Managing Diversity and Political Inclusion

THE CASE OF GHANA

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ghana shares in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural diversity of its West African neighbours.[1] As in other states in the region, ethno-regional divisions and tensions have persisted in Ghana going back to the colonial and post-colonial periods.[2] Throughout the country's colonial and immediate post-independence history, inter-ethnic contestations for political influence and intra-ethnic disputes over chieftaincy succession have occasionally erupted into localized conflict.[3] Religious differences and political competition have further exacerbated these tensions. Significant and long-standing socio-economic inequalities also persist between northern and southern Ghana.[4] Ghana's post-colonial political history has also been characterized by political instability and repeated non-constitutional regime changes, which seriously affected the country's prospect for successful nation-building.[5]

However, since the return to competitive multi-party democracy in 1993, Ghana has proved relatively successful in managing ethno-regional grievances and instabilities—resulting from the country's ethno-cultural and religious diversity—by promoting inclusive political processes and institutions.[6] Unlike many countries in the African region, democratization in Ghana has proved to be quite successful.[7] Ghana is often cited as a model of successful economic reforms and an emerging progressive, inclusive, pluralist democratic society.[8] Ghana's democracy features formal institutional arrangements which have expanded the space for the exercise of citizenship and promoted ethno-regional and religious identities. While ethno-regional and religious tensions tend to intensify, especially around elections, they have proved transient. National unity and peace has generally prevailed.[9] Moreover, despite socio-economic inequalities dividing the country's north and south, Ghana has not descended

into full-blown violent regional conflict. Thus, within the context of competitive multi-party democracy, Ghana has managed to forge a measure of national unity and ethno-regional stability.[10]

What accounts for Ghana's perceived success in peacefully managing group differences and promoting pluralism within the context of competitive democratic politics? More specifically, what institutional configurations have been put in place to foster national political inclusion while still permitting full civic expression of ethno-regional and religious identity in Ghana's Fourth Republic? Finally, what lessons can be learned from the Ghanaian experience in the management of diversity and in the promotion of pluralism? These are the questions addressed in this paper.

Section II provides an overview of the evolution of Ghana's nation-state as well as a profile of the country's ethno-regional, cultural and religious diversity. It also highlights the socio-economic inequalities evident in the country's north–south divide. Section III discusses the immediate post-independence governments' responses to the challenges of nation-building within the context of Ghana's ethno-regional diversity and socio-economic inequalities. Section IV discusses Ghana's transition to democracy. It maps out the key formal institutional drivers, structures and actors put in place for the governance and management of ethno-regional diversity in the context of competitive partisan politics under Ghana's Fourth Republic. Section V analyzes the governance and management of diversity and inclusion in Ghana. Finally, section VI discusses the emerging lessons from Ghana from a pluralism lens, focusing on key sources of inclusion

and exclusion in Ghana and what lessons Ghana offers in promoting democratic pluralism.

II. ORIGINS AND RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY IN GHANA: PEOPLE, STATE AND NATION

The Evolution of the Ghanaian Nation-state

Present-day Ghana emerged as the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain political independence, doing so on 6 March 1957.[11] As a colonial creation, the emergent Ghanaian state (formerly the Gold Coast) embodied a multicultural polyglot of kingdoms and fiefdoms that had been bounded together by the British colonial administration. Before formal colonization of the Gold Coast in 1844, Ghana's territory was made up of several kingdoms and tribal areas, many of which existed as small states. These nation-states were governed by unwritten rules and norms. Community councils and chiefs maintained law and order as well as security and general welfare in the communities. These councils and other traditional institutions, such as traditional warrior groups, were responsible for the enforcement of the law in pre-colonial Ghanaian societies.[12] The Ashanti empire was particularly notable as one of the most advanced states in sub-Saharan Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries.[13]

By 1902, the British created a new administrative entity bringing together the numerous ethnic groups, kingdoms and tribal areas, none of which were

large enough to occupy a position of dominance. Political power was largely vested with the colonial government and written laws were introduced. The colonial government divided the new colony into several territories and districts for administrative purposes.[14] In certain cases, these local administrative bodies became parallel institutions to the existing traditional structures.

The British governed the territory through a strategy of "indirect rule," where a degree of autonomy was granted to traditional authorities in exchange for their support of the central colonial administration.[15] To ensure effective governance, the colonial territories were administratively divided into three regions: the Coastal states, Ashanti territory and the Northern territory. Administratively, a governor general headed the colony and was assisted by members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. The Executive Council was a small advisory body of European officials that recommended laws and voted on taxes, subject to the governor general's approval. The Legislative Council included members of the Executive Council and unofficial members initially chosen to represent British commercial interests. After 1925, membership of the councils expanded to include Africans. Also, a provincial council of traditional chiefs was established in all three territories of the colony, partly to give chiefs a colony-wide function.

As the colony developed politically and economically, government power gradually shifted from the hands of the governor general and their officials to the Ghanaians themselves. These changes resulted from the gradual development of a strong spirit of nationalism which eventually led to independence

in March 1957.[16] Indeed, unlike many colonies, nationalism grew steadily in the Gold Coast. The growth of nationalism and demand for self-government was fuelled by a number of events and movements: the agitation for indigenous land rights; Ghana's rapid socio-economic development and increase in prosperity; post-First World War changes in British imperial colonial policy which aimed for graduated African representation in colonial administration; and the post-Second World War decline of the British Empire. These developments were further influenced by disgruntled returning Ghanaian soldiers agitating for benefits payments and the compensation denied to them after their service in the Second World War and by the growing (and successful) struggle for independence in other British colonies, such as India. This galvanized the emerging Ghanaian nationalist elites to form movements to coalesce around the demand for self-rule.

In 1951, the British colonial administration initiated sweeping constitutional reforms (such as allowing for the formation of political parties and the holding of popular elections) to manage growing tensions and the demand for self-government.[17] These reforms eventually provided space for the full participation of the nationalist elites in colonial administration and governance. This opportunity emboldened nationalists to demand further reform of the colonial government and administration, which led to the eventual granting of full independence.

However, while the contestation for independence in Ghana was built around a strong force of nationalism among the various elites leading the nationalists

and independence movements, this national unity was fractured by the ethno-cultural difference evident in Ghanaian colonial society. Indeed, in the immediate years leading up to independence, there were debates among the various nationalist movements about the nature of the nation-state that Ghana should be. While the leaders of the primary nationalist movements, the United Gold Coast Convention and the two regionally based parties, the Ashanti-based National Liberation Council and the Northern People's Party, largely advocated for a federal form of governance with significant powers to the various regions, Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) called for a strong centralized unitary state. While Nkrumah and the CPP won the debate (and led Ghana to independence), the disunity apparent at independence continued to manifest itself in the management of inter-group relationships, conflict and in the promotion of national unity. While the contestation for independence in Ghana was built around a strong force of nationalism, this symbolic register of national unity was to face the reality of the ethno-cultural difference evident in Ghanaian colonial society.

