

## Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research Ghana's Democratic Resilience in a Turbulent West African Democratic Landscape: A Comparative Regional Perspective

Assoc. Prof. William Hermann Arrey,<sup>1</sup>

Chair of the Department of Peace and Development Studies  
Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations  
Protestant University of Central Africa, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Email: [warrey64@gmail.com](mailto:warrey64@gmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7977-6589>

Ismail Yussif

Institute of Governance, Humanities, and Social Sciences  
Pan African University, Soa-Yaounde, Cameroon

Email: [yussifismail96@gmail.com](mailto:yussifismail96@gmail.com) ORCID:

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0596-3834>

<https://doi.org/10.56201/jpslr.vol.12.no9.2026.pg135.152>

---

### Abstract

*West Africa has recently faced intense democratic turbulence, marked by successive coups in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger between 2020 and 2023, alongside an attempted coup in Benin in 2025. These reversals highlight the fragility of regional democratic institutions. Yet Ghana stands out as a resilient exception. Ghana has sustained multiparty competition, peaceful power transfers, and a vibrant civil society since its return to constitutional rule in 1993. This study employs a systematic thematic review and qualitative comparative analysis grounded in democratic resilience and neo-institutionalist theories to examine why Ghana has resisted authoritarian backsliding while its neighbors have faltered. Drawing on document analysis and secondary data, the study situates Ghana's experience within the broader regional landscape. Although Ghana faces challenges such as corruption, clientelism, executive dominance, and polarization, it remains one of West Africa's most stable democracies since 1992. In contrast, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger have succumbed to coups, whereas Nigeria, Benin, and Senegal exhibit hybrid democratic trajectories with mixed governance records. The study underscores that democracy in West Africa is not uniformly fragile; resilience is possible when institutions, civil society, and external actors reinforce legitimacy beyond electoral politics. The case of Ghana demonstrates that democratic survival requires vigilance, reform, inclusive governance, and accountability. Ultimately, the research contributes to debates on African democratization by emphasizing adaptability, institutional autonomy, and resilience as critical to regional democratic stability.*

**Keywords:** *Comparative analysis, Democratic backsliding, Democratic resilience, Ghana Democracy, West Africa*

---

---

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author (email: [warrey64@gmail.com](mailto:warrey64@gmail.com))

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, debates on democratic resilience and vulnerability in Africa have intensified, particularly in West Africa, where military coups and authoritarian rule have proliferated. These developments reflect uneven institutional outcomes shaped by shifting reforms and divergent national experiences (Arrey & Tsidie, 2021; Hugues, 2024; Resnick & Signé, 2025). The optimism of the 1990s, when many African states embraced the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991), led to a downturn in democratic governance. Evidence of democratic backsliding in sub-Saharan Africa includes declining civil liberties, weakened institutional checks, and the resurgence of authoritarian practices and coups (Freedom House, 2024; Gyimah-Boadi, 2025; Wada & Garba, 2025). Freedom in Africa declined for the tenth consecutive year in 2023, driven by armed conflict, coups, and electoral irregularities (Freedom House, 2024). West Africa exemplifies this reversal, with coups in Mali (2020/2021), Guinea (2021), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023), alongside shrinking civic space. This democratic regression is marked by unconstitutional changes in government, constitutional manipulations, and constrained liberties (Christian, 2024; Edward & Weldone, 2025; Tuffuor et al., 2025). The resurgence of coups reflects failures of democratic deepening (Falola, 2022), often linked to government shortcomings, economic hardship, corruption, insecurity, and weakened institutions (Christian, 2024). Ghana stands out as a beacon of stability during this turbulence. Ghana has conducted nine consecutive elections with peaceful alternations of power, sustaining constitutional rule since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1993 (Africa-Press, 2024; Kpessa-Whyte, 2024; Ofosu et al., 2025). Elections in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2024 resulted in successful government changes without military intervention and minimal localized violence (Brookings, 2025; Kumah-Abiwu, 2025; G. Ofosu et al., 2025). Existing scholarship highlights Ghana's institutional design, democratic consolidation, civil society, media freedom, and elite consensus, but less attention has been given to its challenges and resilience from a regional comparative perspective. This paper addresses this gap by situating Ghana's resilience within the context of West Africa's broader democratic decline. It asks: *What makes Ghana a stable democracy in a turbulent sub-region? What challenges threaten its sustainability? What lessons can Ghana's experience offer for promoting democracy and preventing military interventions?* The paper is structured into six sections: introduction, methodology, theoretical frameworks, Ghana's democratic trajectory, regional comparative analysis including Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Benin, and Nigeria, and lessons learned and conclusions. This comparative lens underscores Ghana's significance in African democratization debates and highlights the importance of resilience, adaptability, and institutional autonomy for regional democratic stability.

## 2. Methodology

This study employs a systematic review design grounded in democratic resilience and a neo-institutionalism framework to examine why Ghana has resisted democratic backsliding, while neighboring states succumbed to authoritarian reversals. Using critical document analysis and desk-based inquiry, supported by thematic and secondary data analysis within a qualitative comparative approach, this study situates Ghana's resilience in the broader democratic landscape of West Africa. The analysis compares Ghana's trajectory with countries that have experienced coups, such as Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger, as well as hybrid democracies with mixed records. The literature was synthesized from academic works, policy reports, and news sources addressing Africa's democratic vulnerabilities and endurance, particularly in Ghana (Brookings, 2025; CDD-Ghana, 2024; Freedom House, 2024). Ghana was chosen for its persistent democratic endurance during regional turbulence. The data

analysis was thematic and comparative, linking Ghana's experience to regional backsliding and resilience benchmarks.

### **3. Theoretical analysis frameworks**

This study uses two theoretical perspectives: democratic resilience and neo-institutionalist theories.

#### ***3.1 Democratic Resilience Theory***

The theory of democratic resilience emerged in the late twentieth century, focusing on how political systems manage transitions, endurance, and backsliding. Scholars define this concept as a regime's core capacity to enable institutions, political actors, and citizens to resist external shocks and absorb internal stressors such as elite polarization, corruption, economic crises, security threats, and electoral disputes (Huntington, 1991; Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann & Merkel, 2023; Merkel, 2025; Walz et al., 2025; Saka, Aminu, et al., 2025). A resilient system dynamically adapts without abandoning its core democratic rules and norms through ongoing learning and transformation rather than collapsing into authoritarian reversal (Merkel, 2025; Walz et al., 2025). This concept encompasses various distinct systemic changes, including democratic breakdown, transition, survival, consolidation, and backsliding (Asima, 2024). A democratic transition shifts a state from authoritarian rule to a competitive, multiparty system (Arugay, 2021).

