How Do Voters Decide? A Study of the Determinants of Voting Behavior in Ghana

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HOW DO VOTERS DECIDE? A STUDY OF THE DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN GHANA.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

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Abstract


What factors influence voting behavior in Ghana? This thesis investigates this question using a survey data conducted in four regions in Ghana. A descriptive analyses and logistic regression of the data show that candidate personality and campaign promises are the most important predictors of vote choice. The study further found that ethnic and economic variables are minor features of voting behavior in Ghana: they do not influence how the majority of the electorate make voting decisions. This finding challenges the conventional view on Ghana’s elections that presume that elections are simply an ethnic census. Additionally, the finding suggests that majority of the Ghanaian people are evaluative voters who make voting decisions upon careful assessment of the competence of contesting candidates and campaign promises. Overall, this study draws attention to the importance of personality and pragmatic policies in winning elections. Accordingly, politicians need to be concerned about the public perception of their credibility and image, as well as the policies they bring to the campaign platform.

Keywords: Ghana, Voting Behavior, Swing and Core Voters, Voter Choice.
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### Abbreviations

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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Avoidance of Discrimination Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AED</td>
<td>African Election Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRC</td>
<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRP</td>
<td>All Peoples Republican Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYO</td>
<td>Anlo Youth Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG</td>
<td>Commonwealth Observer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Convention People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFP</td>
<td>Democratic Freedom Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECG</td>
<td>Electoral Commission of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY</td>
<td>Federation for Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>The Great Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>Ghana Action Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCP</td>
<td>Ghana Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCPP</td>
<td>Great Consolidated Popular Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Ghana National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>Independent Electoral Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAC</td>
<td>Inter-Party Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>Muslim Association Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAL</td>
<td>National Alliance of Liberals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIP</td>
<td>National Independence Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLC</td>
<td>National Liberation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>National Redemption Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRP</td>
<td>National Reform Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVNV</td>
<td>No Verification No Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>The Progressive Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFP</td>
<td>Popular Front Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHP</td>
<td>People’s Heritage Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>People’s National Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNDC</td>
<td>Provisional National Defense Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>People’s National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Progress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Presidential Transition Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>Supreme Military Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Togoland Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGCC</td>
<td>United Gold Coast Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC</td>
<td>United National Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United Nationalist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>United Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

One of the most interesting questions about election is not necessarily concerned with who won, but, rather, with why people voted the way they did and what the implications of those votes are. This study will explore how voters in a democracy make their voting choice. It focuses on voters in Ghana, particularly concerning the most significant factors that influence vote choice in its swing and core regions. This chapter provides a detailed and comprehensive overview of the context for the primary research question of this study: What factors influence voting behavior in Ghana?

1.1 Background

According to Ayee (1997), elections are indispensable to democracies because they provide an opportunity for citizens to endorse or reject an incumbent. In democracies an election offers the citizenry an avenue to choose their representatives; it is an act which is fundamental to the exercise of legitimate authority. Additionally, many citizens view participating in the democratic system through voting as the single most important—and often the only—political act that they will ever undertake. Therefore, free and fair elections are essential in any democracy, as it enables the masses to elect their preferred leaders (Erdmann 2004). Given the necessity of this political ritual in conferring legitimate political authority, the question of what shapes voters’ political preferences—mainly how and why citizens vote—has long been germane in the study of political science.
Research on voting behavior indicates that a myriad of factors impact people’s vote choice. For example, voters may be influenced by elements related to economic conditions, ethnicity, identity, candidate personality, political party affiliation, incumbent performance, and campaign issues. Based on studies conducted internationally, analysts have found that voters may base their decisions on one or more of the above factors. In the United States, although issues such as immigration and abortion may influence vote choice, party identification strongly determines voting preferences (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes 1964; Baum and Klein 2007; Rock and Baum 2010). Indeed, the dominant view is that rational evaluations are the primary driver of voting behavior and electoral outcomes in Western democracies. However, the same has not been said of African democracies.

Numerous writers suggests that voting behavior in Africa is influenced by distinctive factors, such as ethnicity, family lineages, and religion (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Barkan 1979; Ferree 2004, 2008; Lindberg et al 2008; Horowitz 1985). Nonetheless, other scholars, including Lindberg and Morrison (2007), Anebo (2006) and Debrah (2008) have downplayed the salience of ethnicity in African elections. They posit that African voters are influenced by a host of other factors, such as party affiliation, campaign issues, and incumbent performance, with ethnicity being a minor feature of African elections.

The above contrasting views suggest that the motivation of African voters is not so easily defined. Thus, if voters distinctively vote based on what they perceive to be their economic interests, then why do incumbent parties and candidates often get re-elected in the face of untold hardship and poor economic conditions in their respective countries? Furthermore, if voters vote based on their respective ethnicities, then why do so many democratically elected African presidents hail from minority ethnic groups (Bratton, Bhavnani and Chen 2012)? Additionally,
the party in power should remain largely unchanged for extended periods of time if voter choice is determined primarily by stable sociological factors (Adams and Agomor 2014). The mixed reality is that over the past two decades and earlier, countries such as Cape Verde, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal, and Zambia have had successive elections leading to peaceful alternations of power, while other countries such as Botswana and South Africa have had one party in power for an extensive period of time.