Ghana: An Ethno-regional and Religious Profile

With an estimated population of 25 million people and 92 ethnic groups, Ghana is among the most ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse societies in the sub-Saharan Africa region. The most recent census counts Akans (subdivided into Ashanti, Fante, Akwapim, Brong, Akim, Nzema and other small units) as the largest group, encompassing 47.5% of the population. The Mole-Dagbani make up

16.6% of the population, the Ewe 13.9%, Ga-Dangbe 7.4%, Gurma 5.7%, Guan 3.7%, Grusi 2.5%, Mande-Busanga 1.1% and other 1.6%.[18]

Geographically, the largest ethnic group, the Akan, is located mostly in southern and western Ghana; the Ga-Dangbe are in the southeast, and the Ewes predominate in the east. Much further to the north, located in Ghana's savannah zone, are two other major ethnic constellations: the Gurma in the northeast and the Mole-Dagbani to the northwest. However, there is a significant degree of overlap between these ethnic geographical divisions/concentrations and the regional political administrative structure of the country:[19] the Mole-Dagbani are predominantly in Ghana's Northern and two Upper regions; the Ewes in the Volta Region; the Ga-Adangbe in the Greater Accra Region; and the various Akan subgroups are principally in the Ashanti, Western, Brong-Ahafo and Eastern regions.[20] It is also important to note that all regions have a sizeable number of migrants or people considered to be "strangers."[21]

Ghana's ethno-regional map is almost coterminous with its religious map as well. While Ghana is a predominantly Christian country, with about 71% of the population adhering to some Christian denomination, Muslims constitute around 18% of the population. Muslims form a considerable part of the population in the northern regions. Indeed, in the largest of the three northern regions (i.e., the "Northern Region"), the majority of the population (about 56%) is Muslim. The majority of Christians are predominantly Akan and are found largely in southern areas. However, this religious North–South divide is much mitigated by the fact that

Christians and Traditionalists/animists (those who practice and/or adhere to ethno-cultural beliefs) also constitute a significant proportion of the population in the three northern regions, particularly in the Upper West and Upper East regions.[22]

Inter- and intra-group ethnic relationships in Ghana have been mixed. While Ghana has not generally suffered prolonged or widespread violent inter- and intra-ethnic conflict, ethnic competition, rivalry, conflict, domination and marginalization have been recurrent themes in the Ghanaian political experience.[23] Inter-group conflicts including sporadic violence have often erupted. For instance, the Brong-Akans and the Ashanti-Akans have feuded persistently over whether or not the former is a "vassal" state of the Ashanti kingdom.[24] Similarly, in the Northern and Upper East regions and parts of the Volta Region, contiguous ethnic groups are still caught up in old ethno-cultural struggles for domination and inter-ethnic warfare.[25] Occasionally, the inter-ethnic violence is spurred by mundane everyday activities. For example, in 1994, a dispute about the price of a guinea fowl sparked latent strife in the Northern Region, which quickly transformed into an explosive, full-blown communal conflict between two anciently contiguous ethnic groups— the Konkombas and the Nanumbas.[26]

While religious conflict in Ghana is not on the scale of other countries in the West African subregion, there are longstanding religious conflicts, some involving intra- and inter-ethnic and religious rivalries, which periodically break into violence. There have been violent incidents between Muslims of different sects, especially in the Northern, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions.[27] A much reported and

debated religious conflict is between the traditional religious authorities of the Ga Traditional State and Christian churches operating in several suburbs of Accra, Ghana's capital. There has been continued tension between Ga traditionalist and some charismatic churches over the annual ban on drumming and noise-making imposed by the Ga Traditional Council prior to the celebration of Homowo, a traditional Ga festival. The annual ban on drumming and dancing preceding the festival has become a point of conflict because several Christian churches have refused to observe the ban and have been attacked by organized unofficial enforcers of the ban.[28]

Among the many factors that fuel ethno-national clashes are disputes over land and other natural resources, sovereignty issues related to chieftainships and socio-cultural discrimination.[29] In many cases, the disputes arise from years of "minority" groups being relegated to "second-rate citizens" status in both the traditional and political administration of the region and from an attempt to bypass some of the "gates" (family households that are legitimately entitled to ascend to the chieftaincy throne) in the system of rotation in the selection of chiefs.[30] These underlying causal factors have been made more pronounced by the growing socio-economic inequalities between Ghana's North and South.

Socio-economic Cleavages: Ghana's Long-standing North–South Developmental Inequality

Ghana's ethno-regional and religious cleavages are exacerbated by a serious developmental divide between its northern and southern regions. The

cleavages are driven in part by colonial and post-colonial policies.[31] Most agricultural resources in Ghana, particularly tree crops such as cocoa as well as minerals and forest resources, are concentrated in the southern coastal regions. During the colonial period, the British policy of investing more heavily in regions where exploitable resources such as gold, diamonds, timber and cocoa were available and cheapest to export, led to the concentration of more socio-economic infrastructure in the South. This drove higher socio-economic development levels in the South unmatched in northern regions.[32] The post-colonial failure to break this established pattern of unequal development between the North and the South further cemented the poor developmental status of the North.

The developmental disparity between the North and South has divided the country and created a vivid contrast between underprivileged Northerners and more privileged Southerners.[33] The contrast is evident in income disparities, access to services and economic opportunities, and political and administrative representation. At present, regional income inequality between the North and South is significant: average per capita incomes are two-to-four times lower in the North than elsewhere in the country. Further, there are wide disparities with respect to the distribution of key services and infrastructure in the North and South, including in medical and health facilities, access to telephones, consumption of electricity, small-scale industries and schools.[34] Most infrastructure development as well as financial investment is concentrated in the South. As a result, southern Ghana and its largest ethnic group—the Akans—have enjoyed relative economic and political dominance in the colonial and post-colonial era.[35]

The North–South developmental disparity in Ghana is also further evidenced in the poverty- incidence levels across the regions. To be sure, the northern regions have much poorer people relative to the southern regions. For instance, 44.4% of persons are poor in the Upper East Region, increasing to 50.4% of persons in the Northern Region and 70.7% of persons in the Upper West Region. Similarly, in terms of extreme poverty incidence, apart from the three northern regions, whose rates are higher than the national rate of extreme poverty, all the other regions in the coastal and forest areas (bordering southern Ghana) have rates lower than the national average. The Upper West Region has the highest extreme poverty incidence of 45.1%, followed by the Northern Region (22.8%) and Upper East Region (21.3%). In terms of contribution to national poverty incidence, the three northern regions account for slightly over a quarter of the extremely poor in Ghana, far more than any other region. The three northern regions combined account for more than half of those living in extreme poverty (52.7%) in Ghana.[36]

