Civil society organizations were already working to improve Ghana’s democracy and push for peace long before the 2008 election year, but the influence of their efforts became known after the 2008 experience. As tension mounted throughout the campaign, civil society organizations merged efforts to

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66 Berman’s work, Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic, discusses the fall of the Weimar Republic in which civil society thrived amidst weak political parties and institutions; civil organizations came to serve as a breeding ground for Nazi training camps and ultimately proved to promote non-democratic values. She argues civil society can work against democracy as much as it can promote it.

67 As explained in the introduction, I define civil society as “voluntary associations and organizations formally outside of the state and political parties that have united over a common set of objectives.”

68 In the days following the run-off election held on December 28, 2008, the electorate became increasingly anxious as they awaited the election results. At one point, NDC supporters gathered outside the EC compound having been encouraged to do so by NDC party adherents spreading fear about the NPP as the incumbent manipulating the results. Some interviewees said and the media confirmed that as many as 20,000 people gathered outside the EC, and engaged in behaviors such as throwing sticks and stones at the building.
create a broad-based coalition and strengthen their pro-democracy efforts. The key organizations involved were: the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), the Friedrich Ebert Stifting Foundation, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), the Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA), the West African Network for Peace (WANEP), Ghana’s Christian Council (CC) and the African Elections Project (AEP).

Civil society representatives in Ghana reported that they began tailoring their agenda to that of the 2008 elections as early as the beginning of the year. Many cited their reasoning to be based on concerns about the recent election experience in Kenya as well as the violence that took place during the selection of the NPP presidential candidate. Interviewees from civil society believed the conditions in Ghana were conducive for conflict based on past experiences. Civil society organizations offered voter education to supplement the efforts of the NCCE, prepared for election observation missions and organized a plethora of opportunities for interaction between the public, the EC, and the political parties in order to dispel myths and create trust in the electoral process. Underlying all of this work, it appears theirs was a shared goal: to ensure peace throughout the 2008 election cycle.

As electoral activities opened, members of civil society noticed and began to address the hurdles that emerged from the electoral process. This type of anticipatory mobilization is first noticeable around the new voter registration exercise, which was

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69 The CDD-Ghana partners with IDASA in South Africa and Michigan State University to release the Afrobarometer report, which measures African’s attitudes on political, social and economic, issues facing Africa.
70 GII is the local chapter of Transparency International.
scheduled to take place in May 2008, but was postponed. At this point, technocrats from civil society became aware that this postponement and change in the electoral calendar had created confusion surrounding the motivation for the change. Interviewees said there were fears that alterations in the schedule signified that the EC was susceptible to pressures from the incumbent NPP.

Adding to the tension about the registration exercise, the EC had incorrectly and publicly declared that they anticipated the registration of one million new voters based on the quantity of 18-year olds in the country (Samuel Interview). However, the numbers were nearly double those they had expected. It became evident that either the EC was wrong or that the parties were making efforts to manipulate the register. The controversy surrounding the expected patronage heightened nerves regarding the credibility of the exercise and more broadly, the capacity of the electoral commission to conduct its work.

The NDC was hyper-alert to the incumbency advantage around the registration, and employed alarmist tactics that became evident with registration exercise. Such tactics were used to discredit the independence of the EC. It was perceived that any manipulation of the EC would be in favor of the incumbent party. The advantage of the incumbency is a sensitive topic during elections in Africa, and the EC having misjudged the turnout of new voters, provided an opportunity for the NDC to exploit the potential for such an advantage.

The new voter exercise was rescheduled for and occurred between July 31 and August 12, 2008. It was opened ‘in the spirit of transparency’ according to one

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71 The company hired by the EC to take photos for the ID cards did not have the proper technology to accomplish the task. The equipment had to be ordered and did not arrive in time for the originally scheduled exercise, and hence it was postponed (Kwadwo Interview).
interviewee (Ruby Interview) with amnesty given to those who had been illegally registered previously if they were to come forward and remove their name from the list. The exercise proved problematic, and the tension that was created only grew as the electoral process unfolded.

In addition to the misgivings leading up to the exercise, the new voter registration was not without ‘serious administrative bottlenecks’ (CODEO 2009, 14).\footnote{CODEO Report page 14-15. CODEO called the exercise “inadequate” due to severe administrative bottlenecks, lack of security, too many party agents (with interference) and incidences of violence in Greater Accra, Northern Region, and Ashanti rooted in accusation of minor voting. Additionally, several interviewees criticized the EC for speculating as to how many voters were expected; when these numbers were exceeded significantly, it raised concerns about acts of fraud and bloating the registry. (See Samuel interview).} The turnout being higher than anticipated meant that the EC was under-prepared and it greatly impacted patrons. A CODEO election observer described the registration exercise as follows:

The registration of new voters was totally overwhelming with the amount of young people. I am not sure where they all came from. My daughter, she is 28-years old, [and she] was so excited. It was her first time ever to vote (she is a PhD student in the States). The day was chaotic. There were so many people and the numbers were overwhelming. It seems the EC began to wonder because when they came back from the EC, they had expected numbers in their heads and they projected the number of 18-year olds. They thought they had some idea of what to expect especially considering the first exercise [voter ID replacement was poorly attended]. I went with my daughter who had already gone on day one and day two. I went on the third day and I couldn’t believe the line. (Gabiana Interview)

The disruption and long lines of the exercise caused disenchantment by those unable to register to vote.