What, then, determines voting preference in Africa? On what basis do voters decide how they will cast their ballots when they go to the polls, and what are the reasons for preferring one candidate or party over others in an election? Using Ghana as an exploratory case study, this thesis seeks to answer the above questions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Since its independence in 1957, Ghana has experienced a number of democratic elections and military takeover of civilian regimes, which have produced the First, Second, Third and Fourth Republics (Asah-Asante 2015). The democratic regime of the current Fourth Republic, came into being as Ghana established a constitutional rule in 1992. Since this period, the country has made significant advancements towards the consolidation of electoral democracy (Adjei 2012). Under the Fourth Republic, Ghana has held seven successive presidential and parliamentary elections every four years since 1992, which have resulted in three peaceful alternations of power between the two main political parties: the incumbent, New Patriotic Party (NPP), and the opposition, National Democratic Congress (NDC). With these peaceful transfers of power between the incumbent and the opposition, Ghana has passed the Huntington’s two
turn-over test of democratic consolidation and thus became a successful case in establishing and maintaining democratic governance in Africa (Adjei 2012; Huntington 1991).

While Ghana’s multi-party system advances and is generally hailed as a model for Africa, its voting pattern has become a concern, particularly in the stronghold regions of the two main political parties: the NPP and the NDC (Adjei 2012). Voting outcomes over the past two decades show that out of the ten political regions in Ghana, six are core regions shared among the two main parties, while four are considered swing regions. The NDC and NPP have their stronghold in the Volta and Ashanti region, respectively. Since the first general election in 1992, these two parties have always won the majority of votes from their core regions. Although the two parties have overwhelming support from their core regions, it is victory in the swing regions that ultimately determines who wins political power in Ghana. In the swing regions, the two parties have relatively equal electoral strength, which make the elections more competitive. Unlike the core regions which consistently votes for one party, the swing regions alternate their votes in successive elections. Indeed, none of the political parties has been able to win three consecutive elections in the swing regions. It is the variations in the voting pattern of these swing regions that has made a change in government possible in the 2000, 2008 and 2016 elections.

The electoral data on Ghana shows that a political party must secure the majority of votes in all of the four swing regions in order to win political power. The direction of votes in these regions has always predicted which party wins the elections (Ghana Electoral Commission 2017). In all the seven elections conducted under the Fourth Republic, the party that formed the next government won its core region, as well as the majority of votes in all the four swing regions. In 1992 and 1996, the NDC won the Volta region, its stronghold, plus the four swing
regions to secure victory in the general elections. In the first alternation of power in election 2000, the opposition NPP won overwhelmingly in the Ashanti region, its stronghold and the four swing regions before winning the general election. The incumbent NPP again won these same regions in the 2004 general elections. In the second alternation in the 2008 elections, the incumbent NPP won in their home region of Ashanti, but lost in all the four swing regions to the opposition NDC. The incumbent party, the NDC, retained power in 2012 by winning its core region and all the swing regions. This trend continued in the third alternation in the 2016 elections when the opposition NPP won the presidential election by winning in all the four swing regions in addition to their stronghold core region. These dynamics shows that electoral victory therefore depends not just on winning a core region, but also on getting a majority in all of the four swing regions. The swing regions have always voted together; hence, a party can win its core region, but it will lose power if it fails to attain the majority of votes in the swing regions.

The electoral results from 1992 to 2016 show that the electorate voted out incumbent governments on three occasions, making possible the change of government between the two main political parties, the NPP and NDC. The swing regions differ from the core regions in their voting pattern. While the core regions consistently voted for one party, the swing regions have not. With this observed voting pattern, this thesis asks the following question: what factors influence voting behavior in Ghana? What are the major determinants of voter choice in the swing and core regions? To what extent do ethnic and economic variables explain voting behavior? In general, the study will explore the extent to which vote choice is influenced by economic factors, candidate personality, campaigns and/or ethnic considerations in new consolidating democracies.
1.3 Hypothesis

The general assumption within the literature is that elections in Africa are heavily influenced by ethnicity. Using Ghana as a case study, this thesis seeks to test this commonly held viewpoint.

The study hypothesizes that ethnic considerations determine electoral outcomes in the core regions, while economic factors drive electoral outcomes in the swing regions.

1.4 Research Design and Methodology

1.4.1 Case Profile

Ghana is a unitary state, with ten administrative regions and a population of approximately 30 million. The Republic of Ghana is a constitutional democracy, ruled by a president who is both the head of state and the head of government. Since its transition from military dictatorships to a multi-party democracy in 1992, Ghana is considered one of the most stable democracies in Africa.

1.4.2 Research Methods

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data to answer the research question. Creswell (2013) and Silverman (2005) support such a combination of techniques and suggest that researchers have to abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative methods, and instead make use of the most valued features of each. Consequently, the use of mixed methods in this study helps to do away with the inadequacies inherent in using only one methodology. Again, the mixed approach offers the researcher the opportunity and space to access more of the required information than a single approach could.
The qualitative data was obtained from secondary sources and is mainly descriptive. They include the electoral results published by the Electoral Commission of Ghana from 1951 to 2016, as well as the Freedom House reports and the United Nations (UN) reports, Ghanaian periodicals, and other relevant publications. The quantitative analysis is based on primary data obtained from a survey of voters in Ghana. The target population of this study consisted of every registered voter in two selected swing regions (Central and Greater Accra), and two core regions (Ashanti and Volta Region). The survey questionnaires were administered to 300 respondents between June 15 and August 12 in 2017. Out of the 300 respondents, 75 were interviewed in each of the four regions. It involved only participants who were 18 years old and above and who had voted in at least one of the previous presidential elections.¹

In conducting the survey, the researcher used a structured questionnaire. It consists of closed-ended questions in which the respondent is asked to select an answer from a few options provided by the researcher (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire has two sections: the first set of questions pertains to demographic information, and the second mainly relates to political and voting behavior. The demographic section covers basic questions that determine the participants’ gender, age, income, and language. For the purpose of establishing insight into their political attitudes and behaviors, respondents were asked questions regarding some of the significant factors that are known to impact vote choice. In addition, they were asked to indicate whether or not they identify with any of the political parties in Ghana. To gain further insights into the motivation of voter choice, voters were asked if they consider factors such as the economy, the