There also exist significant disparities in the representation of Northern and Southern ethnic groups in political and administrative positions. Both in the colonial and the immediate post-independence periods, Southern Ghanaians, Akans in particular, have tended to occupy top positions in politics and the public services, due mainly to their numerical advantage as well as educational and professional achievement.[37] In the first three decades of independence, Southern Ghana has produced nearly all of the heads of state (presidents) under both military and civilian administrations.[38] The level of Northern elite representation at the highest level of

state and technocratic senior public-service positions has been generally low except in the ministries of Health, Education, and Youth and Sports. [39]

III. TOWARDS NATION-BUILDING: POST-COLONIAL RESPONSE TO

Ethno-regional Diversity and Socio-economic Inequalities in Ghana (1957–92)

Ghana's multicultural and religious diversity and the associated socio-economic disparities presented a real challenge and a test case (as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa) for successful nation-building. To respond to the challenge, Ghanaian post-colonial governments worked toward the development of nationhood by implementing several legal, institutional, social and economic policies and programs promoting inclusion.[40] These policies and programs have included but were not limited to the following: the centralization of the state and power; distribution of government-controlled resources and influence; the staffing of the public bureaucracy with key ethno-regional appointive positions in government and the public sector; and the distribution of symbolic goods such as declaring public holidays to commemorate religious activities of minority groups.[41]

The broad political and institutional actions underlying the nation-building project first involved the centralization of the state and political power,

and a number of key political actions and tendencies were evident. In the immediate years after independence (1957–66) and throughout the many years of military intervention (1966–69, 1972–79, 1979–81 and 1982–92), Ghanaian governments embarked on a process of closing off democracy and the institutionalization of authoritarianism.[42] This started with the promulgation of laws forbidding the expression of ethno-regional tendencies through the formation of political parties, the expansion of presidential powers, the elimination of constitutional checks on executive power and the formalization of single-party rule between 1960 and 1966.[43] While constitutional democratic rule was briefly re-introduced between 1969 and 1972 (and between 1979 to 1982), constitutional democratic rule was largely replaced with civilian and military authoritarianism throughout the first three decades of independence.

The centralization of state power evidenced in the closure of political space to democracy were justified in Ghana, as in most African countries, on the grounds that national unity and economic development required maximum political and social stability and that a degree of "totalitarianism" was necessary to contain the otherwise discordant tendencies in ethno-regionally and culturally divided societies.[44] It was also argued that expressions of ethnic identities through democratic institutions and processes were inherently negative and obstructive in political terms and dysfunctional in the task of nation-building. Moreover, it was further argued that a requirement of successful nation-building necessitated different identities be eradicated, submerged under or subordinated to the group(s) dominating state power.[45]

Another response towards attempts at nation-building by post-colonial Ghanaian governments was the distribution of broad state-sponsored socio-economic investments that sought to improve the socio-economic well-being of all citizens as well as affirmative action to reduce regional inequalities in development and political representation. Post-colonial governments addressed high levels of inequality by spreading the coverage of economic infrastructure (especially roads, bridges and post offices) and social services (clinics and health posts, schools, etc.) in all regions so as to improve economic opportunity and living standards.

Post-colonial governments, both civilian and military, also recognized affirmative action as a means of addressing historic legacies of inequalities in Ghanaian society in general, but the North–South developmental divide in particular. Concerned about the cleavages posed by inequality, governments adopted various policies and programs to level the field of opportunities and address the imbalance in the economic, social and political fields.[46] While there was a general recognition of inequalities in Ghana across all regions, and so attempts were made to improve them, the developmental disparities across the North and South necessitated the "targeting" of some regions and communities. As a corollary to this, in the area of investment in social services delivery, special attention was paid to the historically disadvantaged Northern regions. For example, in the field of education, in addition to the system of fee-free primary and middle school for all Ghanaians, special facilities (such as bursaries) were given to persons from the North for secondary and

university education. Cabinet, bureaucratic and technocratic positions in government and the public service as well as the membership of ruling military councils were also informally balanced to reflect Ghana's cultural and ethnic diversity.[47]

These institutional and socio-economic policy responses towards governing diversity and promoting inclusion have ensured Ghana's relative success in forging ethno-regional and cultural stability in comparison with trends in other Africa nations post-independence. To be sure, despite the closure of political space to democracy, lingering ethno-regional tensions and socio-economic inequalities, Ghana remained a relatively unified, peaceful, stable state unlike many of the states in sub-Saharan Africa. The country did not face major ethnic insurrections nor did it witness prolonged political conflicts and instability as happened elsewhere on the African continent.

However, the post-independence nation-building project in Ghana—creating and sustaining an ethno-inclusive, plural democratic, progressive state—still remained a challenge. The many years of democratic closure, political instability, repeated non-constitutional regime changes and serious (though largely non-violent) ethnic tensions created a weak state–society relationship and dampened prospects for democratic pluralism. Thus, in the 1990s, Ghana faced determining how to reverse the weak state–society relationship and replace authoritarian- and patronage-driven nation-building efforts with effective institutions of democratic governance that would foster democratic pluralism.

IV. MANAGING DIVERSITY THROUGH POLITICAL INCLUSION: DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM IN GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC (1993–PRESENT)

As discussed in section III, in the immediate decades after independence (1957–1992), Ghana witnessed a prolonged closure of the democratic political space, a decline in the quality of governance and a weak state–society relationship. Weakness in the state–society relationship and the decline in the quality of governance was evidenced in the rise of civilian and military authoritarianism (1960, 1966, 1972, 1979 and 1982), the suspension of key civil liberties and democratic political rights, and growing socio-economic inequalities. These failings limited progress in the attempt to create an ethnically plural and democratically inclusive nation-state.

To restore the post-colonial agenda of building an inclusive, plural democratic state within the context of Ghana's multi-ethnic and multicultural nation-state and socio-economic inequalities, latent socio-political forces demanded a return to a constitutional multi-party democracy in the late 1980s. The process of democratic restoration and consolidation was to be guided by a new constitution which guaranteed and legitimated key institutions of democratic politics and governance. The new constitution was also meant to enable the recognition of socio-cultural rights as well as political and civil liberties, and to provide a

framework for the recognition and management of ethno-regional and cultural diversity.

The constitution-making process and the transition to democratic civilian rule in Ghana were characterized by two key struggles. The first was how to open up the political space sufficiently enough to ensure inclusive, democratic participation in politics and governance; the second was the struggle for improved economic development and better living standards after decades of socio-economic decline. The debates, discussions, compromise and consensus on these two key challenges resulted in a draft constitutional document ratified in a referendum in 1992. The constitutional referendum was followed by the lifting of the ban on the formation of political parties and the execution of a transitional democratic multi-party election (the first since 1979) that ushered Ghana into yet another constitutional democratic experiment in 1993—the fourth such experiment since independence in 1957.