In addition to logistical challenges, there were sporadic incidents of violence at registration centers. There is one particular account of gunshots that were fired during registration in Tamale, according to an August 1, 2008 report by JoyFM Online and later
confirmed in an interview with the MP from that area. There was violence throughout the country as well and the disputes that occurred in Ashanti, Greater Accra and the Northern regions were all said to be rooted in accusations of minor registration; conflict was further amplified by a lack of security and too many party agents who were interfering in the process (CODEO 2009, 15).

Following the exercise, the NDC continued its tactic to create awareness around the work of the EC. They announced that the registry in the Ashanti region, considered the ‘world bank’ of the ruling NPP, was bloated. These accusations became a point of contention between the parties and the NDC and the EC. Distrust in the process became a ‘strategic resource’ used by the NDC throughout the remainder of the electoral contest to cause a ‘snowball affect at creating mistrust in the process and the EC’ (Kwame Interview).

Overall, the new voter registration exercise was deemed ‘inadequate’ in the election observation report issued by CODEO. The violence, unpreparedness, and chaos of the exercise created uneasiness that grew throughout the remainder of the electoral year. It also provided the NDC with an opportunity to create doubt around the work of the EC. Civil society organizations saw the interplay between the parties and the EC and read the mood and frustration of the electorate as signals of upcoming problems. Civil society groups had already begun their 2008 election programming, but following the problems with the registration they intensified their efforts to address the growing skepticism surrounding the credibility of the upcoming elections. Much of their efforts focused on the register, cleaning it up, and regaining the confidence of the electorate (See Appendix 8 CFI Press Release for more detail).
As one researcher from the IDEG pointed out, “it was clear to everyone that we were headed for trouble. Even the language of the campaigns was hostile and combative. Everyone became nervous and civil society had to intervene” (Kwame Interview). The organized response had emerged by late August in a coalition of civil society organizations led by IDEG, known as the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI). As one election observation report stated, the “joint efforts were aimed at strengthening the voice and participation of civil society in a growing but fragile democracy.” (Christian Council Report 2009, 37). IDEG already had programs related to national cohesion, peace, and understanding the political platforms through lectures and talks. However, through their work, IDEG realized that people were talking, and this talk was leading to tension; politicians were saying a lot and it became apparent that more effort was needed to hold politicians accountable.\(^{73}\)

The CFI sought to engage a broad-based coalition of organizations with various competencies to promote peaceful elections. There were doubts expressed initially as to how the CFI, which formalized in October 2008, was any different than the work already being done (Ruby Interview). Yet, the CFI did become a unified and trusted voice and did not contribute to the chaos and noise already being made by political parties and the media. Civil society technocrats strategized and communicated cohesively through respected religious leaders under the umbrella of the CFI, expanding their efforts, and becoming critical in the final days of the election.

Interviewees viewed the “tension” as being highest in the period that followed the first election on December 7, 2008. The run-off vote was held on the 28\(^{th}\) of December, 73 Ruby Interview.
but many felt that pressure peaked as the Ghanaian electorate waited for the EC to announce the results of the vote. There was a delay in the announcement because the margin between the NPP and NDC was so close.\textsuperscript{74}

The media contributed to the tension at this point. Radio stations started reporting on December 29 that the NDC and NPP had met with the EC at the Head Office and had disagreed over results from Volta and Ashanti regions — the media reporting caused great tension (Christian Council Election Report 2009, 63). Additionally several interviewees mentioned a set of figures from Kumasi (the NPP stronghold), which were altered after coming into the EC (Gabiana and Emmanuel Interviews).

A CODEO election observer, who was at the Kofi Annan Peace Center watching the tabulation of returns, felt that Ghana was at this point on the “verge of getting to a state of emergency because tension had mounted and the EC had been besieged by NDC supporters” (Sheikh Interview). The NDC were so confident they had won the election and the figures were in their favor that they became hyper-alert not to allow any manipulation to take place. The NDC took matters into their own hands and as one civil society representative said “at a certain point, the NDC started to play a psychological brimstone” (Samuel Interview). This is when NDC supporters were said to have “besieged the EC.”\textsuperscript{75} There were a reported nearly 20,000 NDC supporters who

\textsuperscript{74} The NDC led following the run-off on December 28, 2008 by a mere 23,055 votes.