¹ In Ghana, only those 18 years and above can register to participate in elections.
personality of candidates, ethnicity and identity, partisan affiliation, and campaign issues when casting their ballot.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to provide insight into the determinants of electoral outcomes in Ghana. As Ghana’s democracy progresses with seven successive elections and three alternations in power, the findings of this study could serve as an illustration of how a multi-ethnic state can overcome ethnic voting to achieve competitive elections and alternation in power, a hallmark of a functioning democracy. Determinants of voting decisions in Ghana remain under-researched; therefore, findings from this study will add to existing knowledge, and pave the way for future research on elections and voter choice. Currently, not much is known about how voters decide in the swing regions, which have been christened as the king makers. As a result, this study seeks to add to the existing knowledge in the field. More generally, the findings may aid in improving our understanding, not only of electoral processes in Ghana, but also in other countries where elections have been understood as ethnic census.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The main finding of this study relies on the analysis of survey data; as a result, the success of this research, to a very large extent, was dependent on the respondents’ openness and willingness to participate. Hence, some limitations faced in this study included interpreting the survey questionnaire into the local languages of the respondents, scarcity of time on the part of the informants, as well as the respondents’ honesty in providing answers to the questionnaire. Additionally, although the selection of the sampling population was conducted randomly in order to include people of diverse demographic backgrounds to reflect the actual demographic
population of Ghana, the relatively limited sample size of 300 voters means that this study’s conclusions will need to be supplemented with additional research to support any generalizations made about the voting behavior in Ghana.

Another challenge encountered throughout the study included potential respondents’ refusal to participate. The fact the fieldwork was conducted a few months after the December 2016 general elections may have increased the rate of refusal as some people perceived it to be a government-backed project. Alternatively, following the change of government in the 2016 elections, some potential participants may have feared the research was sanctioned by the new government to identify supporters and opponents of the new regime. The respondents who were more critical of the ruling party may have refused to sign the consent form or have the interviews recorded. To overcome this problem, I had to show proof that I was a researcher from an American University on numerous occasions. Although this was time-consuming, it, ultimately, helped to obtain the trust of some of the subjects.

Finally, it is also possible that the findings of this study may be inadvertently affected by methodological and procedural challenges. This could stem from multiple situations including unintentional ambiguity in the wording of the questionnaire and the respondents’ misunderstanding of the question. When this happens, the survey will produce inaccurate data, thus affecting the quality of the research. Therefore, readers are cautioned against making oversimplistic interpretations of the findings as presented in this study.

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2 It is also possible that the selection of the participants of the study sample was not random enough; hence, the data obtained from the subjects may not adequately reflect or represent the actual situation of the larger population.
1.7 Summary

This chapter presented a brief synopsis of the foundation for this study and its objectives. The study seeks to answer the following question: What factors influence voting behavior in Ghana? In this regard, the thesis is primarily designed as a representative, nationwide sample study, employing mixed methods of collecting quantitative and qualitative data. The aim is not only to generalize about voting behavior based on the case study of Ghana, but also to gain an insight into how voters make their electoral decisions. Findings from the study may aid in understanding electoral dynamics in Ghana and elsewhere, particularly where elections are viewed as an “ethnic census.”
CHAPTER TWO

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The determinants of voter choice has been a much-researched and frequently debated source of academic inquiry. Over the years, many scholars have examined voting behavior from different theoretical approaches, utilizing a variety of data, and have arrived at several different answers. Therefore, in an attempt to unveil the motivations of Ghanaian voters, this chapter reviews and summarizes the major schools of thought surrounding the “why” of voting behavior. The dominant theories used to explain voting behavior are the sociological model, often referred to as the Columbia School; the psychological model, sometimes called the Michigan School and the rational-choice approach. Although all these theories illustrate different kinds of voting behavior, they are not isolated from one another; in fact, in many cases, these approaches are complementary and interconnected. Taken together, these theories offer insight into the thought processes of voters and an explanation as to why they vote the way they do.

2.1 What is Voting Behavior?

Voting behavior refers to human activity in the context of elections. It is defined as a set of related personal and electoral actions, which may include participation in electoral campaigns, voter turnout, and choosing for whom to vote (Bratton 2013). Thus, it encompasses both the actions and inactions of people regarding electoral participation, as well as for whom to support if one decides to engage in the voting process (Rule 2014). Therefore, the study of voting behavior constitutes an attempt at unpacking the context in which voters make decisions about
candidates and parties. Such a study opens a window to the minds of the millions of people who are involved in the political process as voters.

The studies on electoral behavior have shown that voting decisions do not take place in a vacuum; instead, they are based upon a person’s life experiences. Voters’ choices are likely influenced by a multiplicity of factors. For example, research have shown that the electorate may determine their votes on the basis of one or more of the following considerations: (1) the performance of the government in power, (2) the personality of candidates, (3) the voters’ positions or orientations on specific issues, (4) partisanship or party affiliation, (5) the state of the economy, and/or (6) the identity or ethnic background of the candidate (Prysby and Scavo 1993). According to Heywood (2002), these considerations are shaped by short-term and long-term influences. The short-term influences are specific to a particular election and are susceptible to substantial shifts from one election to the next. Examples of this include the state of the economy, the government’s performance, or the candidate’s personality. However, other factors, such as party loyalty are more stable in the long-run (Hazarika 2015; Prysby and Scavo 1993; Heywood 2002).