The management of diversity through the promotion of political and social inclusion in Ghana's Fourth Republic rested on a commitment to building effective institutions of democratic governance that enabled as well as supported pluralism. The following sections offer a breakdown of the underlying key institutional drivers/mechanisms that facilitate and guarantee ethno-regional diversity as well as promote political inclusion in Ghana.

The 1992 Constitution

The 1992 Constitution is Ghana's longest-implemented constitution and the main source of political inclusion and diversity in Ghana. The 1992

Constitution has outlasted all previous constitutions, and the current Republic over which it governs has outlasted all regimes, civilian or military. The Constitution has provided the legal, institutional and procedural framework for democratic governance and the exercise of democratic citizenship in Ghana. It has fostered a vast expansion of civil and political rights, and defined how the relationship between the state and society should be structured and governance organized.

Furthermore, the Constitution embodies key democratic pluralist principles and institutions that are to be recognized and affirmed by the state. Key among such principles is the affirmation of Ghana's multicultural and multi-ethnic roots, and the separation of powers between the key institutions of government (the executive, legislature and the judiciary). The Constitution also guarantees democratic participation in governance through the conduct of popular, regularly scheduled national elections. It also fosters decentralization as a governance mechanism for managing local diversity and promoting inclusion. Thus, as a normative guide, the 1992 Constitution has become a key source of inspiration towards building a progressive, inclusive democratic nation-state in Ghana.

Parliament

Ghana has had a long history of parliamentary practice. However, the record of parliamentary practice in Ghana is the most underdeveloped relative to the other branches of government—the executive and the judiciary. The current Ghanaian parliament is organized as a single-chamber unicameral legislature. It consists of 275 members

elected through competitive multi-party democratic elections on the basis of a first-past-the-post electoral system. Elected members serve four-year terms, and they are eligible for re-election. Elected Members of Parliament represent diverse citizens within geographically defined areas of the country called constituencies.

The Ghanaian parliament is vested with legislative, deliberative and oversight responsibilities. In discharging its legislative functions, Ghana's parliament examines and passes laws laid in the house on behalf of the president. As part of its deliberative functions, it conducts parliamentary hearing processes to provide a public forum for discussion and debate, thus affirming that all views and all groups of society have a right to be represented. In undertaking its oversight responsibilities, Ghana's parliament is empowered to approve or disapprove key appointments to the public services made by the president and generally attempts to act as a check on the executive arm of government by summoning members of the executive to Parliament to answer various questions related to their stewardship. The existence of Ghana's parliament has resulted in the creation of key national institutions of governance such as national human rights commissions and other quasi-state institutions of good governance.

Judiciary

In Ghana the conflict resolution powers of the state are vested in the judiciary. Ghana's judiciary consists of "the Superior Courts of Judicature comprising—(i) the Supreme Court; (ii) the Court of Appeal; and (iii) the High Court and Regional Tribunals" as well

as "such lower courts or tribunals as Parliament may by law establish."[48] Since the 1992 Constitution came into force, Parliament has established the following lower courts: Circuit Courts; District Courts; Juvenile Courts; and the National House of Chiefs, Regional Houses of Chiefs and Traditional Council (to adjudicate over any case or matter affecting chieftaincy). The judiciary's constitutionally guaranteed powers have emboldened the courts to exercise their functions freely and independently.

Consequently, since the return to constitutional rule, Ghana's judiciary has played an important mediating role in fostering respect for civil and political liberties and upholding the underlying principles of socio-political rights expressed in the Constitution. The judiciary has exercised its constitutionally guaranteed independence expressively on a number of key issues of national politics and development: for example, the courts, headed by the Supreme Court, has provided road maps for electoral reform since 1993; expanded the space for political participation; and protected the fundamental rights of citizens against violations. Thus, Ghana's judiciary has become an important institution in the promotion of good governance and constitutionalism.

National Peace Council

The National Peace Council (NPC) was established in 2006. It is a government-led initiative to assist in conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building in Ghana. It is composed of eminent religious leaders from the main faith-based groups, chiefs and private persons of high repute selected through a broad-based consultation process with all stakeholders, including political parties, the chieftaincy institutions, youth and women's groups. The NPC's mandate is to facilitate a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to build sustainable peace in Ghana. The NPC carries out its mandate by monitoring conflict situations and advising government and other bodies (political parties, traditional authorities, civil society organizations, religious-based groups, etc.) on how to mediate and deepen dialogue between feuding parties and provides a policy framework for dealing with conflict situations.[49]

Since its establishment, the NPC has intervened and mediated in a number of conflicts that were potential threats to the peace, stability and development of the nation. The NPC has also taken proactive steps to sensitize key conflict-prone institutions, such as the chieftaincy and political parties, on how to manage intra-institutional conflict through capacity-building workshops, and it has cooperated with civil society in advocating for political tolerance and developing an early warning system for monitoring conflicts.[50]

National Commission for Civic Education

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is a government agency established under the 1992 Constitution with a mandate to create awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution and to educate and encourage citizens to defend the Constitution against all forms of abuse and violation. The NCCE formulates programs at the national, regional and district levels aimed at realizing the objectives of the Constitution. It is also charged with creating, implementing and overseeing programs intended to increase citizens' awareness of

their civic responsibilities and grow appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people.

Since its establishment, the NCCE has carried out its mandate of broad non-partisan civic education through programs that focused on building civic awareness in schools, rights awareness campaigns especially for women and vulnerable groups, community outreach programs focusing on peaceful coexistence, and key stakeholder dialogues on how to deepen Ghana's democracy through broad-based participation.

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) was established in 1993 by an Act of Parliament (Act, 456) pursuant to the 1992 Constitution. CHRAJ's mandates are to investigate complaints about corruption, abuse of power and human rights violations, to take remedial actions and to promote public knowledge and awareness of human rights. CHRAJ has, since its establishment, and through its national, regional and district wide offices, addressed many complaints in the areas of public corruption and human rights abuse, such as wrongful dismissals or termination of employment contracts, spousal neglect and child abuse. CHRAJ also engages in public education in the areas of corruption and human rights violations, and has partnered with many state and non-state organizations to build a culture of respect for human rights.[51]

Electoral Commission

Established under the 1992 Constitution, the Electoral Commission (EC), Ghana's national electoral management body, is responsible for organizing public elections and referenda and for registering political parties prior to elections. The EC's mandate is to ensure that the organizational structure and functioning of political parties participating in public elections conform to the requirements of the Constitution. It is also responsible for the regulation of the conduct of all public elections. As well as regulating practices at the national level, the EC oversees electoral practices at the regional, district and constituency levels.

Since its establishment in 1993, the EC has supervised six national elections with varying levels of quality. To be sure, the first democratic elections in 1992, which completed the transition process, were determined not to be free and fair. Since the 1992 elections, however, the EC has improved the management of the electoral process with key reforms after every national election. The EC's reforms and the improvements in the quality of election management resulted in two historic, peaceful hand-overs/transitions of political power from one democratically elected party to another in 2001 and in 2009[52] (a rare practice in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa), . This has increased public confidence and trust in the commission. Most Ghanaians perceive the EC as independent and relatively less susceptible to political manipulations and interferences.[53] Evidence of the public's trust in the EC is demonstrated by consistently high voter turnout in the presidential

and parliamentary elections: indeed, since 1996 voter turnout has averaged over 70%.