Meanwhile, democratic consolidation occurs when democracy becomes "the only game in town," strengthening institutions, norms, and values to achieve deep legitimacy through the rule of law, civil society, multiparty competition, and widespread accountability (Akin & Ade, 2018; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Saka, Aminu, et al., 2025). Despite being fragile and contested, democratic resilience goes further by emphasizing a dynamic system of adaptability, self-correction, and institutional continuity (Croissant & Lott, 2025).

This theory explains Ghana's democratic journey within West Africa, a region recently troubled by military coups and democratic breakdown. Ghana has successfully held elections and alternated power since 2000, despite facing localized electoral disputes, corruption, economic shocks, and polarization (Ofosu et al., 2025). Strong institutions in Ghana have steadily managed these internal and external pressures within constitutional boundaries (Bob-Milliar & Madsen, 2025; Brookings, 2025; Chin, 2024; Kumah-Abiwu, 2025; Resnick & Signé, 2025). The Electoral Commission of Ghana has consistently run competitive multiparty elections. Political actors consistently accept results even in highly contested polls such as those in 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020, even though two parties dominate. Furthermore, the Supreme Court successfully resolved the 2012 and 2020 presidential election petitions, reinforcing legal settlements and preventing post-election violence without coercion (Asante, 2023; Gyimah-Boadi, 2025; Ofosu et al., 2025). In Ghana, ruling and opposition leaders demonstrate maturity by respecting institutions and accepting the peaceful alternation of power. This resilience contrasts sharply with neighboring West African states that use coercive power changes to address governance issues (Akin & Ade, 2018; Gyimah-Boadi, 2025; Wada & Garba, 2025a).

Citizens, the media, and civil society organizations actively defend constitutionalism through voting, peaceful protests, and public debates to resist unconstitutional term extensions and governance excesses (Botchway, 2018a; Ransford, 2015). However, critics argue that the resilience theory can overstate institutional endurance while ignoring gradual democratic erosion. This focus overlooks growing elite dominance, falling accountability, and declining public trust (Afrobarometer, 2025; Asante, 2023; Chin, 2024). This erosion remains visible in Ghana, as evidenced by a decline in its V-Dem liberal democracy Index since 2010 (Asima, 2024; Brookings, 2025; Freedom House, 2024).

### **3.2 Neo-Institutionalism Theory**

The neo-institutionalist paradigm complements democratic resilience theory by problematizing how formal structures and informal dynamics contestably dictate political behavior and democratic outcomes (March & Olsen, 2006). Deviating from simplistic behavioral models, this framework, pioneered by March and Olsen (1984) and expanded by Helmke and Levitsky (2006), argues that institutions utilize rules and norms to manufacture legitimacy and engineer structural incentives (Gani et al., 2024; March & Olsen, 2006; Lowndes & Roberts, 2006). Crucially, it exposes how constitutional designs can simultaneously reward democratic compliance or be co-opted to aid elite exploitation (Gani et al., 2024). Ghana's 1992 Constitution serves as a primary site of this tension; while its formal separation of powers theoretically constrains overt authoritarian behavior, it masks deeper systemic vulnerabilities (Brookings, 2025; Gani et al., 2024; G. Ofosu et al., 2025). Although formal mechanisms, such as judicial review and strict two-term limits, have successfully averted the blatant executive entrenchment seen in states such as Guinea, they fail to mitigate sub-constitutional degradation (Chin, 2024; Kumah-Abiwu, 2025; Njoki, 2025; Resnick & Signé, 2025; Wada & Garba, 2025a). Indeed, the growing hegemony of informal practices, namely, clientelism, partisan patronage, and executive capture of public appointments, actively subverts formal rules, locking Ghana into a volatile cycle of winner-takes-all politics (Akin & Ade, 2018; Asima, 2024; Kpessa-Whyte, 2024; Sefa-Nyarko, 2022). This analytical lens also deconstructs the divergent governance crises plaguing West Africa. In Mali and Burkina Faso, acute institutional collapse completely obliterated civilian oversight, allowing informal, military-dominated networks to supplant constitutional law (Adem, 2025; Ayoola et al., 2024; Bob-Milliar & Paller, 2018). Conversely, Senegal's recent political survival reveals how resilient formal systems are heavily dependent on informal elite negotiations and civic pressure (BudgIT Senegal Report, 2024; Fall & Kelly, 2025). Thus, Ghana's trajectory is not a static success but a precarious balancing act between formal democratic containment and informal exclusionary governance (Bob-Milliar & Madsen, 2025; Oduro et al., 2022). Neo-institutionalism is criticized for overstating structural determinism while underplaying human agency, political will, and citizen-led mobilization (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Lowndes & Roberts, 2006). However, the theory remains indispensable for this study: it moves beyond romanticized views of Ghana's constitutional durability to expose the corrosive patronage systems undermining its democratic consolidation.

### **4. Ghana's Democratic Trajectory and Resilience**

Since the 1992 Constitution of Ghana was promulgated, the country has sustained eight successful elections and uninterrupted constitutional rule, distinguishing it from many West African states that faltered during the third wave of democratization in the 1990s (Botchway, 2018b; Saka, Adekunle, et al., 2025; Tuffuor et al., 2025). Ghana's Fourth Republic institutionalized competitive multiparty elections, although its early years were marked by competitive authoritarianism under the transition from military to civilian rule of Jerry John Rawlings. Despite contested outcomes, notably in 2012 and 2020, the Electoral Commission and Supreme Court demonstrated institutional resilience by peacefully resolving disputes and avoiding coercive transitions (Brookings, 2025; International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2023; Chin, 2024; Ransford, 2015). Respect for presidential term limits and alternation of power between the NDC and NPP reinforced democratic norms.

This trajectory reflects democratic resilience theory, whereby Ghana absorbed distortions in electoral fairness and executive dominance while preserving constitutional rule, unlike neighbors that experienced breakdowns (Africa-Press, 2024; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Lührmann & Merkel, 2023). The commitment of the elite to electoral outcomes has been central. For

instance, Dr. Bawumia's early concession in the 2024 elections illustrated respect for democratic norms and was widely applauded (Agyekum et al., 2025; Akin & Ade, 2018; JoyNews, 2024). The Supreme Court's adjudication of the 2012 and 2020 petitions further entrenched trust in judicial conflict management (Abass, 2024; Freedom House, 2024; Gyimah-Boadi, 2021). CSOs are pivotal in democratic consolidation. The CDD-Ghana and CODEO promoted voter education, policy advocacy, and election monitoring (Botchway, 2018a; CDD-Ghana, 2024). CODEO's independent verification of results in 2020 reduced tensions and localized violence (Brookings, 2025; Danso et al., 2022). Although Ghanaians overwhelmingly reject military rule, dissatisfaction persists over governance and service delivery (Afrobarometer, 2022). Faith-based groups and traditional authorities also mediated tensions and promoted non-violence (Ahmed, 2022; Albrecht & Edu-Afful, 2024; Haruna, 2024). Media pluralism, enshrined in Chapter 12 of the Constitution, has amplified citizen voices and exposed corruption (Dzisah et al., 2024; Gyekye-Jandoh & Ahmed, 2023). Investigative journalists such as Anas Aremeyaw Anas and Manasseh Azure Awuni pressured institutions through exposés, reinforcing accountability (Delali, 2018; Ofosu et al., 2025; Ransford, 2015). Ghana ranks among Africa's freest media spaces, though partisan polarization increasingly undermines content (Afrobarometer, 2022).