Another potentially strong short-term influence on voter choice is the mass media. The mass media, particularly radio and television, have grown increasingly important in influencing electoral outcomes (Ball and Peters 2005). In contemporary times, political parties and politicians have effectively utilized social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to convey their campaign messages to the populace. The media plays a crucial role in making information readily available to the voters, upon which they base their voting decisions (Popkin 1991). Nonetheless, the media has also become a channel for spreading false stories, which tend to
negatively affect the electoral behavior of voters (Kurtzleben 2017; Gunther, Beck and Nisbet 2018).

The aforementioned factors which influence voter behavior operate within the context of the three main competing and overlapping classical theoretical paradigms: the Sociological model, the Psychological model, and the Rational-choice model of voting. The Sociological approach concentrates on the relationship between the individual and the social structure. It situates voting in a social context, examining the effects that variables such as area of residence, social class, ethnicity, and religion have on voting (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944; Harrop and Miller 1987). The Psychological approach ties voting decisions to the voter’s psychological predispositions and attitudes, such as one’s party affiliation, attitude towards candidates, and positions on issues (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960). Lastly, the Rational-choice approach attempts to explain voting behavior as a rational self-interest decision, stemming from the instrumental cost-benefit calculus of the individual voter (Downs 1957; Olayode 2015). These three models constitute the basic and underlying theoretical framework of this study.

2.2 Review of the Literature

As was noted earlier, three schools of thought dominate the voting behavior research namely the Sociological School, the Psychological School and the Rational-choice Model. These perspectives emerged at different times in history and took different approaches as to why and how voters make voting decisions. In the sections that follow, I will discuss the major ideas of each theoretical strand and cite several scholarly research works.
2.2.1 The Sociological Model

The sociological model of voting behavior was developed by a group of scholars at Columbia University, namely Felix Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. Lazarsfeld and his team at the Columbia School conducted survey interviews of 600 voters in Erie County, Ohio during the 1940 United States presidential elections. The research participants were interviewed seven times over a seven-month period during the course of the presidential campaign cycle to identify which voters changed their original position during the campaign period. During the study, only 54 out of the 600 research subjects changed their initial position throughout the campaign. The research was constructed with the aim of studying the role of the media in the decision-making process of voters. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) initially assumed that voting was an individual act, affected mainly by the personality of the voter and his or her exposure to media. However, the study, whose findings were published in *The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*, revealed that it is the social group to which people belong that determines for whom they will vote. The study found that social and cultural environments are the leading factors influencing voting behavior and that the relationship between one’s social group and electoral behavior is fairly strong. For instance, the research revealed that approximately 75 percent of first-time voters voted the same way their parents did (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944).

The researchers of the Columbia School assert that vote choice is a matter of sentiment and disposition rather than rational preferences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954). Their sociological model places a strong emphasis on external forces, particularly the influence voters’ primary groups exert on them. Individuals become accustomed to the political traditions of the
groups they belong (Aiba 2002). The voter’s behavior is seen as a product of his or her political and cultural environment.

The fundamental assumption of the sociological model is that one’s voting preference is to a greater extent influenced by individual membership in a particular social group, as well as the economic and social position of the group (Anderson and Yaish 2003; Thomassen 1994; Heywood 2002). Thus, people who share the same identity as far as their social class, religion, region, or ethnicity are concerned tend to vote as a bloc, in such a way that voting for a particular candidate or party becomes an inherent extension of the voter’s social identity (Andersen and Heath 2003). Consequently, social groups vote for the candidate or party that is perceived as representing their interests or that is most likely to prioritize their needs (Adjei 2012). Voter choice therefore is a type of social activity. Put simply, the social environment helps determine the political adherence of citizens (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1994; Andersen and Heath 2003; Andersen and Heath 2000).

The sociological model also asserts that family is the dominant agent of socialization influencing vote preference. Through political socialization, the political culture, values, and norms of the older generations are passed along to the younger generations (Sarlamanov and Jovanoski 2014). This socialization is most intense in childhood, during which most of the political attitudes are formed. At this early stage, the basic values that determine the political lives of voters are learned within the family, primarily through the relationship between parent and child. Thus, people inherit their political preferences from their families, and tend to vote as their families do (Sarlamanov and Jovanoski 2014).

Since its introduction in the 1950s, the sociological model has been useful in explaining voting behavior. However, it has also been criticized on several fronts. The first such criticism
relates to its over-emphasis of social determinism. By placing an emphasis on the importance of social groups in influencing voting decisions, the approach dismisses the self-interest and role of the individual voter as well as the influence political parties have on mobilizing voters. Secondly, the model assumes that the voter can only belong to one group when in reality a voter may belong to a number of social groups. For example, a person may be linked to one party due to his or her social class and another due to ethnicity or degree of religiosity. Third, the approach fails to explain why some social cleavages strongly influence attitude and voting behavior in some emerging democracies but not in others. A study by Young (2009) found that social cleavages have a more significant impact on voting in Kenya than in Ghana. Social groups, therefore, cannot be the “sine qua non” of vote choice. Lastly, this model stresses continuity and stability in electoral preference. The problem with this theory, however, is that if vote choice is determined solely by the stable sociological factors, election results would remain unchanged for extended periods of time (Olayode 2015). Simply put, the theory fails to explain why some members deviate from their group inclination and why changes occur in the electoral results over time. In modern times, the correlation between sociological factors and party support has drastically weakened (Brooks et al 2006).

Nonetheless, some scholars contend that social groups continue to provide identity for various categories of voters. For example, Heywood (2002) and Evans (1999) are of the view that social class remains an important factor influencing electoral choice. Indeed, the sociological model is not only still relevant as a model of voting behavior, but it can also be linked with other models of voting, as it will be examined in the subsequent sections. The impact of social processes on voting behavior has been emphasized by several empirical studies.
Duncan Luce studied the motivations of group voting behavior in America in the late 1950's. He contended that relations with members of primary groups are the main social mechanisms for developing political decisions. According to Luce, “…social classification should be a part of the input data which, with whatever other data appear relevant, lead to a prediction of voting behavior.” (Duncan Luce 1959:333). Therefore, according to this school, one’s association in certain primary groups, such as race, religion or area of residence can affect voting behavior.