\textsuperscript{75} The commissioner’s impression of the “besieging” of the EC is as follows: “The first time it happened I didn’t even know. I was in my room here. Someone called me and told me to turn on the TV and I did and I saw them. The first it was the NDC and I didn’t even realize they were there. The second time maybe the following day it was the NPP and I went down and saw them and they [security] had me leave through another door, but the police controlled them and didn’t allow them into the building, they were confined to the street. They threw some stones into the yard, but it wasn’t besieged and the police were here so they stayed out in the street, but people who were watching on TV saw the big sticks and heard the noise. If you were my friend and saw it, you would be nervous, but I didn’t even know. The police kept them at bay.”
gathered outside the EC as vigilantes. Ghanaians feared that violence, rioting, and looting was going to erupt.

At this point, a great deal of behind the scenes work was taking place through the CFI. Cardinal Appiah Turkson, a prominent Catholic leader and chair of the National Peace Council, having been engaged and briefed by the CFI, urged the public to stay calm. Meanwhile leaders of the CFI met with both candidates throughout the night of the 29th to “find opportunities to bring about calm and peaceful resolution to the emerging crisis” (Christian Council Election Report 2009, 63). The president and the EC Chairman were both approached the following morning.

The result of the meetings was that both candidates agreed to accept the results announced by the EC, both pledged to support transparency, and agreed to ask their supporters to remain calm (Emmanuel Interview). Throughout the meetings, both parties recognized the need for dialogue between them and the mediators that participated from civil society to facilitate communication.

Mediation efforts gave the EC time and space to continue with its work. By the 30th of December, the EC announced that the election results were too close to call and that they would hold a tiebreaker vote in Tain on January 2, 2009. The commissioner said that the pending vote in Tain would allow the EC the time to investigate the allegations of fraud.76 Many interviewees felt the announcement of Tain broke the tension, and focused the energy on the vote and the work at hand. Others felt that Tain gave the NPP time to accept defeat, because it was nearly mathematically impossible they could win the election based on Tain since it had strongly favored NDC in the first round.

76 http://allafrica.com/stories/200812300841.html
At this juncture the mediation efforts shifted from acceptance of results to those of transition.

The mediation appeared fine until it came out in the press that the NPP had filed an ex parte injunction in the court to prevent the EC Chairman from announcing the election results. At this point, one of the mediators said, that the mediation almost fell apart as the NDC started to doubt the trustworthiness of the CFI due to the fact that the CFI had been unaware of the NPP’s attempt to file an injunction.

The election at Tain went ahead as scheduled, but the NPP withdrew its party agents with the messaging of “No Vote, No Volta” and the NDC won unanimously. Only those behind closed doors know the details of the conversations that took place in the period between declaration of the winner and the transition of power on January 7th, but it appears that civil society had successfully convinced both the politicians and the electorate that there was no good in violence. As the one of the founding members of NPP said, “sometimes it is better to let the small things go rather than plunge the country into chaos.”

There seemed to be feelings that had the NDC not been declared the winner, they may have continued to employ tactics aimed at discrediting the validity of the results. An NPP party leader said, “The NPP accepted defeat with the slim margin of 40,000 votes, while if the table had been turned and the NPP had been declared the winner, I don’t think the NDC would have done the same” (Da Rocha Interview). This same sentiment was echoed by a one of the main mediators from civil society. He said, “It was ok

77 Da Rocha Interview.
because the truth was on their [the NDC] side, had it been the reverse, I am not sure violence could have been stopped” (Sully Interview).

Ultimately, the CFI proved to be critical in disseminating information to the media and the public as well as mediating between political parties, the sitting government and the EC. The information filtered through the CFI contributed to peace efforts because it dispelled false information as the electoral process drew to a close. The initial efforts of the CFI sought to leverage the resources and existing capacities of member organizations to undertake a massive peace and education effort. However, in the final days of the election the CFI merged into an emergency mediation body with churches. The CFI brought together democratic institutions such as the NCCE and Ghana’s Peace Council with civil society organizations as well as religious leaders. As one participant said, “it was an incredible effort to monitor, observe, and educate – it was a massive undertaking” (Ruby Interview).

Additional Contributions from Civil Society

Several civil society organizations that participated in election observation activities, along with religious groups, joined together under the umbrella of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO). CODEO and the Christian Council of Ghana (a member of CODEO) released fairly detailed reports of their election observations. CODEO conducted extensive observation during election activities, throughout the campaign and pre-election, but perhaps their most notable contribution was the introduction in 2008 of parallel vote tabulation (PVT). The PVT enabled CODEO to verify the results of the EC within 24 hours of the vote. Had there been gross manipulation of the numbers, the PVT would have caught it, and because there generally
was not, the PVT gave credibility to the results released by the EC. While there was some criticism that the average Ghanaian did not understand the PVT, it inspired confidence in the EC and provides another barrier to prevent political parties from attempting to manipulate the vote.