Challenges persist. Executive dominance and winner-takes-all politics undermine checks and balances, particularly through the appointment and dismissal of key institutions such as the Judiciary, Electoral Commission, and Auditor-General (Akin & Ade, 2018; Graphic Online, 2020; Kpessa-Whyte, 2024; Tweneboah-Koduah, 2024). Such practices, which were prevalent between 2017 and 2024, weakened institutional independence and contributed to democratic backsliding. From a neo-institutional perspective, Ghana's formal institutions constrained authoritarian excesses while enabling elite dominance. Unlike Côte d'Ivoire or Guinea, Ghana has not manipulated term limits, reinforcing constitutional stability (Bukari, 2022; Gani et al., 2024; Abass, 2024; Musah, 2020).

Anti-corruption efforts gained traction with the establishment of the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) in 2018, tasked with investigating and prosecuting corruption (OSP, 2018). However, despite EOCO and OSP interventions, enforcement remains weak, with high corruption perceptions persisting (Transparency International, 2024). Scholars argue that Ghana exemplifies a "stagnated democracy," which is resilient against breakdown but lacking substantive reforms (Oduro et al., 2022).

Informal institutions intensify democratic deficits. Patronage networks, clientelism, and politicized appointments weaken accountability (Afrobarometer, 2025; Agyekum et al., 2025; Asima, 2024; Okine, 2021; Sefa-Nyarko, 2022). Campaign financing and recruitment politicization have intensified, eroding public trust in parties and parliament (Afrobarometer, 2023). Citizens' dissatisfaction reflects failures in governance rather than democracy rejection. Ghana positions itself as a defender of the constitutional order within ECOWAS, mediating crises and supporting sanctions against coup regimes, symbolizing West African resistance to democratic decline.

In sum, Ghana's democratic resilience rests on elite commitment, judicial independence, civil society activism, and media pluralism. However, executive dominance, corruption, and informal patronage networks hinder consolidation. Ghana's case illustrates resilience as a mechanism preventing breakdown but insufficient for deepening reforms, situating the country as both a regional model and a "stagnated democracy" struggling to balance resilience with substantive democratic consolidation.

## 5. Comparative Analysis of Ghana and Selected West African Countries

Ghana sustains democratic endurance through institutions, elite commitment, and peaceful alternation, contrasting Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso's breakdowns. Senegal cautiously

aligns, whereas Benin and Nigeria exhibit hybrid regimes. Failures stem from weak institutions, elite capture, poor political culture, and military autonomy, which foster constitutional manipulation and governance collapse. This section compares Ghana's democratic sustainability and endurance with other democratic trajectories in the West African region.

### ***5.1 Democratic Breakdown in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger*** ***The Democratic Breakdown in Mali: 2012, 2020, and 2021***

Mali, once hailed as a model of democratization during Africa's Third Wave (Huntington, 1991), transitioned to multiparty democracy in 1991, signaling its commitment to democratic practices (Christian, 2024; Njoki, 2025). However, its trajectory has sharply declined, marked by three coups in 2012, 2020, and 2021 that dismantled institutions and eroded legitimacy (Njoki, 2025). The 2012 coup ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré, while the 2020 coup removed President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita amid mass protests linked to corruption, economic stagnation, elite divergence, and insecurity from jihadist insurgencies in northern and central Mali (Christian, 2024; Gyimah-Boadi, 2021; Njoki, 2025; Wada & Garba, 2025a). The 2021 coup led by Assimi Goita deposed transitional President Bah N'Daw, reflecting elite disunity and entrenched military autonomy (Falola, 2022). Scholars argue that Mali's backsliding stems from weak civic norms and fragile elite commitment to constitutional order, leaving institutions unable to command legitimacy or regulate political behavior (Christian, 2024). Samarin (2024) noted that the polyarchy and liberal democracy scores in 2022 fell below those of the 1991 transition, underscoring Mali's democratic collapse. Compared to Ghana's resilience, Mali exemplifies fragility, anchored in elite respect for institutions, judicial independence, and peaceful alternation. Its reversals highlight how insecurity and weak institutions undo decades of progress. Elections remain postponed, military dominance persists, and Mali is suspended from ECOWAS and the AU. International partners, including France and the United Nations, have scaled back operations, deepening governance and security vacuums. Thus, the case of Mali illustrates the vulnerability of Sahelian states, where military exploit crises to entrench power. Unlike Ghana's endurance, Mali demonstrates how democratic gains can unravel under corruption, elite fragmentation, and insecurity, leaving the state under authoritarian rule and regional isolation.

### ***The Democratic Breakdown in Guinea: 2021***

In September 2021, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya led a coup against the democratically elected president of Guinea, Alpha Condé, following Mali's military takeover of the region. Doumbouya now serves as Guinea's president (Christian, 2024). Condé, elected in 2010 as Guinea's first democratic leader after decades of authoritarian rule since independence in 1958 (Ayoola et al., 2024; Gyimah-Boadi, 2025), increasingly undermined democratic norms. His 2020 constitutional revision, enabling a third term, triggered mass protests and violent repression during corruption and economic hardship (Edward & Weldone, 2025; Nwagbo & Ofoke, 2025). Crackdowns, imprisonment of opposition leaders, and worsening economic conditions deepened public frustration (Freedom House, 2024; Njoki, 2025).

Condé's authoritarian drift and governance failures facilitated the coup of 2021 (Nord et al., 2025). Institutional weakness and fragmented political consensus have enabled military intervention, eroded constitutional rule, and diminished resistance to future takeovers (Sidi & Adebayo, 2024). The reversals in Guinea illustrate how constitutional manipulation and repression dismantle legitimacy, paving the way for military entrenchment.

The coup parallels the trajectory of Mali, where the military exploited governance crises to consolidate power, reflecting a broader Sahelian pattern. In contrast, Ghana demonstrates resilience: strong institutions, elite consensus, and respect for constitutional limits sustain

democratic stability. Citizens' adherence to constitutional rule reinforces Ghana's endurance, distinguishing it from Guinea and Mali (Abdulai, 2023; Lührmann & Merkel, 2023). Guinea's case demonstrates that democratic gains remain fragile and reversible without institutional strength and respect for constitutional boundaries.