Branton (2004) examined the effect of race on American elections. She observed that white voters and minority voters vote differently on some issues because they perceive and interpret the effect of issues differently. Branton argues that race has a positive effect on many racially-relevant election-related issues. However, she also finds a consistently negative relationship between individual-level voting and race. After examining a range of ten issues—ranging from gambling to sentencing for controlled substance possession—she found that only one out of the ten variables being examined had a statistically significant connection with race. Branton concludes that, there is no strong correlation between race and vote choice on many electoral issues.

In another study of the social processes which underlie voting behavior, Manza and Brooks (1999), contends that although there are many social cleavages such as religion, occupation, and class, race is the most important social cleavage influencing political processes and voting behavior in American elections. Similarly, Smidt and Kellstedt (1992) drew a connection in the US between how voters vote on issues and their religiosity. Most evangelicals identified with the Republican Party, while non-evangelicals are associated with the Democratic Party. However, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that social cleavages do not significantly
influence voter choice in Western democracies. They posit that in Europe and other established democracies, issues such as education, health care policy, welfare schemes, socio-economic development and the provision of social amenities are the main determining factors that shape voters preference for a particular candidate or political party in an election.

Further support for the sociological basis of voting has been established by multiple case studies in Africa. The linkage between ethnicity and voting in Africa has been examined by several scholars. According to Horowitz (1985), ethnicity exerts a strong direct influence on segmented societies, by generating a long-term psychological sense of party loyalty, anchoring citizens to parties. As a result, casting a vote in multi-ethnic societies becomes an expression of group identity. To Horowitz, ethnic parties are those that derive their support from an identifiable ethnic group and serve the interests of that group. In societies where such ethnic parties flourish, Horowitz argues that elections essentially become an ethnic census (Horowitz, 1985:293) because people are more likely to vote in ethnic blocs if they live in societies with high rates of ethnic cleavage. Voting in such communities is based on ethnic considerations, as members will prefer to have one of their own as a leader. Gyimah-Boadi (2007) agrees with these viewpoints by stating that African elections and electoral campaigns are not based on issues, and as a result, political parties and candidates focused on ethnic bonds, the personality of candidates, party loyalty, and symbols to canvass votes. This happens because elections in Africa often involve the mobilization of ethnic support, especially in elections where the political elite are incapable of articulating better policies. This dominant view is corroborated in studies conducted by Kimenyi (1997); Muigai (1995); Orvis (2001); Kimenyi and Romero (2008); Erdmann (2007).

However, a study of Nigerian elections complicates the above viewpoint. Lewis (2007) observes that though identity is important in Nigerian politics, ethnicity is not the only axis of
identification. Beyond ethnicity, identity in Nigeria is also derived from class and religion. Furthermore, Lewis finds that identity is not fixed, but, rather, it varies by region and over time. In other words, identity is relatively fluid; as such identity politics may be more salient in some parts of the country than in others. Nevertheless, Lewis reveals that ethnic feelings are strongest, in the Niger Delta where people feel discriminated against and exploited. This suggests that the lack of uniform development across in a multi-ethnic society will create fertile grounds for ethnic politics to be expressed. The findings of Lewis (2007) show that there are no clear cut determinants of electoral outcome in Nigeria; instead, voting behavior is determined by a host of crisscrossing and mixed variables. Thus, no singular factor can definitively explain voting patterns in Nigeria. This study is useful to the current work because they both explore the salience of ethnicity and other determinants of voting behavior across different regions within the same country.

The findings of Fridy (2007), Gyimah-Boadi (2007) and Erdmann (2007) also support the sociological school. Their studies concluded that ethnicity is an extremely significant factor in Ghanaian elections. Voter choice and party alignment are influenced more by ethnicity, rather than ideology, policy issues or performance of the incumbent. Additionally, clientelism also shapes voting behavior in Ghana. Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) note that there is a strong feeling among Ghanaians that employment into the public sector is highly influenced by party affiliation, region of origin, and ethnicity. That is to say, there is high level of ethnic patronage and favoritism. In turn, this fosters ethno-regional voting patterns that raises the prospect of ethnicity being employed as an instrument of ethnic mobilization for competition in elections and public service (Useh 2011).
In a related study that examines ethnic manifestations in Ghanaian politics, Frimpong (2006) analyzes the results of the 2004 general election. He posit that the electorate voted on ethnic lines and that the incumbent party (NPP) benefited from this voting pattern, as seen in their victory in that particular election. However, Anebo (2006) disagrees with Frimpong (2006), arguing that the closeness of the results (52% for NPP and 48% for NDC) indicates that the electorate in Ghana are ‘mature’ voters who vote on issues and not primarily on ethnic considerations. All things considered, none of these studies focused on the voter choice in the swing and core regions.

2.2.1.1 The Case of Ghana: Ethnic Voting Theory

The trajectory of Ghana’s electoral politics shows that the sociological model may be applicable in explaining the voting behavior of some segments of the population. This claim is premised on the fact that since 1992, ethno-regional bloc voting has persisted in two core regions, the Ashanti Region and the Volta Region. Despite three alternations of political power in the country, these two regions have consistently voted overwhelmingly for the NPP and NDC, respectively. It is argued that the voting patterns are what they are because these areas serve as the home regions of the political parties’ respective founders. This study will employ the ethnic voting theory in an attempt to explain voters’ choices in the core regions.