*The Mixed Messages of the Media*

The media was a critical facet of civil society, which both contributed to and destabilized the democratic process in 2008. The media in Ghana has proliferated and liberalized during the Fourth Republic. Today, it is a critical medium to disseminate information and provide a check and balance to the activities and results of the EC, politicians, and the state. During the 2008 election in Ghana, however, the media was criticized for contributing to and fueling tensions.

The media is at times considered the ‘fourth estate’ or the fourth pillar of key democratic institutions, but for the purposes of this paper and its partnership with the efforts of civil society, it is included in this section.

Throughout the 1990s, Ghana’s media ‘found voice in the transition to democracy’ (Gadzekpo 2008, 3). Institutions to protect and regulate the media popped up while both radio and television stations proliferated across the country. To further advance the freedom of the media, President Kufuor repealed the criminal libel law in 2001. As a result, by 2006, Ghana’s position in the Press Freedom Index rose to fourth in

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78 Gadzekpo 2008, 5.
79 The Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), National Communication Authority (NCA), and National Media Commission (NMC) all emerged as media expanded with the return to democracy. However, there is some overlap and gray area regarding the responsibilities of each body, and as Gadzekpo says, “the good media do not need them. The bad media ignores them.” (6). Today there are more than 300 newspapers registered with the NMC. Following the liberalization of the airwaves in 1996 and nationwide radio coverage starting in 1998, there are 24 TV stations and 37 FM Radio stations registered. (Gadzekpo)
Africa and 34th in the world. There is no question that the media has exploded under democracy and the freedom of the media is precisely what is being most criticized from the 2008 experience.

Throughout the election year, the media was an instrumental channel to inform the Ghanaian electorate. The debates between the presidential candidates were both televised and broadcast. Media campaigns were used to educate the illiterate on the basics of voting. These campaigns were credited with reducing spoilt ballots between the first and second round. The CFI communicated with the public via the media in a series of press releases and talks from respected religious leaders.

In the period between the first and second round of voting, television stations provided free airtime to educate voters on the electoral process in order to lower the number of spoilt ballots from the first round. The media coordinated efforts with religious and civil society leaders to promote peace as well. TV3 played a clip put together by the Christian Council of children in the suburbs crying out that they want peace over and over again. These activities were all viewed as strengthening democracy and providing an important check to the work of the EC and behaviors of political parties as well.

Another important contribution of the media was that of announcing the election returns as they were released, which was supposed to lessen doubts about manipulation of the figures by the EC. However, the closeness of the election magnified even the slightest error or difference in the results, fueling accusations against the EC.

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81 See Appendix 8.
82 Fred Interview.
Out of the various modes of media, the radio is deemed the most critical in that it is most widely available in local languages and can disperse information to the “highly illiterate electorate” of Ghana.\textsuperscript{83} The radio stations of Joy FM, Peace FM, Adom, and Citi FM all provided updates on voting and results. In some cases they were used as “tools in transmitting falsehoods to the public resulting in some infractions across the country.”\textsuperscript{84} In terms of television, the channels TV Africa, Metro TV, TV3 and Net 2 TV disseminated a great deal of electoral information to the electorate as well.\textsuperscript{85}

According to interviewees and election reports, the media primarily covered the two major parties. There were complaints by members of minority parties about the lack of fair coverage,\textsuperscript{86} and one observation report said that the NPP had more airtime during peak hours than did the NDC.\textsuperscript{87} Despite some inequality of coverage, the media provided an important mechanism for reaching and spreading information to a wide gamut of Ghanaian society.

Consequently, the media was also criticized for contributing to the tension. Media outlets were accused of sensationalizing the campaign, using ‘incendiary’ language and hosting ‘vitiolic broadcasts.’\textsuperscript{88} RadioGold, known for its NDC leanings, was accused of inciting voters to go out on the streets and take matters into their own hands.\textsuperscript{89} Many interviewees also felt that particular media outlets provided a platform

\textsuperscript{83} Many interviewees talked about Ghanaians as highly illiterate. According to CIA World Fact book data from 2000, nearly 57.9\% of the adult population is literate, compared to 48.7\% in Ivory Coast, 85.1\% in Kenya, and 68\% in Nigeria.
\textsuperscript{84} Christian Council Election Report 2009, Page 35.
\textsuperscript{85} IBID.
\textsuperscript{86} Henry Interview
\textsuperscript{87} Christian Council Election Report 2009, Page 35.
\textsuperscript{88} Gabiana, AEP, Simon, and Ruby Interviews.
\textsuperscript{89} Radio station RadioGold has been widely accused of inciting NDC supporters to get out on the streets, gather at the EC, and ensure that the NPP did not steal the election. One interviewee (Gabiana Interview) likened the taunts crossing the radio waves to those made in Rwanda.
(mainly in the form of call-in radio programs) to contribute to party intolerance and for misinformation to be spread. According to one newspaper owner, there was a great deal of irresponsible journalism that took place without consequence.\textsuperscript{90}