### ***The Democratic Breakdown in Burkina Faso: The 2022 Crisis***

Burkina Faso experienced two conservative coups in 1 year (January 2022-September 2022). In January 2022, a military coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba overthrew President Roch Marc Christian Kabore. Paul-Henri Damiba was appointed as interim president. However, another military coup led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré also ousted Damiba in September 2022. Falola (2022) described it as a "coup within a coup", marking a country that had witnessed two consecutive coups within a year. The action was cited as the state's continued struggle with the growing Jihadist insurgency and widespread public dissatisfaction with state affairs management (Africanews, 2023; Edward & Weldone, 2025; Gyimah-Boadi, 2021). This movement results in incremental institutional weakness and severe democratic setbacks that significantly erode the country's earlier democratic gains.

The 2023 Global Terrorism Report ranked Burkina Faso as the second most terrorist-affected country in the world in 2022 (Africanews, 2023). The Afrobarometer (2024) reports also indicated that public support for democracy has declined by 7% compared to previous years, highlighting the commitment of states and the public to democratic institutions. However, public support for military rule has increased in countries such as Burkina Faso, although opposition to military rule has weakened by 11 % (Adem, 2025; Afrobarometer, 2024; Wada & Garba, 2025b). This indicates the discontent of the military and the public with democratic institutions or governance, coupled with corruption, economic stagnation, and other informal institutional activities, reflecting the turbulent political history of Burkina Faso (Afrobarometer, 2024; Gani et al., 2024; Hall & Taylor, 1996). Thus, the lack of elite commitment and public trust allows the military to view coups as a corrective response to governance failure. This poor democratic outcome contrasts with the case of Ghana, which reflects a relatively high level of public trust in democratic institutions and an elite commitment to respecting constitutional rules and electoral outcomes, which constrains military rule or unconstitutional intervention and executive dominance (Croissant & Lott, 2025; Daffeh et al., 2024; Ransford, 2015). The democratic reversals in Burkina Faso illustrate how fragile institutions, insecurity, and military dominance can undo democratic gains. The double coups of 2022 entrenched authoritarian rule, aligning Burkina Faso with Mali, Guinea, and Niger in West Africa's coup belt in sharp contrast to Ghana's democratic resilience. The Burkina Faso case study demonstrates that democratic transitions remain vulnerable to collapse under security and legitimacy crises without strong institutions and effective governance.

### ***The Democratic Breakdown of Niger: 2023***

In 2011, after years of instability, the election of Mahamadou Issoufou marked a democratic milestone for Niger. Between 2011 and 2021, Niger experienced two rare peaceful transfers of power in the Sahel, positioning it as a democratic outlier compared to Mali and Burkina Faso. The 2021 election brought Mohamed Bazoum to power, succeeding Issoufou in Niger's first democratic handover, hailed as a regional success. However, Bazoum's regime quickly faced institutional fragility and mounting security crises, culminating in the coup of July 2023. The presidential guard detained Bazoum, and General Abdourahamane Tchiani assumed leadership, shocking observers who had considered Niger a democratic bulwark.

The underlying causes included jihadist insurgencies spilling from Mali and Nigeria, weak institutions such as electoral bodies and a judiciary lacking independence, entrenched military

dominance, and corruption and poor governance fueling public disillusionment. These dynamics eroded civilian legitimacy and reinforced the military's role as an arbiter of power. Regional and international responses were swift: ECOWAS suspended Niger and threatened intervention, though divisions undermined enforcement. The AU and UN condemned the coup, while France, the United States, and Russia scrambled to protect their strategic interests. The ECCAS remained silent, reflecting regime solidarity and deficits in credibility. Currently, Niger is under military rule with delayed transition timelines. Civic space is restricted, opposition leaders are harassed, and external actors (Russia, China, and the United States) compete for influence, complicating democratic restoration. Comparative analysis situates Niger's reversals alongside Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, underscoring regional decline in democratic practices (Kumah-Abiwu, 2025; March & Olsen, 2006; Sefa-Nyarko, 2022). In contrast, Ghana exemplifies democratic resilience: strong institutions, elite consensus, and sustained civilian control over military autonomy prevent coups, aligning with democratic resilience theory and neo-institutionalism (Abdulai, 2023; Adem, 2025; Brookings, 2025). In sum, Niger's trajectory demonstrates how fragile institutions and insecurity can undo historic democratic progress. The 2023 coup aligned Niger with the West African coup belt, in sharp contrast to Ghana's resilience.

## ***5.2 Challenging Democratic Resilience in Senegal, Benin, and Nigeria***

### ***Challenging Democratic Resilience in Senegal***

Senegal's democratic trajectory began with the establishment of a multiparty system in 1978, marking a shift toward pluralism. Senegal has been recognized as one of West Africa's most enduring cases of democratic resilience in recent years, often compared to Ghana (BudgIT Senegal Report, 2024). Under President Abdoulaye Wade, constitutional manipulation emerged when the National Assembly extended presidential terms to seven years in 2008, which was approved by the judiciary (BudgIT Senegal Report, 2024; Njoki, 2025; Resnick & Signé, 2025). However, in 2012, opposition leader Macky Sall defeated Wade, promising to restore the five-year limit (Moestrup, 2025). Authoritarian tendencies followed Sall's second victory in 2019. Ahead of the 2024 election, opposition leaders were arrested, protests erupted, and Sall attempted to postpone the elections. The government restricted civil liberties by shutting down mobile internet, seizing broadcast licenses, and violently repressing demonstrations (BudgIT Senegal Report, 2024; Nwagbo & Ofoke, 2025). Civil society, the media, religious leaders, and political elites mobilized against these actions. The constitutional council and judiciary asserted independence, ruling against Sall's postponement and upholding electoral integrity (Fall & Kelly, 2025; Gyimah-Boadi, 2021).

This episode illustrates the strength of informal accountability mechanisms, civil society activism, media vigilance, and judicial independence in reinforcing democratic norms (BudgIT Senegal Report, 2024). Democratic resilience theory emphasizes that survival depends on respect for constitutional rule and institutional reinforcement, principles that Ghana has similarly relied upon (Daffeh et al., 2024; Fall & Kelly, 2025; Gyimah-Boadi, 2021). Senegal remained resilient by 2026, having survived the 2023–2024 constitutional crisis and achieved a peaceful transfer of power to Bassirou Diomaye Faye in April 2024. Although challenges from politicized institutions, opposition repression, and economic pressures persisted, civil liberties and political rights remained relatively strong. Senegal's resilience lies in its tradition of civilian rule, peaceful transitions, and vibrant civil society. Despite its vulnerabilities, Senegal remains far more stable than Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger and closer to Ghana in terms of democratic endurance. Senegal demonstrates that democracy in West Africa can withstand turbulence but requires vigilance against constitutional manipulation and executive overreach.