The ethnic voting theory holds that individuals behave according to the norms and values of the group to which they belong. Thus, an individual’s personality becomes synonymous with their social group. Consequently, the electorate will vote for a candidate from their social group if they deem the candidate to be the best protector of their interests (Adjei 2012). According to Bratton, Bhavnani, and Chen (2012), ethnic voting occurs “whenever members of a cultural group show disproportionate affinity at the polls for a particular political party” (2011:1).
Horowitz (1985) defines ethnic voting as “voting for the party identified with the voters’ own ethnic group, no matter who the individual candidates happen to be” (Keulder 2000:267). In line with these definitions, ethnic voting could be assumed to occur in the Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana, where voters have consistently shown massive support for either the NPP or NDC since 1992. The Ashanti and Volta regions tend to vote in a bloc, and the manifestation of such identity-based voting has rendered the elections in these regions a mere expression of ethnic support (Bratton, Bhavnani and Chen. 2012). The election results in these regions merely confirm the numerical dominance of the majority social group (Keulder 2000).

2.2.2 The Psychological or Psycho-social Model

This model has its origins in the survey research conducted by scholars at the University of Michigan during the US presidential elections in 1948, 1952, and 1956. The combined results of these investigations were published in the book *The American Voter* by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960). The psychological model offers a criticism of the sociological model. It combines both psychological and sociological factors to explain voting preferences. Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (2010) emphasize that membership in a social group has little direct impact on one’s voting decisions. This model claims that Columbia School’s sociological model merely links social characteristics to voter choice; as a result, it leaves unexplained the process in between. In this regard, the psychological model focuses on “the psychological variables which intervene between the external events of the voter’s world and his ultimate behavior” (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1954:85-86). With this stated aim, the model concentrates on the immediate cognitive motives of voters. Within this framework, three major "objects" have been identified: political parties, political issues, and the political candidates. It is
these objects which the voter perceives, evaluates, and reacts to (Verburg 1979). These three motivational factors constitute the main tenets of the psychological model.

The psychological model underscores partisanship or party identification as the most important determinant of voting behavior. Partisanship is defined as the continuing psychological affinity and attachment people have for a particular political party (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). The partisan voter is viewed as a loyal, long-term supporter, who strongly identifies with a political party (Heywood 2002). Such strong affinity makes it difficult to persuade partisan voters to vote for another party or even withdraw their support from their preferred party. Partisans will remain attached to their preferred party even if they have moved out of line with them on major political principles (Jowell and Cottice 1985). In this regard, a voter’s party identification is considered a stable phenomenon that does not change easily. Hence, during elections, vote choice becomes a mere manifestation of a long-standing predisposition towards a particular political party. However, voters’ political affinities may shift slightly depending on the issues and candidates involved in a specific election (Campbell 1964).

Aside from partisanship, issue orientation and candidate position are the other two motivational factors that affect voters’ decisions under this model. Issue orientation refers to individuals’ perspectives and positions on issues, as well as the extent to which voters’ preferences or dislikes for certain policies influences their vote. For example, a voter concerned about immigration policies will vote for the party that most closely represents his or her stance on the issue. On the other hand, candidate orientation refers to the interest of voters in the personalities of the candidates. It also includes any perceptions the voter has of the candidate, such as likeability. According to this approach, voters are also influenced by the personal characteristics of the leader such as demeanor, style, and intelligence (Rabinowitz and
Macdonald 1989; Carmines and Stimson 1980; Bartels 2002; Lawrence 1978). According to Lawrence (1978), voters are mostly concerned with attributes regarding a candidate’s ability to deliver on its mandate. This suggests that voters are likely to vote for candidates that have the capacity to deliver on their promises, especially when all contesting candidates have similar perspectives on contentious issues.

Additionally, some scholars also link voters’ attraction to a candidate to their political parties or issue positions. According to these theorists, people vote for candidates not necessarily because of the candidate’s traits, but rather they vote for a candidate because of his or her position on certain issues or party affiliation. This school of thought draws no distinction between party affiliation, candidates, and issues. In essence, it suggests that people’s partisanship influences their evaluations of candidates and electoral issues (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). The weakness of this perspective rests in its short-sighted conclusion that people vote for parties they like and against those they do not. Moreover, it does not necessarily account for why voters choose one party over the other. Furthermore, it indicates that voter choice is primarily based on party loyalty and not on evaluations of the candidate’s capacity to deliver while in office (Lawrence 1978).

According to the psychological model, the three motivational factors of vote choice; party, issue, and candidate are altogether into a decision-making mechanism which they call the “funnel of causality.” At the mouth of the funnel is sociological or group influence. An individual is first influenced by social group, especially the family, which develops one’s sense of partisanship. In turn, the partisanship influence how the voter process information, and eventually, how the voter evaluate the issues and candidates. It is this chain of influence that ultimately determines the individual’s vote choice. Taken together, the psychological model
stipulates that identification with a party, through socialization in early childhood, creates a “perceptual screen” which becomes the filter through which voters evaluate candidates and issues, which finally guide voters to their voting choice (Campbell 1964:133; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Evans 2004; Erdmann 2007a).

With its heavy emphasis on party identification, issues, and candidates, the psychological model has become widely accepted as a tool for explaining voter behavior (Dalton 2000; Thomassen and Rosema 2006). Nonetheless, the approach is not without criticism. The first criticism is that this model over-emphasizes the role of partisanship in electoral choice, and in the process, it ignores other factors that are likely to influence voter preference in a particular election. Some people may vote for a party as a protest against the incumbent or other parties in a particular election and not necessarily as a sign of support (Bratton et. al. 2012; Keulder 2000). Additionally, the approach fails to provide a clear distinction between long-term and short-term factors that are likely to influence one’s vote choice (Bartle and Griffiths 2002).