A debate appears to be emerging in Ghana between the beliefs in freedom of speech versus control of defamatory media; many interviewees toted the merit of freedom of speech as the “bedrock” of democracy, while others voiced concern about too much freedom to express negative views particularly during call-in shows. Access to information and open dialogue are fundamental to democracy and freedom of the media goes hand in hand with democracy, but the 2008 election showed that such freedom may come at the cost of nearly pushing the country into turmoil.

\textit{Relevance of Civil Society in 2008 Election}

African scholars Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz argue, “there is as yet no evidence of functionally operating civil society in Africa” (1999, 30). The critical influence of civil society during the 2008 election in Ghana directly contradicts their argument. Civil society not only expanded the efforts of Ghana’s solidifying democratic institutions, but it provided a neutral mediation mechanism when other channels of conflict resolution had been exhausted.

Chabal and Daloz argue that civil society in Africa is nothing more than a façade used by political actors to replicate the same inequalities that already exist in the political system (1999, 22-30), but this too can be disproved in that Ghana’s civil society, along

\textsuperscript{90} Ben Interview said: “Media is in bed with politicians. The corruption in media only strengthens corruption in government. People put too much weight on media. OmanFM favored the NPP and RadioGold was NDC. Mills has given appointments to people from Gold, but I think people from Gold practice irresponsible journalism and there have been no repercussions.”
with the media and extensive voter education efforts, can incorporate previously excluded populations into a political sphere that has long been reserved for the literate and elites. This is a blatant effort to engage a broader sector of Ghanaian society in the political sphere.

Beyond its mere existence, the most important contribution of civil society in 2008 was to contain high levels of tension before it escalated into violence. Interviewees credited time and again the role of civil society as well as various religious leaders in promoting peace and calm during the electoral period.

In the final days of the electoral contest, the CFI proved to be a powerful mediating voice for democracy between the major parties and the EC. The CFI filled pockets within Ghana’s fragile democratic institutions and political culture. The efforts of civil society achieved a peaceful electoral outcome. It appears that even members of the CFI did not foresee just how critical its role would become in the final days of the electoral contest. But the EC and political parties had become so clouded in the accusations being made by each of the parties that civil society and religious elites stepped in to prevent these elections from joining the growing list of failed African elections. It is difficult to say what may have occurred without the pro-democracy, pro-peace movement that emerged from civil society, but what is known is that Ghanaian politicians, in the end, agreed to play by the rules of democracy and civil society played a critical role in making this happen.
Conclusion

In a nutshell, elections will more often than not, be the way to democracy.

--Lindberg, 2006, page 20

An important condition of the 2008 Ghanaian elections that has been overshadowed by the praise for the successful election is that the period leading up to, during, and immediately after the election was rife with tension. Many of those interviewed seemed to stress the need to continue to improve the process in the future and emphasized that the very real threat for violence and conflict during the electoral process need not be overlooked. According to the EC commissioner, while the EC focused on transparency and verifiability of results, it was “civil society and religious-based organizations that managed conflict.”$^{91}$ Perhaps the most critical aspect of the civil society movement that saved the 2008 elections was that it was an endogenous collaboration of domestic actors as opposed to foreign intervention or support.

Bratton and Van de Walle point out a serious consequence of the hurried democratic transitions that swept Africa in the 90s: a failure by elite to buy into democracy. There are clear signs in Ghana that political actors remain intolerant toward one another as well as continue to inappropriately use state resources for their own personal or political gain. Bratton and Van de Walle see political elites as one of the main impediments to democracy in Africa. They write: “democracy can be installed without democrats, but it cannot be consolidated without them” (1997, 279). This paper,

$^{91}$ Kwadwo Interview.
however, illustrates that political elites and supporters in Ghana continue to engage in non-democratic behaviors, necessitating civil society to emerge as a strong and independent force during the election. Furthermore, the strength and vigor of pro-democracy and pro-peace efforts that emerged from civil society had a positive impact on Ghana’s democracy.

The movement that eventually solidified under the CFI was brought about because of problems in the political culture and throughout the electoral process. The case of Ghana confirms what Staffan I. Lindberg argues in *Democracy and Elections in Africa* in that repetitive elections, no matter how free or fair, improve democracy. Lindberg points out that elections have advantages for populations beyond the election itself; he argues that, “there is power in elections; that power propels democratization in the sense of improving the democratic qualities of parties, competition and legitimacy in society outside of the electoral sphere” (2006, 129). While the parties in Ghana still lack a genuine democratic culture, this in turn warranted an even stronger, more powerful pro-democracy movement from civil society, and hence led to improvements in democracy.