### ***Benin Republic's Resilience Under Pressure***

Benin Republic represents an instructive case of democratic resilience, long celebrated as a model in West Africa after its 1990 National Conference, which marked its transition to multiparty democracy and alignment with the Third Wave (Ologou, 2023). However, recent years have witnessed executive dominance and winner-take-all politics, restricting opposition participation. Under President Patrice Talon, Benin experienced democratic stress, marked by disturbances and rising authoritarian tendencies (Ologou, 2023; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025). Electoral reforms approved by Talon and the National Assembly extended presidential and legislative terms from five to seven years, deepening elite centralization and weakening competitive multiparty systems. Opposition members were arrested, while increased taxes, political restrictions, and insecurity in the north fueled discontent and even an attempted coup against Talon's government, though unsuccessful (Ofosu et al., 2025; Ologou, 2023).

Despite these upheavals, civil society activists and the constitutional court have resisted executive overreach, constraining constitutional manipulation and protecting democratic norms. Benin's constitutional culture reflects resilience, limiting military interventions and authoritarian consolidation, akin to Ghana's negotiated reforms that entrenched checks and balances. The trajectory of Benin highlights institutional weaknesses and the risks of elite dominance. SefaNyarko (2022) noted that Ghana's resilience stems from its institutional design and political commitment to democratic practices.

Benin's instability illustrates a distinct form of democratic reversal compared with Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Rather than military coups, Benin's decline stems from constitutional manipulation, electoral exclusion, and repression of civil society. This hybrid authoritarianism erodes legitimacy while maintaining formal institutions, showing that democratic erosion can be gradual and legalistic, complicating ECOWAS responses compared to outright coups.

### ***Challenging Democratic Resilience in Nigeria and Hybrid Democratic Outcome***

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, transitioned to civilian democratic rule in 1999, inaugurating the Fourth Republic. Since then, its democratic trajectory has reflected hybrid outcomes of resilience alongside persistent backsliding (Njoki, 2025; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025). Although civil legitimacy remains central, Nigeria has made limited progress during economic crises and insecurity. Since 1999, it has avoided military intervention, sustaining civilian rule and conducting regular multiparty elections. The 2015 defeat of an incumbent president underscored effective competition (Nevobasi, 2024; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025).

Nevobasi (2024) characterized Nigeria as a nascent democracy constrained by a weak constitutional design and divisions among the various religions. Persistent corruption, insecurity, electoral conflict, executive dominance, and religious interference undermine democratic consolidation. Despite localized violence, repeated elections and peaceful transitions demonstrate a political commitment to constitutional rule. Institutional design remains a key factor in the survival of Nigeria as a democracy (ibid).

By 2026, Nigeria has maintained its resilience through multiparty competition and peaceful transfers of power, but under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the quality of governance has declined. Corruption, insecurity, and economic hardship weaken the rule of law, while judicial inconsistencies and governance deficits place Nigeria in the category of "hybrid democracy" rather than a consolidated democracy (Nevobasi, 2024; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025).

In sum, Nigeria's resilience lies in sustaining elections and civilian rule despite deep governance challenges. Nigeria remains a symbolic anchor in West Africa, although weaker institutionally than Ghana, contrasting sharply with coumarone states such as Mali, Guinea,

Burkina Faso, and Niger. Its endurance illustrates how democracy can persist in fragile contexts through CSA, institutional continuity, and regional leadership.

## 6. Regional Comparative Matrix

**Table 1: Regional Comparative Democratic Resilience versus Fragility Matrix of the Selected Countries**

| Country             | The current status of democracy               | Key Features                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ghana</b>        | Flawless and Resilient Democracy              | Peaceful alternations of power since 1992; strong democratic institutions: Constitutionalism, Electoral Commission, judiciary, media, and vibrant civil society. |
| <b>Mali</b>         | Authoritarian regime and democratic reversals | Successive coups (2020, 2021); indefinitely postponed elections; military dominance undermines civilian rule.                                                    |
| <b>Guinea</b>       | Authoritarian regime and democratic reversals | In 2021, the coup ousted Alpha Condé, the military junta was in power, institutions were weak, and dissent was repressed.                                        |
| <b>Burkina Faso</b> | Authoritarian regime and democratic reversals | Two coups in 2022; military-led transition; insecurity in jihadist insurgency.                                                                                   |
| <b>Niger</b>        | Authoritarian regime and democratic reversals | A coup in July 2023 removed the elected president, Mohamed Bazoum, and suspended democratic institutions.                                                        |
| <b>Senegal</b>      | Hybrid and Resilient Democracy                | Historically stable, but the recent constitutional crisis (2023–2024) over term limits and postponed elections has shaken credibility.                           |
| <b>Benin</b>        | Hybrid and Resilient Democracy                | Once a democratic model, now facing shrinking civic space, manipulated elections, and weakened opposition.                                                       |
| <b>Nigeria</b>      | Hybrid and Resilient Democracy                | Election violence, corruption, and weak institutions plague regular elections; civil liberties are under pressure.                                               |

*Source: Based on a systematic literature review, 2026*

These analytical facts from Table 1 are important to note.

- **Resilient democracies** (Ghana, Senegal) thrive on strong institutions, credible elections, civil-society activism, and balanced external relations.
- **The hybrid democracies** of Nigeria and Benin maintain civilian rule but suffer from corruption, constitutional manipulation, and elite dominance.
- **The fragile democratic backsliding states** of Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger illustrate how insecurity, weak institutions, and contested external involvement erode democratic gains and enable coups.

## 6. Lessons Learned and Policy Implications

In recent years, West Africa has experienced a wave of democratic reversals, marked by military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea, along with shrinking civic space in several states. Ghana has stood out as a beacon of stability during this turbulence, maintaining constitutional order, conducting competitive elections, facilitating peaceful transfers of power, and engaging in a vibrant civil society. Ghana has consolidated

democratic institutions since the constitution of 1992, with peaceful alternations of power between the NDC and NPP (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009).

In contrast, after the 1991 transition, Mali's democratic promise collapsed under weak institutions and insecurity, culminating in coups in 2012 and 2020 (Wing, 2013). Guinea's coup of 2021, facilitated by repression and institutional weakness, ousted Alpha Condé. Burkina Faso's 2014 uprising against Blaise Compaoré, driven by constitutional manipulation and poor governance, led to instability and jihadist violence, paving the way for coups in 2022 and 2023 (Hagberg, 2022). Niger succumbed to fragile institutions and security pressures despite democratic openings, resulting in the coup of 2023 (Thurston, 2023). The comparative analysis highlights two tiers of democratic experience. Ghana (and historically Senegal) remains relatively resilient, while Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger have collapsed into military authoritarianism. Benin and Nigeria illustrate hybrid fragility: institutions exist but are undermined by corruption, manipulation, or constitutional crises (Ologou, 2023; Nevobasi, 2024; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025).

The resilience of Ghana and Senegal stems from strong institutions, credible elections, absence of large-scale insurgency, vibrant civil society, and balanced external relations with ECOWAS and the AU. Fragility in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger reflects weak institutions, politicized governance, militarized security crises, delegitimizing civilian governments through external interventions, and shrinking civic space. These cases illustrate how insecurity and contested external involvement erode democratic gains.