One of the principal means by which the EC has carried out its mandate is through the formation of an Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC). This committee brings together representatives from each of the political parties with the EC on a regular basis, and it is the main avenue for dialogue between the parties and the EC. The EC is not bound to follow the recommendations of the committee, which is a non-statutory mechanism, but in practice, the EC has benefited from the consensual dialogue and reform suggestions from the IPAC process towards building a transparent and inclusive electoral-management framework.

National House of Chiefs

The chieftaincy institution is an established part of the formal political-governance framework in Ghana. In recognition of the significant role played by the chieftaincy institution in governance, the 1992 Constitution guaranteed the institution of chieftaincy with its traditional councils, established a National and Regional Houses of Chiefs and restricted the state from appointing or refusing to recognize chiefs. Under the current 1992 Constitution, no bill affecting the institution of chieftaincy may be introduced in Parliament without reference to the National House of Chiefs. The National House of Chiefs is also charged with the responsibility of reviewing outdated customary practices that violate human rights.[54] Similarly, the National and Regional houses of chiefs are expected to settle chieftaincy disputes, both intra-group (such as the selection of new chiefs from among the people in the relevant

traditional area) and inter-group (such as land disputes between chiefs[55]).

Civic advocacy groups and independent policy think tanks

A key feature of Ghana's democracy is the presence of pluralist civil society organizations (broadly conceived to include media) and independent policy think tanks. The return to democracy in 1992 has resulted in the expansion of the space for the role and influence of civil society in politics and governance. Ghana's civil society is not monolithic. It includes secular, religious and professional organizations, in addition to civic advocacy bodies. Ghanaian civil society groups have operated both independently and cooperatively.[56]

Supported by foreign donor assistance as well a regulatory framework and a political culture which allow for freedom of organization and expression, Ghanaian civil society organizations (CSOs) have played an active role in fostering democratic participation and good-governance practices as well as partnering with the state to improve citizens' social well-being. They have kept watch on governments in order to ensure that they abide by constitutional provisions, especially those that seek to strengthen unity, pluralism and inclusion, peace and stability in the Ghanaian national body politic. Some CSOs have focused attention on strengthening Ghana's democracy through election monitoring and observations, inclusive voter education, peace-building and national reconciliation efforts. And increasingly, many CSOs are contributing towards broad-based development[57] across a wide range of social and economic spheres and regions.

V. GOVERNING DIVERSITY AND PROMOTING PLURALISM IN GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

This section critically analyzes the governance and management of diversity and the promotion of inclusion in Ghana's Fourth Republic. It discusses reforms in the political domain at the level of law, politics and recognition and how they shape ethno-political participation and inclusion. The section also examines reforms in the economic and social domain and how they influenced outcomes in livelihood and wellbeing, and the role citizens and civil society play in the promotion of diversity and inclusion.

Law, Politics and Recognition

Since the return to constitutional rule in 1993, Ghanaian governments and political elites have worked to manage diversity and strengthen political inclusion through liberal democratic structures and fostering good governance practices. A key foundational instrument underlying the governance and management of diversity and political inclusion in Ghana's Fourth Republic is the 1992 Constitution. The 1992 Constitution has provided the normative framework for democracy and good governance in Ghana. The Constitution has many attractive and progressive features: it has fostered a clear separation of powers between the three branches of government (executive, legislative and judiciary). The Constitution further provides as well as protects basic, fundamental human rights by establishing a Bill of Rights enjoining state actors to respect and safeguard the civil, political, economic and socio-cultural rights of all citizens. Article 12 (2) of the

1992 Constitution particularly states, "Every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed, or gender, shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual."

Similarly, elections and multi-party electoral politics in Ghana's Fourth Republic have helped to promote pluralism and consolidate the democratic base of the Ghanaian ethno-cultural state. Since the contested transitional multi-party election of 1992 (which ushered Ghana into multi-party democratic rule), the country has advanced a consensual, competitive and broadly participatory and legitimate electoral process strengthened through a pluralist institutional mechanism. In Ghana today, democratic, popular, competitive multi-party elections have become the norm and the only vehicle for conferring, renewing and withdrawing the mandate to govern and exercise legitimate political authority. The country has successfully held six successive popular democratic multi-party elections since 1992 and governments that have emerged from these elections have been broadly representative of the nation's political, ethnic, cultural and social mix.

The promotion of decentralization and local government is yet another democratic institutional innovation fostered in the Fourth Republic to promote good governance and democratic pluralism in Ghana. The normative foundation of Ghana's decentralization policy and the practice of local governance in the Fourth Republic finds expression in the democratic liberal ethos of the 1992 Constitution which enjoined the state to take appropriate measures to "make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial

machinery of government to the regions and districts, and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and government."[58] In the years since the return to democracy, Ghana has advanced a decentralization framework that has created political and governance structures from the country's regions down to the level of districts and communities.

Ghana currently has 16 administrative regions and 260 districts with three-tier subnational governments at the regional, district and subdistrict level. At the district level, the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) govern the district by exercising political and administrative authority, and they are responsible for the overall development of the district. The political and administrative arrangements at the district level, particularly the conduct of non-partisan, popular, independently administered elections to elect assembly members and the practice of public hearings to discuss and adopt policies have allowed every citizen the opportunity to exercise voice and choice in governance and development.

However, in spite of this progressive democratic institutional framework, promoting inclusion and diversity in Ghana, in practice, remains a challenge. Ghana's constitutional framework has vested vastly disproportionate power and control of resources in the hands of the executive branch of government. This concentration of power means presidents and other senior government policy-makers do not feel the need to take into consideration the needs and preferences of "out-groups," chief among them the marginalized and disadvantaged groups most

excluded in the political system. In the absence of credible regulations or even balanced conventions to guide the use of such powers, presidents and their parties have been virtually free to practice "winner-takes-all" politics. This constitutional-design defect (i.e., the ways in which the Constitution is understood and practiced) has limited space for political inclusion and the promotion of pluralism.

Similarly, access to justice and the benefits of the rule of law remains unequal, especially for the poor, less educated and sexual minorities. The law in Ghana is typically applied in favour of the affluent in society, particularly incumbent government and ruling party bigwigs, and applied against the poor and less educated. Gross inefficiencies in the administration of justice, widespread judicial corruption, coupled with a marked absence of legal representation for the majority of Ghanaians, has meant that most instances of constitutional rights violations go unchallenged and uncorrected.[59] More worrying, the persecution of sexual minorities has escalated in Ghana. Prominent figures in politics and government, media, religious communities and civil society have demanded more robust enforcement of laws in Ghana's criminal code prohibiting homosexuality.[60] Key constitutional bodies established to safeguard and protect citizens and freedoms have increasingly become bureaucratized, insular and ineffective. Chronic underfunding of the CHRAJ and NCCE, and the non-binding nature of their findings and recommendations, has weakened the role of these institutions as necessary safeguards for the protection of citizens' rights.