In addition to the civil society, it need not go overlooked that the Ghanaian case attests to the need for a sophisticated, well-managed, and independent Electoral Commission. While the importance of an independent EC is crucial and contributed to the peaceful outcome in 200892, this case demonstrates that this alone in 2008 would not have been enough.

92 None of the interviewees, even those representing political parties, expressed concern post-facto regarding the integrity of Ghana’s electoral process and Electoral Commission. In fact, all those interviewed attested to the independence of Ghana’s Electoral Commission and all appeared to hold a high level of respect for the Commissioner himself.
Instead, it appears that amidst a political culture that has yet to fully embrace democracy, the emergence of civil society provided the critical support necessary for the eventual success of the 2008 elections. The active and mobilized pro-peace movement from civil society augmented and reinforced the work of the EC by providing a trusted alternative to the media, the political parties, and the EC. The existence and strength of Ghana’s civil society as evident from the 2008 election experience goes against the contemporary grain of literature on politics in African societies, outlining a critical difference between Ghana’s election and the violent experiences that have begotten the continent and bewildered the pro-democracy world.93

93 In the days leading up to my departure from Ghana, there was a high level of tension and some violence surrounding an August 18, 2009 re-run of a parliamentary election being held in Akwatia. The December 7, 2008 election had been called inconclusive in the district due to the seizure of ballot boxes in six polling stations. According to the NPP party’s General Secretary, Nana Ohene Ntow, whom I spoke with on August 18, there were violent clashes the weekend leading up to the vote. He, himself, claims to have been physically attacked as well as reporting that vandalism had occurred to several NPP party members’ vehicles in the region. He spoke briefly of the re-emergence of a special military unit since the NDC came to power in the beginning of the year, and insinuated that there may be implications that Ghana is headed toward a military state.
There also appears to be continued bad relations between the two political parties evident through continued public denouncements of former President John Kufuor against the current administration for their treatment of him as well as the NPP refusing to sign a peace document between the two parties: “NPP rejects peace deal.” Thursday, 10 September 2009: http://news.myjoyonline.com/politics/200909/35058.asp.
Appendix 1: Research Methodology

My initial research goal was to determine why the support for the opposition party, the NDC, was underreported leading up to the initial election, and what if anything caused voters to support the NDC at the ballot box. Throughout the initial interviews it became apparent that voters desired change from what many viewed as the lavish, wasteful ways of the then party in power, the NPP, and that the opposition party, the NDC, ran a stronger grassroots campaign and hence was perceived as much more “in touch” with the average Ghanaian. The NDC also appeared to exploit the perceived policy failures by the then ruling government, the NPP, campaigning on an anti-corruption platform that would put more “cash in the pockets” of Ghanaians.

Initial interviewees emphasized, however, that there was a significant amount of tension surrounding the electoral process, in particular during the interim period between the initial election and the run-off. The expectation for conflict spiked as voters awaited the announcement of election results following the run-off on December 28, 2008. I therefore chose to focus my research on the tension surrounding the election and the efforts particularly by members of civil society and religious organizations, which were made to ensure that such tension, did not escalate into full out violent conflict.

My research was conducted between June 29 and August 18, 2009 in Accra, Ghana. The research includes data collected from both scripted and open-ended interviews as well as press releases, media reports, polls, and evaluation reports by observer organizations. Interviews were conducted with individuals who participated in the electoral process as members of civil society organizations, religious leaders, academics, members of media, party members, government representatives and heads of various government bodies. Initially, I used a formal questionnaire and tape-recorded each interview. I met some skepticism regarding the use of a recording device, and therefore decided to remove it as well as my script to encourage interviewees to talk more freely. I did, however, attempt to focus the interviews after mid-July on the prevention of violent conflict and role of the electoral commission throughout the 2008 presidential campaign and electoral process.

To recruit and identify research subjects, I employed a snowball or chain-referral sampling methodology. Such a tactic relies on referral from one interviewee to the next. I also read the local newspapers to identify organizations, reporters and prominent political actors whom I could interview. I
nearly always contacted them initially via telephone to ask if I could come in and explain my project. Through these initial contacts, I was able to set up a few interviews right away with local reporters and professors of political science at the university. During each interview, I asked the interviewee if there was anyone they would recommend I talk to, and many interviewees made initial contact and introduction on my behalf. Snowball sampling proved to be effective, as it appeared conducive to the cultural context.