The lesson is that democratic resilience requires more than regular elections. It depends on sustained interaction among formal institutions, elite accountability, and civic engagement. Ghana's experience shows that resilience is a long-term process built through institutional strength and normative commitment, thriving even during stressors. Democratic rules and constitutional procedures must command legitimacy and consistent enforcement to sustain resilience. The policy implications emphasize the importance of preventive governance over reactive crisis management. Ghana should prioritize reforms that strengthen accountability, dismantle informal patronage, reduce executive dominance, and address corruption and socioeconomic exclusion to deepen trust. ECOWAS must also move beyond reactive sanctions, strengthen early warning systems, and support electoral processes to ensure quality democracy. Effective enforcement of constitutional rules, robust electoral institutions, active civil society, vibrant media, and anti-coup norms will enhance elite commitment and public trust in West Africa, reducing democratic backsliding.

In sum, Ghana and Senegal demonstrate that democracy can survive turbulence through institutional strength and civic engagement, while Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger reveal how fragility and insecurity enable authoritarian reversals. Nigeria and Benin highlight hybrid pathways, underscoring that resilience is fragile but achievable with PG and robust institutions.

## 7. Conclusion

In recent years, West Africa has faced a wave of democratic reversals, marked by military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea. Ghana has stood out as a beacon of stability during this turbulence, maintaining constitutional order, conducting competitive elections, facilitating peaceful transfers of power, and engaging in a vibrant civil society. Ghana has consolidated democratic institutions since the constitution of 1992, with peaceful alternations of power between the NDC and NPP (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009).

After the 1991 transition, Mali's democratic promise collapsed under weak institutions and insecurity, culminating in coups in 2012 and 2020 (Wing, 2013). Guinea's coup of 2021, facilitated by repression and institutional weakness, ousted Alpha Condé. Burkina Faso's 2014 uprising against Blaise Compaoré, driven by constitutional manipulation and poor

governance, led to instability and jihadist violence, paving the way for coups in 2022 and 2023 (Hagberg, 2022). Niger succumbed to fragile institutions and security pressures despite democratic openings, resulting in the coup of 2023 (Thurston, 2023).

A comparative analysis highlights two tiers of democratic experience. Ghana (and historically Senegal) remains resilient, while Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger have collapsed into military authoritarianism. Benin and Nigeria illustrate hybrid fragility: institutions exist but are undermined by corruption, manipulation, or constitutional crises (Ologou, 2023; Nevobasi, 2024; Saka, Adekunle et al., 2025).

The resilience of Ghana and Senegal stems from strong institutions, credible elections, absence of large-scale insurgency, vibrant civil society, and balanced external relations with ECOWAS and the AU. Fragility in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger reflects weak institutions, politicized governance, militarized security crises, delegitimizing civilian governments through external interventions, and shrinking civic space. These cases illustrate how insecurity and contested external involvement erode democratic gains.

The lesson is that democratic resilience requires more than regular elections. It depends on sustained interaction among formal institutions, elite accountability, and civic engagement. Ghana's experience shows that resilience is a long-term process built through institutional strength and normative commitment, thriving even during stressors. Democratic rules and constitutional procedures must command legitimacy and consistent enforcement to sustain resilience. The policy implications emphasize the importance of preventive governance over reactive crisis management. Ghana should prioritize reforms that strengthen accountability, dismantle informal patronage, reduce executive dominance, and address corruption and socioeconomic exclusion. ECOWAS must move beyond reactive sanctions, strengthen early warning systems, and support electoral processes. Effective enforcement of constitutional rules, robust institutions, active civil society, vibrant media, and anti-coup norms will enhance elite commitment and public trust in West Africa, reducing democratic backsliding. Thus, this regional comparative analysis highlights the fact that democracy in West Africa is not uniformly fragile; rather, resilience is possible when institutions, civil society, and external actors align to reinforce legitimacy. Evidently, the study's significance goes beyond Ghana, contributing to the broader debate on African democratization by focusing on adaptability, resilience, and institutional authority to enhance regional stability.

## References

- Abass, U. (2024). Democracy: A Reflection on Ghana's Republics, 1960-1992. *Africanania*, 4(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.58851/africanania.1290002>
- Abdulai, K. M. (2023). An evaluation of the quality of democracy of Ghana. *Democracy and Security*, 19(4), 347–388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2023.2220140><https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2023.2220140>
- Adem, S. I. (2025). Democratic Decay in Africa: Reflection on the System of Governance and Poor Leadership. *International Journal of Research in Education, Humanities and Commerce*, 06(01), 141–158. <https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2025.6111>
- Africanews. (2023). *Burkina Faso ranked 2nd in Global Terrorism Impact* | Africanews. <https://www.africanews.com/2023/03/28/burkina-faso-ranked-2nd-in-global-terrorism-impact/>
- Afrobarometer. Making our peace with democracy: Insights from Afrobarometer - Ghana Center for Democratic Development. Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://cddgh.org/2022/03/30/making-our-peace-with-democracy-insights-from-afrobarometer/>.
- Afrobarometer. (2024). *African insights 2024: Democracy at risk-the people's perspective*. Retrieved from <https://www.afrobarometer.org/feature/flagship-report/>
- Agyekum, H. A., Bob-Milliar, G. M., Lauterbach, K., & Thiel, A. (2025). *Ghana's 2024 elections: Ghanaians' vote for renewal and accountability*. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 59, 63–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397251352867>
- Ahmed, A. H. (2022). Ghana's Rebellious Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation: A Critical Assessment of #Fixthecountry Movement. *H. A.*, 2. <https://www.h.ac.uk/>
- Akin, P. M., & Ade, O. F. (2018). Democratic consolidation in Africa: The Ghanaian paradigm. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 3(1). <https://ijels.com/detail/democratic-consolidation-in-africa-the-ghanaian-paradigm/>
- Albrecht, P., & Edu-Afful, F. (2024). Peacekeeping, policing and politics: Assembling the Ghana Armed Forces. *International Affairs*, 100(3), 961–980. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaae065>
- Arrey, W. H., & Tsidie, S. T. N. (2021). The democratization process in Cameroon, thirty (30) years after democratic transition (1990-2020): achievements, challenges, uncertainties and prospects. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, V(IX, September 2021).
- Arugay, A. A. (2021). Democratic transitions. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies* (pp. 1–7). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74336-3\\_190-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74336-3_190-1)
- Asante, J. K. (2023). Identity politics and electoral outcomes in Ghana: the interplay of ethnicity, religion, and political mobilization. *African Journal of Emerging Issues*, 5(17), 261–277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aje.2023.17.261>
- Asima, C. K. (2024, October 25). *Ghanaians' trust in key institutions at record low—Afrobarometer report*. Retrieved from <https://citinewsroom.com/2024/10/ghanaians-trust-in-key-institutions-at-record-low-cdd-ghanas-afrobarometer-report-reveals/>.
- Ayoola, A. O., Ojo, S. A., & Kugbayi, O. (2024). The fragility of democracy in Africa: Are military coups d'état a never-ending issue? *PanAfrican Journal of Governance and Development (PJGD)*, 5(2), 80–104. <https://doi.org/10.46404/panjogov.v5i2.5703><https://doi.org/10.46404/panjogov.v5i2.5703>
- Bob-Milliar, G. M., & Madsen, D. H. (2025). *Ghana's democracy stress tested—three milestones passed: Women remain severely underrepresented*.