Furthermore, Ghana's system of multi-party democratic politics is challenged by severe inclusion

gaps. Women, people living with disabilities and other social minorities as well as the poor, less educated and rural inhabitants all suffer exclusion in terms of participation and representation. There are currently no statutory electoral quotas for women and other minority groups. The cost of electoral campaigns in the Fourth Republic are excessively high with the tendency to generate disparate exclusionary effects, especially by gender and class.[61] Consequently, women and other social groups remain under-represented in key state institutions of governance, in the country's centres of public decision-making and in public life.

Another deficit to inclusive governance and the promotion of pluralism in Ghana is the long delay in devolving administrative and fiscal power to local governments and their popularly elected assemblies. Indeed, in spite of the progress in decentralized local government and administration reform, Ghana remains essentially a centralized state in shape and form. Progress in improving political, financial and administrative decentralization to the regions and districts remains stagnant. The MMDAs—the highest governing institutional organ at the local level— have become little more than the extensions of the central government as they have little to offer as autonomous centres of power capable of representing the interests of a diverse citizenry. More worrying, the control held by the president and his party over the appointment of metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives (i.e., mayors) and one-third of the members of local assemblies undermines inclusion for citizens in the district who belong to the other parties.

Livelihood and Well-being

Broad economic and social inequalities as well as North–South developmental disparities in economic and social life represent the main lines of social and regional polarization in Ghana.[62] To reduce economic and social inequalities and the regionally based development gap, successive governments in the Fourth Republic buoyed by the 1992 Constitution have committed to promoting not only pro-poor inclusive economic growth but also to focus special attention on reducing the country's North–South developmental inequalities. The Ghanaian government's commitment towards achieving inclusive pro-poor growth and social development across the country has been expressed in policy frameworks including Ghana's Vision 2020, the Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategies (vol. I and II) and now the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (vol. I and II).

This commitment to pro-poor growth and development has resulted in the design of innovative social protection policies and programs to reduce poverty and improve human development. Key among such policies and programs are the Free Universal Compulsory Basic Education program,[63] Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP),[64] the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS),[65] the Ghana National School Feeding Programme, the Free Exercise Books and School Uniform Programme, the Capitation Grant Scheme for Public Basic Schools[66] and the Ghana Youth Entrepreneurial Employment Programme.[67] These pro-poor social interventions have contributed towards reducing poverty and improving human development in the critical areas

of access to education and health care, income inequality and child nutrition.[68]

Aside from these broad national interventions attending to North–South developmental disparities, successive Ghanaian governments, with the support of international donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have targeted investment in human development (education, health, water) and economic infrastructure (roads, transportation, communication) as well as created a special development authority to oversee accelerated development of the North. A recent notable intervention is the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority designed to attract investment to growth corridors in the northern ecological zone while providing employment and income-generating opportunities.[69]

However, in spite of these policies and interventions, achieving inclusive, shared economic growth still remains a challenge. The experience of poverty in Ghana today (in spite of fairly strong average economic growth rates in the period of multi-party democratic rule) shows the relative failure of democracy to foster inclusion in social and economic development. Recent economic growth in Ghana has bypassed many of the country's rural and urban poor. Women, persons living with disabilities and other social minorities as well as the poor, less educated, peri-urban and rural inhabitants who suffer the most from exclusion in terms of political participation and representation are the same people who enjoy the fewest benefits of social and economic development. Similarly, many social protection interventions targeted at these groups such as LEAP and NHIS have suffered from chronic resource constraints, poor implementation and corruption. This has limited the impact of these interventions.

Furthermore, the policy of targeting the Ghana's northern regions for growth and poverty reduction to decrease spatial inequalities has stopped well short of any program to transform the North as a major social and economic growth pole. Indeed, in spite of the political commitment to address the "northern development problem," investments in key infrastructural development and improved social service provision in the North still lags behind all other regions in Ghana.[70] A recent study of the state of public service delivery and well-being across Ghana's 260 districts ranked the most deprived districts in terms of well-being to be concentrated in Ghana's three northern regions.[71] Similarly, many of the key institutional interventions have been bedeviled with corruption, limiting their ability to respond to the key developmental challenges facing the northern regions. A far greater impediment in the efforts to transform the northern regions is the continuing inter- and intra-ethnic and tribal conflict and tension. These conflicts and violent tensions have hampered investment flow and the economic growth prospect of the North.

Citizens, Civil Society and Identity

Unlike many countries in Africa, Ghana has largely succeeded in promoting plural citizenship. There is a culture of respect for citizens' rights and recognition of ethno-cultural identity. This culture of respect and recognition is guaranteed by the Constitution and in popular belief. Findings from the Afrobarometer[72] surveys in Ghana show that the majority of Ghanaians say they feel equally Ghanaian and ethnic

(i.e., 42% in 2005, 57% in 2008, 51% in 2012 and 34% in 2014). Similarly, tolerance and respect for diversity in Ghana is positive. There is a high level of tolerance and desire for peaceful coexistence among citizens in Ghana. Findings from the Afrobarometer (Round 6) show that 80% of survey respondents say they would "somewhat" or "strongly" like to have people of different religious faiths (80%) and people of different ethnicities (81%) as neighbours. In addition, 14% would not care if their neighbours were of a different religion or ethnicity. Furthermore, almost Ghanaians (88%) would like or not mind living next to immigrants or foreign workers. More than two-thirds (68%) of Ghanaians would like or not mind having people living with HIV/AIDS as neighbours.[73] This widespread tolerance and respect for diversity is propped up by the 1992 Constitution, which uplifts diversity and inclusion and frowns upon discrimination.

The growth of a broad-based activist civil society and media has also helped in the promotion of pluralism in Ghana. Ghana's civil society sector is made up of faith-based and traditional associations, and secular, research and policy-based think-tanks. While some of the CSOs have focused on deepening civic awareness, upholding ethno-cultural, religious identity, and on issues of inclusive economic opportunity, service provision and general social welfare, others are working on promoting governmental accountability in the area of economic development and poverty reduction.

Also, another important driver of Ghana's democratic pluralism in the Fourth Republic is the growth of the media sector. The growth of media of all forms in Ghana (i.e., television, radio and print) has become significant in the country's political development. Since the return to pluralist democracy, and the commitment towards media freedom and pluralism, state domination of the Ghanaian media landscape has given way to an environment in which a plethora of privately owned newspapers, radio and television broadcast stations have emerged.[74] Currently, Ghana has more than 100 privately owned newspapers and over 300 radio stations spread across the country. In addition to over 30 television stations, Ghana's media landscape is among the most broad-based and widespread across the African continent.