I was purposeful, however, in ensuring that my sampling was as representative as possible. I intentionally included members of both major and minor political parties, representatives from several government bodies linked to elections and/or good governance activities, members of media from politically diverse newspapers, researchers, academics, and both Muslim and Christian leaders. Over the course of two months, I was able to conduct 32 in-depth interviews (the schedule is included in the appendix). Interviews represent ten civil society organizations, three government-established bodies, three media organizations, four political parties and four polling and research organizations.

During interviews, I opened by obtaining oral consent regarding the use of the interview for the purposes of this paper. At first, I used a formal questionnaire and tape-recorded each interview, but I met skepticism (particularly from young party members) regarding my use of a recording device. As a result, I decided to remove it as well as my script to encourage interviewees to talk more freely. By mid-July, I began to focus my interviews specifically on how the work and independence of the electoral commission impacted tensions. To my surprise interviewees exposed an unexpected characteristic of the 2008 elections, the critical role of civil society. While I did not directly ask questions about civil society, it emerged in a majority of my interviews whether I asked about it or not.
Appendix 2: Schedule of Interviews

1. June 29: Synovate Ghana (formerly Steadman Group), Researcher
2. June 29: CPP, Representative/Former Parliamentary Candidate
4. July 7: CPP, Youth Organizer
5. July 14: Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Co-Chair/Muslim Community Leader
6. July 21: CDD, Programs Manager
7. July 22: PNC, Community Relations
8. July 22: NDC, Sympathizer/Teacher
10. July 23: African Election Project, Executive Director
11. July 24: PNC, Youth Organizer
14. July 28: National Democratic Congress (NDC), Member of Parliament 1
15. July 28: NDC, Member of Parliament 2
17. July 28: Research International, Director
18. July 29: National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Director of Education
19. July 30: Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA), Executive Director
20. July 31: Friedrich Ebert Stifting Foundation, Program Coordinator
21. August 3: Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Principal Researcher
22. August 3: Ghana Integrity Initiative of Transparency International (GII), Operations Manager
23. August 4: Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Research Officer
24. August 5: Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Advisory Board Member
25. August 6: Daily Despatch, Editor
27. August 6: People’s National Congress (PNC), Member of Parliament 1
28. August 7: West African Network for Peace (WANEP), Program Manager
29. August 10: Electoral Commissioner (EC), Chairman
30. August 11: Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), Founding Chairman of NPP, Lawyer
31. August 12: Christian Council (CC), General Secretary
32. August 13: WANEP, Executive Director
33. August 17: National Peace Council (NPC), Program Manager
34. August 17: National Peace Council (NPC), General Secretary
35. August 18: NPP Headquarters, General Secretary
36. August 18: Office of NPP Candidate: Press Secretary

*Breakdown of Interviews by Category*

**CIVIL SOCIETY/Religious Organizations (10 organizations, 14 individuals)**
Includes: CDD (1), Christian Council (1), CODEO (2), Friedrich Ebert Stifting Foundation (1), GII (1), IDEG (2), IEA (1), IPA (1), WANEP (2), African Elections Project (2).

**GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BODIES (3 bodies, 4 individuals)**
Includes: EC (1), NCCE (1), NPC (2)

**MEDIA (3 organizations, 6 individuals)**

**POLITICAL PARTIES (4 parties, 15 individuals)**
Includes: CPP (3), NDC (3), NPP (5), PNC (4)

**POLLING ORGANIZATIONS (4 organizations, 6 individuals)**
Includes: BIG (1), Daily Despatch (2), Research International (2), Synovate Ghana (1).

*Only the interviewees that clearly identified themselves as a member of a particular party are included.

Several of these individuals are also classified in one of the other categories as well.
Appendix 3: Interview Questionnaire

1). In your opinion, why did the NDC win the 2008 presidential election?

2). In your opinion, why did the NPP lose the 2008 presidential election?

3). What role if any did the minority parties (PNC, CPP) play in 2008 elections?

4). What occurred in the weeks leading up to the election that you felt had an impact on how Ghanaians voted?

5). How important were the policy platforms in influencing voters?

6). Did you anticipate voting irregularities? Did the party[ies]? What did you/they do to prevent or offset irregularities?

7). If so, did you expect irregularities to impact the outcome of the election?

8). In your opinion, was the 2008 Ghana Presidential Election “free” and “fair”? If so, why? If not, why? Do you feel that the run-off election was “free” and “fair”? Why or why not?

9). What was the level of tension during the election? The runoff? Did you expect the tension? What was done by the parties/media/civil society orgs/govt/security to disseminate/intensify tensions?

10). What do you view as the essential elements of democracy?

11). In your opinion is Ghana a democracy? Why or why not?
Appendix 4: Votes for CPP Presidential Candidate Papa Kwesi Nduom by Region during the 2008 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Number of Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western*†</td>
<td>33,251</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central*</td>
<td>15,449</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>20,697</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>4,817</td>
<td>.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>8,101</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>11,937</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>3,988</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>10,844</td>
<td>1.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>113,494</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.34%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana

*Denotes regions where CPP is most popular.