Furthermore, party identification may have a stronger explanatory power in some countries while not holding as much power in others. According to Bartels (2000), there have been signs of partisan decline in the United States, with an increase of “independents” and “split-ticket voting.” Nonetheless, partisan votes continue to increase in presidential elections in the United States (Bartels 2000). A number of studies in Europe (Italy) and Africa (Kenya) have found that party identification has become a less significant factor in predicting the outcome of elections. Candidate personality and issues have replaced party loyalty as the primary motivation for individual voting (Palazzolo and Theriault 1996). Thus, it is difficult to accept the assumption that partisanship stays constant and never changes. Empirical studies have shown that partisan
support is not unbreakable. Voters move to and from their respective political parties in response to their orientation on issues as well as their evaluations of candidates and parties (Popkin 1991).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the psychological model’s ‘funnel of causality’ explanation has been remarkable in helping researchers understand how voters’ development of a sense of party loyalty becomes the filter through which they evaluate candidates and issues, which ultimately impacts their vote preference. Therefore, this model sheds light on why some voters rarely ever change their voting pattern from one election to the next. The dominance of partisanship is reflected and reinforced by the American Voter. In this book, the authors, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1964) studied the electoral victory of President Harry Truman in 1948 and the re-election of President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. They concluded that partisanship is the primary determinant of vote choice in the United States. Thus, voters primarily vote for the candidate representing their preferred political party (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1964).

Further support for the role of party in influencing voter choice in America can be found in an article published in 1959, by Angus Campbell and Donald E. Stokes. Their comparative study of voting behavior and party lead to a conclusion that traditional allegiance to party, whether Democratic or Republican, continues to be the major correlate of voting behavior. They went on to conclude that this identification with party accounts (also) for a larger portion of variance in preference than do attitudes toward the candidates and issues (Campbell and Stokes 1959).

Gerald M. Pamper also noted the early influence of partisanship but went further to state that of “… the various groups which affect political man, the most important is the political party itself.” (Pamper 1968:71). For Pamper, party identification” is clearly related to individual
perceptions and to political events. Its relationship to the vote itself is, therefore, more obvious and more consistent.” (p.83).

Niemi and Weisberg (1984) argue that while parties and candidates can influence electoral outcomes, issues in their view are the major determinant of voter choice because all parties and candidates put up issues during the campaign on which the electorate to makes a choice. However, they equally admit that, there are instances when voters make up their mind as to which party or candidate they will support before the campaign even starts. Asher (1988) also postulates that party identification plays a major role in American presidential elections, but he added that other factors such as the issues put forward by parties and the type of candidates put forward also have an impact.

In another study, Miroff, Seidelman, and Swanstrom (1999) identify campaign messages, the mass media, and the personality and image of individual candidates as the main factors that determine voters’ choice in American elections. They posit that although most voters may have partisan affiliations with particular parties, the majority of the voters are not blind loyalists and could be moved to vote for other parties if they find the personality and campaign issues of the candidate attractive (Miroff, Seidelman and Swanstrom 1999). This work helps us understand how and why voters shift from their original political inclinations in the electioneering period.

Similarly, Koppensteiner and Stephen (2014) investigate the relationship between voters’ first impressions and the tendency to favor candidates who are considered as having a personality trait that is close or similar to that of the voter. Eighty participants were recruited within the University of Vienna. During their experimental study, respondents were asked to rate themselves and unidentified politicians who were presented to them in short video clips giving a speech, and to give an estimate of the probability that they would vote for each politician they
evaluated. The study found that participants tended to vote for politicians who are perceived to have personality traits similar to that of the voters. It was also established that first impressions could influence the participants’ electoral choice. The study established that voters cast their ballots in favor of politicians with certain desired personality trait.

Additionally, Hayes (2010) studied the influence of candidate personality in the United States elections. He specifically focused on the impact of personality traits on voter choice. The study measured traits such as candidate’s leadership qualities, morality, compassion, and care for people. The measures were administered to 500 respondents from 30 states during the 2006 mid-term elections. The study found that voters’ electoral choice was informed by traits or perceived qualities of a candidate. Other studies by Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione and Barbaranelli (2006) in Italy; Fridkin and Kenney (2011) in the United States; and Verhulst, Hatemi and Martin (2010) in Australia, all established that personality traits have a significant influence on political behavior and electoral outcomes.

Nwanganga, Nwachukwu, and Mirian (2017), studied the influence of personality traits on voters’ decisions before and during the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria. They recruited 400 eligible voters from six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Respondents were administered a set of structured and open-ended questionnaires regarding the candidates’ personality and branding. The findings show that personality dimensions such as competence, credibility/sincerity, are attributes that influence voters’ choice of a political candidate prior to and during the election cycle.

2.2.2.1 The Case of Ghana: Party Identification, Candidate and Issue Voting

Under this voting model, the concepts of party identification, issue voting, and candidate personality are discussed. To begin, the electoral support of a partisan voter is relatively stable
and unconditional, which is often regarded as a “hundred percent endorsement of everything a party says or stands for” (Catt 1996; Keulder 2000). A partisan voter consistently votes for the same party. From this understanding of partisanship, this study will assume that the concept of party identification could be applied to the Ghanaian case. This is because the electoral politics of Ghana is dominated by two main political parties, the NPP and NDC. The electoral results under the Fourth Republic indicate that each of the two political parties has stable and core voters (about 40%) who will always cast their ballot for the party. Additionally, the study will utilize the concept of issue voting to examine the extent to which campaign issues impact vote choice in Ghana. Furthermore, this study will seek to find out the explanatory power of candidate voting by examining five personality traits and characteristics: (1) political experience of the candidate, (2) educational background, (3) ability of the candidate to perform effectively as president, (4) physical appearance of the candidate, and (5) the marital status of the candidate.