Ghana's growing media, enabled by the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, has made important contributions towards improving inclusion and a better state–society relationship in the Fourth Republic. The media has played a role in the key areas of improving the quality and legitimacy of the country's democratic elections, promoting transparency and accountability, increasing governmental responsiveness and contributing towards the deepening of the democratic culture, institutions and citizen participation.[75] In particular, the rise and growth of local-language media has provided millions of citizens, especially rural and non-literate populations, the space to participate in discussions on politics and public policy at both the national and local level. These contributions have given voice to and improved citizens' participation in public policy dialogue.

Equally significant, since the return to multi-party democracy, Ghana's political elites have reaffirmed, promoted and committed to protecting the ethno-cultural and religious identity of the Ghanaian

state. This commitment is evident in a number of tendencies: first is the objective attempt by governments and the political class to strive towards fulfilling the constitutionally required ethno-regional balance in representation in political and bureaucratic governance. Successive governments in the Fourth Republic have been sensitive to ethno-regional imbalance and in practice adopted something of an ethnic-mixing formula, giving representation to all the major ethnic groups in Cabinet and to other key public sector institutions, to some extent.[76] This pattern of appointments to political and bureaucratic positions, fostered by constitutional provisions (notably those contained in the 1992 Constitution and enforced by CHRAJ and other such bodies established by the Constitution) have helped to somewhat moderate ethnic tension and exclusion.

Second is the political elite's commitment to peaceful management of ethno-regional and religious tension and conflicts in Ghana. Unlike their fellow political elites in Africa, the Ghanaian political class has managed to largely contain ethno-regional and religious cleavages and tendencies. The peaceful management of ethno-cultural and religious conflict in the Fourth Republic is premised on a national peace architecture that stands on six central pillars: law and order by the National Security Council; rule of law by the judiciary; traditional authority and alternative justice by the National House of Chiefs; oversight by the legislature and the independent national human rights body; electoral oversight and civic education by the EC and the NCCE, respectively; watchdog activities and advocacy by CSOs; and mediation and advocacy by the NPC and supporting CSO bodies.[77] Key state agencies such

as the CHRAJ and NCCE, in collaboration with non-state actors (CSOs, NGOs), have been playing an important role in fostering an open inclusive democratic society through the promotion of inter-group harmony and civic identity, advancing and protecting human rights, administrative justice and integrity, and building a culture of transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law.

Notwithstanding the progress in guaranteeing citizens' rights and promoting ethno-cultural diversity in Ghana's Fourth Republic, it is trite to also note that promoting pluralism in Ghana remains somewhat of a challenge. The Ghanaian state, in spite of the country's liberal constitutional framework, has enacted legislation that has sought to limit rights and freedoms of the Ghanaian diaspora from accessing the state and participating in key political and governance processes. Ghanaian dual citizens are subjected to a raft of prohibitions such as disqualification from being a Member of Parliament, from holding certain public offices and being disenfranchised in national elections. Diaspora Ghanaians continue to suffer needless restrictions on their ability to participate in public life in the country of their birth, despite the significant contributions they make to the economic and social development of the nation, not to mention political campaigns. For all intents and purposes, they are disenfranchised—unable to vote for their representatives in government.

Further, there is a growing feeling of discrimination or marginalization along ethnic lines amongst Ghanaians. Findings from Afrobarometer surveys[78] show that, while relatively more Ghanaians in general said they "never" felt unfairly treated as a

result of their ethnicity (i.e., from a low of 43% in 2008 to a high of 63% in 2012), around 3-to-4-in-10 Ghanaians during this same period claimed they "sometimes," "often" or "always" felt unfairly treated solely because of their ethnic background. Both the short- and long-term trends (i.e., 2012–14 and 2002–14) show that the percentages of Ghanaians who felt unfairly treated as a result of their ethnicity increased by 13 and 8 percentage points, respectively. On the other hand, the percentages of Ghanaians who never suffered unfair treatment due to their ethnicity declined by 18 and 5 percentage points during the same period.

Equally worrying, Ghana's civil society and the broad organizations that comprise it are heavily concentrated in urban Ghana. While solid political and economic logic explains the spatial composition and concentration of civil society and governance in Ghana, the focus of important issues privilege national over local-level politics. This is problematic because vast proportions of Ghanaians who live in rural areas become excluded from social, political and economic development. This has had potentially deleterious consequences not only for state construction and growth, but also for nation- and identity-building.[79]

While ethno-regional and religious conflicts have been relatively managed in the Fourth Republic, low intensity inter- and intra-ethnic and tribal conflicts still remain a feature of ethno-social and political relationships in Ghana.[80] Persistent chieftaincy disputes, political mobilization along ethnic lines and voting patterns in the Fourth Republic showcase a Ghanaian nation-state struggling to construct and promote broad-based ethno-cultural identity.

VI. TOWARDS A PLURALISM LENS: EMERGING LESSONS FROM GHANA

Ghana's experience in promoting pluralism through inclusive governance viewed through the pluralism lens is mixed, but relatively commendable. This section highlights the key levers of inclusion and exclusion in Ghana across its political and socio-economic domains.

Levers of Political and Socio-economic Inclusion

The Constitution and the evolution of key institutions of good governance

The 1992 Constitution has provided the basic normative framework for the promotion of democratic pluralism and political inclusion in Ghana. It has provided mechanisms for good governance, and through its provisions on fundamental human rights, the Constitution has sought to promote equal opportunity for all Ghanaians. Most importantly, the 1992 Constitution resulted in the establishment of a number of key institutions to facilitate inclusive governance, political accountability and citizens' participation at various levels of the state.

Elite commitment to promoting an ethnically inclusive state

Throughout colonial rule and post-independence, and particularly in the Fourth Republic, the commitment towards creating and consolidating

the ethno-cultural and religious character of the Ghanaian state remained a key factor towards fostering national integration and the prevention of ethno-regional mobilization and conflicts. This commitment is most evident in the elite's commitment and fidelity towards the promotion of ethno-regional balance in representation and interests in public affairs, the peaceful management of ethno-regional and religious conflicts, and the belief in the normative principles underlying key political institutions of good governance.

Elections, electoral politics and political parties

Ghana's successful management of elections and the evolution of a broad-based multi-party politics is a key source of pluralism. The country's inclusive electoral process and politics have allowed all citizens regardless of socio-economic and ethnic background to broadly participate in political activities by effectively exercising their voice and choice. In addition, the outcomes of elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic are broadly reflective of the will of the people. Governments that emerge from these elections are also broadly representative of the country's political, ethnic, cultural and social mix.

The growth of activist civil society and media

Ghana's heterogeneous civil society and media are key drivers of inclusion. In their varied forms, interests and contribution, civil society and the media (particularly local-language media), have provided spaces and voices for the marginalized and the vulnerable in society. Civil society and the media

have become bastions of political accountability and social justice, and protectors of human rights and broad-based/group-based civil liberties.