- Bob-Milliar, G. M., & Paller, J. W. (2018). Democratic ruptures and electoral outcomes in Africa: Ghana's 2016 election. *Africa Spectrum*, 53(1), 5–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971805300102><https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971805300102>
- Boese, V. A., Edgell, A. B., Hellmeier, S., Maerz, S. F., & Lindberg, S. I. (2021). *How democracies prevail: Democratic resilience as a two-stage process*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2021.1891413>
- Botchway, T. P. (2018a). Civil society and the consolidation of democracy in Ghana's fourth republic. *Powerful Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1452840. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1452840>
- Botchway, T. P. (2018b). Ghana: A Consolidated Democracy? *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ARJASS/2018/39713>
- Brookings. (2025). Why does Ghana's democracy hold steady in a turbulent democratic landscape? Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-does-ghanas-democracy-hold-steady-in-a-turbulent-democratic-landscape/>
- BudgIT Senegal Report. (2024, April 18). Senegal's 2024 election: How civil society and youth protected democracy. Retrieved from <https://senegal.budgetit.org/2024/04/18/senegals-2024-election-how-civil-society-and-youth-protected-democracy/>
- Bukari, G. A. (2022). Political Economy of Elections and Voting Behavior in Ghana's Fourth Republic, 1992-2020. *Africa Journal of Public Sector Development and Governance*, 5(1), 86–108. <https://doi.org/10.55390/ajpsdg.2022.5.1.4><https://doi.org/10.55390/ajpsdg.2022.5.1.4>
- CDD-Ghana. (2024, December 19). *The 2024 Presidential & Parliamentary Elections: Electoral Competition and the Future of Ghana's Democracy*-Ghana Center for Democratic Development. <https://cddgh.org/2024/12/19/the-2024-presidential-parliamentary-elections-electoral-competition-and-the-future-of-ghanas-democracy/>.
- Chin, J. J. (2024). Why Ghana's election matters across Africa. *Journal of Democracy*. Retrieved from <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/online-exclusive/why-ghanas-election-matters-across-africa/>
- Christian, N. A. (2024). Democracy's discontent and the resurgence of coups in West Africa: implications for Africa. *African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration*, 7(1), 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.52589/AJLPRA-UNWJTJEN>
- Croissant, A., & Lott, L. (2025). *Democratic resilience in the twenty-first century: Search for an Analytical Framework and Explorative Analysis—Aurel Croissant, Lars Lott*, 2025. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00323217251345779>
- Daffeh, A., Abdul Wahid, M., & Bangura, A. K. (2024). Trends in democratic governance in West Africa: A case study of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Ghana. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 67–79. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/trends-in-democratic-governance-in-west-africa-a-case-study-of-the-gambia-sierra-leone-and-ghana/>
- Danso, F., Aubyn, F. K., & Boateng, B. (2022). Ensuring peaceful elections in Ghana: The role of civil society organizations in the 2020 elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 22(2), 174–195. <https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2023/v22i2a8><https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2023/v22i2a8>
- Delali, A.-B. (2018, December 16). *Akufo-Addo fires Justice Dery, two other judges over Anas exposé*. Retrieved from <https://citinewsroom.com/2018/12/akufo-addo-fires-justice-dery-two-other-judges/>

- Dzisah, W., Diedong, A., Asante, J., & Asare, K. (2024). Media business ownership and control in Ghana's democracy. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 17(1), 104–118. <https://doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v17i1.8>
- Edward, T. C., & Weldone, D. O. (2025). Resurgence of military rule in West Africa and the formation of the alliance of Sahel states: Implications for regional stability. *Journal of Political Studies in Law Review*, 11(8), pp. 78–93. <https://doi.org/10.56201/jpslr.vol.11.no8.2025.pg78.93>
- Fall, I., & Kelly, C. L. (2025). Why Senegal's Democracy Survived. *Journal of Democracy*. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/why-senegals-democracy-survived/>
- Falola, T. (2022, January 29). Are coups back in Africa? *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/508569-are-coups-back-in-africa-by-toyin-falola.html?tztc=1>.
- Freedom House. (2024). *Africa marks a decade of decline in freedom, with 2023 being marred by electoral violence and civil conflict*. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-africa-marks-decade-decline-freedom-2023-being-marred-electoral-violence-and>
- Gani, F., Archellie, R. D., Waworuntu, A. L. G., Alkatiri, Z., & Holil, M. (2024). Neo-institutionalism perspective on local governance in Lombok: Reinstitutionalisation of Tuan Guru in the Indonesian decentralization era. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, 8(10), 8373. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i10.8373>
- Ghanaians decry widespread corruption, Afrobarometer survey shows. Afrobarometer. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/ghanaians-decry-widespread-corruption-afrobarometer-survey-shows/>
- Ghana-Press. (2024, December 8). Ghana Consolidates Democracy with Ninth Elections in Fourth Republic. Accessed December 8, 2019. <https://www.africa-press.net/ghana/all-news/ghana-consolidates-democracy-with-ninth-elections-in-fourth-republic>
- Graphic Online. (2020, July 3). *Domelevo replies Akufo-Addo: Proceed on leave directive is unconstitutional*. Retrieved from <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/domelevo-responds-to-akufo-addo-s-directive-to-proceed-on-leave.html>.
- Gyekye-Jandoh, M. A., & Ahmed, A. H. (2023). Ghana's democracy and the digital public sphere: Some pertinent issues. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 10(1), 139–168. <https://doi.org/10.4314/contjas.v10i1.6>
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2021). *Democratic Backsliding in West Africa: Nature, Causes, Remedies*. New York: Harper.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2025). *Africa's Unfinished Democratic Journey: My Modest Part*.
- Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). Political science and the three new institutions. *Political Studies*, 44(5), 936–957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00343.x>
- Haruna, A. I. (2024). Electoral politics and democratic governance in Ghana: The role of civil society organizations. *The Brooklyn Research and Publishing Institute*, 11, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jppg.v11p1>
- Helmke, G., & Levitsky, S. (2006). *Informal institutions and democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hugues, D. P. (2024). *Democracy and Autocracy in Africa*. Volume 03(05 May 2024), 480–483. <https://doi.org/10.58806/ijsshmr.2024.v3i5n03>
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy*. Retrieved from <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/democracys-third-wave/>
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). (2023). *Paths to Democratic Resilience in an Era of Backsliding: A Roadmap for the Democracy Support Community | IFES - The International Foundation for Electoral Systems*.