†Denotes region where CPP won a parliamentary seat.
Appendix 5: Votes for PNC Presidential Candidate Dr. Edward Mahama by Region during the 2008 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Number of Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>3,206</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>6,262</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>3,271</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>2,948</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>5,464</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>4,038</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern*</td>
<td>16,638*</td>
<td>2.10%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East*†</td>
<td>20,349*</td>
<td>6.06%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West*†</td>
<td>8,625*</td>
<td>4.01%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>73,494</td>
<td>.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana

*Denotes regions where PNC is most popular.
† Denotes region where PNC won parliamentary seats.
Appendix 6: Support for NPP in Ghana’s 2008 Presidential Election on December 7, 2008 and Run-off Election on December 28, 2008 by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>First Round: December 7, 2008</th>
<th>Second Round: December 28, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Number of VotesReceived</td>
<td>Percentage of Votes Received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>376,270</td>
<td>47.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>313,665</td>
<td>45.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>768,465</td>
<td>46.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>99,584</td>
<td>14.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>491,520</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti*</td>
<td>1,214,350</td>
<td>72.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>392,588</td>
<td>50.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>303,406</td>
<td>38.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>118,545</td>
<td>35.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>81,137</td>
<td>37.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>4,159,439</td>
<td>49.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana

*Denotes NPP’s stronghold or ‘World Bank’ of voters
Appendix 7: Support for NDC in Ghana’s 2008 Presidential Election on December 7, 2008 and Run-off Election on December 28, 2008 by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>First Round: December 7, 2008</th>
<th></th>
<th>Second Round: December 28, 2008</th>
<th></th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Number of Votes Received</td>
<td>Percentage of Votes Received</td>
<td>Total Number of Votes Received</td>
<td>Percentage of Votes Received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>372,400</td>
<td>47.06%</td>
<td>414,144</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>+4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>345,126</td>
<td>50.58%</td>
<td>378,975</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>+3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>870,011</td>
<td>52.11%</td>
<td>953,086</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>+2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta*</td>
<td>551,046</td>
<td>82.88%</td>
<td>630,899</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>+3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>353,522</td>
<td>41.10%</td>
<td>396,277</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>+1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>438,234</td>
<td>26.13%</td>
<td>479,749</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>370,404</td>
<td>47.70%</td>
<td>408,029</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>450,564</td>
<td>56.84%</td>
<td>500,953</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>+4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>188,405</td>
<td>56.06%</td>
<td>223,994</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>+9.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>116,922</td>
<td>54.36%</td>
<td>134,926</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>+7.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>4,056,634</td>
<td>47.92%</td>
<td>4,521,032</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>+2.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana
*Denotes NDC’s stronghold or ‘World Bank’ of voters
Appendix 8: CFI Inauguration Press Release

October 08, 2008
PRESS STATEMENT: CLEANING THE VOTERS’ REGISTER FOR PEACEFUL AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER 2008

We, the members of the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) a coalition of Civil Society organizations committed to the conduct of a free, fair, peaceful and transparent election in Ghana on December 7, 2008. Having met at Alisa Hotel, North Ridge, Accra on Thursday, 2 October 2008, to inaugurate our coalition and take stock of the limited registration exercise of July-August 2008, realized that, the challenges that face our country constitute a grave threat to the holding of credible elections in 2008 and beyond. Have concluded that;

The present voters register should be cleaned to restore the confidence of the voting public in it and create the appropriate environment for free, fair and peaceful elections; and CSOs and other citizens groups and public-spirited Ghanaians from all walks of life should be mobilized to participate more effectively in the election process in our country.

The Forum accordingly wishes to affirm its commitment, to ensuring credible and peaceful elections by;

i. Appealing to political parties, traditional authorities, churches and all religious bodies to appeal to their members to volunteer information to the EC on all cases of underage, alien, double or multiple registration and deceased persons whose names remain in the register;

ii. Educating the voting public to participate fully in the exhibition of the voters register and thereby help clean it up through the removal of illegal names;

iii. Giving maximum publicity to the exhibition of the voters register to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the exercise;

iv. Mounting an observation of the exhibition” of the voters register and make recommendation on further appropriate measures to be taken to guarantee the integrity and credibility of the register;

v. Undertaking a broad advocacy campaign to ensure free, fair, transparent and peaceful election on December 7, 2008;

vi. Disseminating peace messages throughout the length and breadth of Ghana to ensure peace and national unity before, during and after election 2008;

vii. Asking the security agencies to firmly and impartially perform their duties before, during and after the election;

viii. Advising all political leaders and election candidates to bring their influence to bear on their political support base to keep the peace and ensure a successful election in December 2008; and

ix. Appealing to all Ghanaians in all they do to put Ghana first, political power second.
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