The emphasis on pro-poor inclusive economic growth and social development

Ghana's public policies have been sensitive to the complex challenges presented by the country's diversity and the attendant socio-economic inequalities. The commitment to promoting not only pro-poor inclusive economic growth but also focusing special attention on reducing the North–South developmental gap has enabled socio-economic inclusion. This commitment has somewhat helped in reducing inequalities in economic and social opportunities across social groups, thus lowering group tension.

Levers of Political and Socio-economic Exclusion

Excessive concentration of political power in the executive branch

Ghana's constitutional framework has vested vastly disproportionate power and control of resources in the hands of the executive president. This concentration of power means presidents and other senior government policy-makers do not feel the need to take into consideration the needs and preferences of "out-groups," chief among them the marginalized and disadvantaged groups who are most excluded in the political system. In the absence of credible regulations or even balanced conventions to guide the use of such powers, presidents and their parties have been virtually free to practice "winner-

takes-all" politics. This constitutional-design defect (i.e., the ways in which the Constitution is understood and practiced) has limited the space for political inclusion and the promotion of pluralist politics.

Limited participation and representation of the vulnerable and the marginalized in the electoral process and governance

While Ghana's electoral and political party system affords all citizens the opportunity to participate in politics and governance, the exercise of effective, democratic citizenship in Ghana continues to remain limited in practice for some citizens. For instance, women, people living with disabilities and other social minorities as well as the poor, less educated and rural inhabitants all suffer exclusion with regards to participation and representation. There are currently no statutory electoral quotas for women and other minority groups. Consequently, women and other social groups remain under-represented in key Ghanaian state institutions of governance, in centres of public decision-making and in public life.

The growing socio-economic inequality and the deepening north–south developmental disparity

Ghana's recent economic growth has bypassed many of the country's rural and urban poor and poorest citizens: joblessness, income insecurity, low agricultural productivity and lack of access to economic resources, especially among women, persist. This has limited the potential of citizens, particularly women and persons living with

disabilities, to participate fully in the country's economic transformation and political processes. Worst still, Ghana's North–South developmental disparities in economic and social life continue. Northern Ghana, relative to Southern Ghana, remains disadvantaged in access to key economic and political resources.

Enduring low-level inter- and intra-ethnic conflict

While ethno-regional and nationalist conflicts have been contained, many of the intra-ethnic conflicts and the conditions leading to such conflict have never been resolved, particularly in northern Ghana. Such low-level conflicts continue to deter investment particularly in the North, thus deepening regional inequality and the full integration of the North as a key social and economic growth pole.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that Ghana has made considerable progress in fostering pluralism in the era of multi-party democracy. Ghana's experience highlights the roles that formal institutions at the level of law, politics and recognition and commitment towards improved broad-based socio-economic development propped up by values of tolerance and respect for diversity can play in shaping a country's attempt at ensuring peaceful and inclusive accommodation of its diverse ethnic, regional and religious communities. However, this paper has also highlighted the challenges that remain. These gaps are rooted in deficiencies in

the prevailing constitutional and legal order and the politics they have spawned, the structure of the political economy and the challenges in negotiating the everyday realities of ethno-cultural diversity. All this aside, as viewed through a pluralism lens, Ghana's overall experience is comparatively positive.

NOTES

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2   See Agyeman, D.K (2008), "Managing Diversity and Ethnic Conflict," in *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*, edited by B. Agyeman-Duah (Accra: Ghana Centre for Democratic Development), p. 77-96.

3   See V.K. Ametewee (2007), "Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Ghana," in *Ethnicity, Conflicts and Consensus in Ghana*, edited by Steve Tonah (Accra: Woeli Publication Services), p. 25-41.

4   See A. Abdul-Gafaru (2014), "Rethinking Spatial Inequalities in Development: The Primacy of Politics and Power Relations," Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) Working Paper No. 29 (Manchester, UK: Effective States and Inclusive Development).

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11 See B. Agyeman-Duah (2008), "Introduction: Fifty Years in Perspective," in *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*, edited by B. Agyeman-Duah (Accra: Ghana Centre for Democratic Development), p. 1-31.

12 Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana [CDD-Ghana] (2013), *Elections and the Management of Diversity in Africa* (Ghana Country Report), prepared for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's African Governance Report III.

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14 L. Berry, ed. (1994) *Ghana: A Country study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division).

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64 The LEAP program is a cash-transfer program directed to the poorest households.

65 The NHIS is a national health insurance policy that ensures access to basic health care services to all residents.

66 These are per capita grants given to schools to cover household education costs

67 The Ghana Youth Employment Programme is a youth skills and employment program aimed at fighting youth unemployment.

68 See Ghana News Agency, (2016), "LEAP Now Benefiting 213,000 Households in Ghana—Minister," *Ghana Business News*, 23 November, accessed 22 December 2016, https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2016/11/23/leap-now-benefiting-213000-households-in-ghana-minister/.

69 For a detailed reading, see *Savannah Accelerated Development Authority Act, 2010* (Act 805).

70 See Edgar Cooke and Sarah Hague (2016), *The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report: Using the 6th Ghana Living Standard Survey* (Accra: UNICEF, Ghana)

71 Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and UNICEF (2016): Ghana District League Table Report (Accra: CDD-Ghana).

72 The Afrobarometer is an African-led public attitude survey that measures citizen views and attitudes on democracy, governance and socio-economic development in 34 African countries. For more details see Afrobarometer, accessed 19 April 2019, http://afrobarometer.org/.

73 Daniel Armah-Attoh and Isaac Debrah (2015), "Day of Tolerance: 'Neighbourliness': A Strength of Ghana's Diverse Society," *Afrobarometter Dispatch* No. 58, accessed 19 April 2019, http://afrobarometer.org/publications/ad58-day-tolerance-neighbourliness-strength-ghanas-diverse-society.

74 See G. Audrey (2008), "Guardians of Democracy: The Media," in *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*, edited by B. Agyeman-Duah (Accra: Ghana Centre for Democratic Development), p. 195-214.

75 See *Ibid*.

76 Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana [CDD-Ghana] (2013).

77 See W.A. Awinador-Kanyirige (2014), "Ghana's National Peace Council," Policy Brief, August (New York: Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect).

78 The Rounds for which this question were asked are rounds 4, 5 and 6.

79 E. Gyimah-Boadi and M.T. Markovits (2008), "Civil Society and Governance," in *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*, edited by B. Agyeman-Duah (Accra: Ghana Centre for Democratic Development), p. 215-233.

80 See Emmanuel Debrah, Seidu Alidu and Isaac Owusu-Mensah (2016), "The Cost of Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Ghana's Northern Region: The Case of the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict," *Journal of African Conflict and Peace Studies* 3 (1, article 2): 1–27.

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