- <https://www.ifes.org/pub/paths-democratic-resilience-era-backsliding/understanding-democratic-backsliding>
- JoyNews. (2024). *Bawumia concedes defeat, calls for unity after NPP's massive election loss—MyJoyOnline*. Retrieved from <https://www.myjoyonline.com/bawumia-concedes-defeat-calls-for-unity-after-npps-massive-election-loss/>
- Kpessa-Whyte, M. (2024). Blighting the 'Bright Star' through Constitutional Tyranny: Nana Akufo-Addo and Democratic Backsliding in Ghana. *Journal of African Politics*, 4(2), 01–19. <https://doi.org/10.58548/2024jap42.0119>
- Kumah-Abiwu, F. (2025). Three decades of democratic rule in Ghana: Progress, perils and promises of the Fourth Republic. *Democratization*, 0(0), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2025.2508249>
- Linz, J. J., & Stepan, A. C. (1996). Toward Consolidated Democracies. *Journal of Democracy*, 7(2), 14–33.
- Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2006). *Why Institutions Matter: The New Institutionalism In Political Science [PDF] [3se82kmsqk5g]*. Retrieved from <https://vdoc.pub/documents/why-institutions-matter-the-new-institutionalism-in-political-science-3se82kmsqk5g>
- Lührmann, A., & Merkel, W. (2023). *Resilience of democracy: responses to illiberal and authoritarian challenges*. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Resilience-of-democracy-responses-to-illiberal-and-authoritarian-challenges/Luhrmann-Merkel/p/book/9781032426167>
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2006). The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life. *American Political Science Review* 78 (September): 734–49 Cited 456 times. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4), 675–675. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055406272563>
- Merkel, W. (2025). What is democratic resilience? *Democratization*, 0(0), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2025.2590677>
- Moestrup, S. (2025, July 1). *Democratic Resilience and Resistance to Third-Term Manipulation in West Africa*
- Musah, H. (2020). Democratic sustainability and conflict resilience in Ghana's democratic system. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, 1(2), 55–77. <https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v1i2.13>
- Nevobasi, A. A. (2024). *An evaluation of democratization processes in West Africa: A comparative analysis of Nigeria's and Ghana's democratic governance*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/44609>
- Njoki, E. (2025). Democratic Backsliding and Military Coups in West Africa: Strategies to Reverse Erosion and Strengthen Political Stability. *International Policy Review (IPR)*, (1), 4.2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipr.2025.04.2>
- Nord, M., Altman, D., Angiolillo, F., Fernandes, T., Good God, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2025). *25 years of autocratization - democracy Trumped? Democracy Report 2025* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 5227625). Social Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5227625>
- Nwagbo, S. N. C., & Ofoke, I. I. (2025). Resurgence of coup d'état in West Africa and democratic consolidation: Assessing the role of ECOWAS. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/resurgence-of-coup-detat-in-west-africa-and-democratic-consolidation-assessing-the-role-of-ecowas/>
- Oduro, F., Selvik, L.-M., & Dupuy, K. (2022). Ghana: A stagnated democratic trajectory. In *Democratic Backsliding in Africa?: Autocratization, Resilience, and Contention*,

- edited by L. R. Arriola, L. Rakner, and N. van de Walle (Oxford University Press), p. 0 (Oxford, UK). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192867322.003.0005>
- Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP), G. (2018). *The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP), Ghana*. <https://osp.gov.gh>
- Ofori, G., Armah-Attah, D., Dome, M. Z., & Selormey, E. (2025). *Ghana's Democracy under the Fourth Republic*. The Brookings Africa Growth Initiative (AGI). <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/washU/Ghanas-democracy-under-the-fourth-republic-1.pdf>
- Okine, N. A. (2021, March 10). *Domelevo's forced retirement is unlawful-CSOs*. Retrieved from <https://citinewsroom.com/2021/03/domelevos-forced-retirement-unlawful-csos/>
- Ologou, E. (2023). Democracy captured in Benin. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369506505\\_Democracy\\_Capture\\_in\\_Benin](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369506505_Democracy_Capture_in_Benin)
- Ransford, O. D. (2015). *Beyond Elections: Ghana's Democracy from the Citizenry Perspective*
- Resnick, D., & Signé, L. (2025). *Prospects for democratic resilience in Africa during uncertain times*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prospects-for-democratic-resilience-in-africa-during-uncertain-times/>.
- Saka, M., Adekunle, A. A., & Sulley, I. (2025). Democratic consolidation: The study of post-third wave democratization in Ghana and Nigeria. *Uganda Pentecostal University Journal of Sustainable Development*, 1(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.69612/upujsd-2025-11-010>
- Samarin, M. (2024). *Mali: Desk study on aid and democracy*. UNU-WIDER. <https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/IMPB3542>
- Sefa-Nyarko, C. (2022). Institutional design of Ghana and the Fourth Republic: On the checks and balances between the state and society. *Third World Quarterly*, 43(8), 2006–2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2079487>
- Sidi, A. J., & Adebayo, P. (2024). *Undemocratisation and military coup d'état in Guinea, West Africa*. *Journal of Political Economy*, 8(2), 229–241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpe.2024.04.024>.
- Transparency International. (2024, January 30). *2023 Corruption Perceptions Index—Explore Ghana's results*. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>
- Tuffuor, K. A., Acquah, J. D., & Boateng, J. S. (2025). *Consolidating Democracy in Ghana: The Role of the Social Sciences*. Aior. <https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/id/JSParchives/consolidating-democracy-in-ghana%3A-the-role-of-the-social-sciences?>
- Tweneboah-Koduah, D. (2024). Political Parties: Builders and Destroyers of Ghana's Drive to Democratic Consolidation. *Social Sciences*, 13(3), 61–73. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ss.20241303.13>
- Wada, Y. M., & Garba, M. K. (2025a). Democratic backsliding in West Africa: An analysis of ECOWAS's response to military coups. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(9), 79–82. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v4i9.582>
- Wada, Y. M., & Garba, M. K. (2025b). *Democratic Backsliding in West Africa: An Analysis of ECOWAS's Response to Military Coups* | *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. <https://sprinpub.com/sjahss/article/view/sjahss.v4i9.582>
- Walz, K., Merten, L., Rosenthal, M., Niedringhaus, J., & Helgest, J. (2025). From latest buzzword to conceptual framework: Unraveling the complexities of democratic resilience. *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 19(1), 93–122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-024-00618-7https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-024-00618-7>

Wing, S. D. (2013). *Mali's Precarious Democracy and the Causes of Conflict*. United States Institute of Peace.