2.2.3 The Rational Choice Model

The rational-choice model of voting behavior has a long history which can be traced to Anthony Downs in his book, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, published in 1957. This model takes on an economic view of voter choice. As one analyst puts it, it equates the behavior of voters in elections with the behavior of consumers in the economic market (Antunes 2010). Basically, the rational-choice approach portrays voters as rational economic actors in the sense that they behave like consumers in a market, who express their choices amongst the available policy options presented to them by parties or candidates. Unlike in the previous models, under the rational-choice approach, voting is seen as an instrumental rather than habitual act. In other words, voting is a means to an end. According to Downs (1957), the rational voter will behave in the following five ways:
1. The individual is always able to make a decision when presented with alternatives.

2. He or she is able to rank his or her preferences, in the highest preferred order.

3. The individuals’ preference is transitive, meaning the voter will prefer alternative 1 to 2, and 2 to 3, in that order.

4. The individual will always choose the most preferred alternative, which is the highest ranked alternative in the preference ordering.

5. The individual will always make the same decision whenever presented with the same alternatives under the same circumstances.

The underlying assumption is that voting is a conscious rational act, where individual voters weigh the pros and cons of the available options when determining their vote choice. Consequently, upon careful evaluation of the costs and benefits, a person will vote for the party or candidate with programs and policies that best serves and reflects one’s own self-interests (Catt 1996; Andersen and Heath 2000; Downs 1957).3 Contrary to the previous models that focused on socialization and social determinants, this model focuses on the individual and his or her freedom of choice. It essentially posits that the voter engages in a rationally purposeful behavior when exercising choice in elections (Oppenheimer 2008). Therefore, the motivation for an individual to vote or not and how to vote is calculated on the benefits derived from such a decision. Put differently, voters decide how they will vote on the basis of what they expect to receive in exchange for their political support. It follows that as the expected benefits of voting vary from one election to the next, the voting preferences of a rational voters are also likely to

3 Self-interest means taking actions or decisions that brings most personal benefits. A self-interested voter simply makes voting decision based on expectations of personal gain.
change in various elections. For example, a voter may be concerned about educational policies during one election cycle, but may become interested in health and immigration policies in subsequent elections. It is these unaligned voters, whose interests are constantly changing, that are partly responsible for the alternations in electoral outcomes and for determining the winners and losers of elections. This study hoped that the rational-choice perspective would be helpful in explaining voting patterns in the swing regions of Ghana.

The rational-choice model highlights two decisions made during elections: whether to vote or withdraw and whom to vote for if one decides to vote. The rational assumption is that the individual will vote if the expected reward from voting is higher than the expected reward from not voting (Farber 2009). As one decides to participate in voting, the rational voter will imagine a scenario in which each party wins and then proceed to compare the possible benefits to be derived from those victories. In addition, the rational voter will vote for the candidate or party that champions their interests. However, the voter may likely abstain from voting if a win for either party brings about relatively similar levels of utility (Antunes 2010). In sum, this model of voting asserts that the voter will perform a complete analysis of the choices and will select the outcomes with higher utility as opposed to those with lower utility (Aldrich 1993). The personal interests of voters determine their voting choice.

The model also regards voters as individualistic entities. It claims that individuals make their voting decisions regardless of their membership to a social group or the psychological attachment they have to a political party. Generally, the voter as a self-interested and materialistic individual will prioritize personal benefits ahead of collective gains. Such voters typically do not have strong party loyalty or any real connections to political parties (Downs 1957; Bartle and Griffiths 2002; Fiorina 1977). As Crewe once remarked, “Voters are up for
grabs” (1983:107). In the electoral market, these uncommitted voters will trade their support for rewards and favors such as improvements to living conditions or increases in wages or other measures that promise to have positive impacts on the voters (Bartle and Griffiths 2002).

Although the rational-choice model places heavy emphasis on the actions of the individual, it does not completely ignore the influence that social structure has on an individual’s behavior. However, it regards collective behavior and collective decision-making as an aggregation of individual interests (Olson 1965). Therefore, group voting behavior is viewed as an amalgamation and a reflection of the individual rational voting behavior.

Additionally, the rational-choice perspective holds that the rational voter is in tune with the economy, and as a result, responds to changes in economic circumstances. According to Bratton et al., “elections are won or lost on the economy” (2001:29). The economy becomes a “valence issue” during elections in the sense that most voters arguably prefer a better economy to a bad one (Fossati 2014:118). Consequently, it is assumed that rational voters will pay particular attention to how the economy is handled, particularly by assessing the performance of the incumbent government. Accordingly, voters will reward the incumbent with a renewed mandate if the economic situation is satisfactory, but vote for the opposition if the economy performs poorly. In this reward-punishment theory, Butler and Stokes (1974) articulate that voters reward the government for the conditions they welcome and punish the government for the conditions they dislike. However, the reality is that voters do not necessarily reward incumbents when the economy is booming, but they are more inclined to punish it during economic downturn (Bratton, Bhavnani, Chen 2012; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). Nevertheless, the rational voter is more in tune with the economic circumstances of the country than the partisan voter or those voters with stable sociological inclinations like ethnicity.
Under this conceptual model, three main dimensions exist to analyze the behavior of rational voters: target, time, and context of evaluation. Through the target dimension, voters assess governmental performance either based on their own personal economic situations or the governments’ collective performance in the general economy. In the case of the former, voters judge the government based on the well-being of themselves and their family (Lewis-Beck and Stigmaier 2000; Lewis-Beck and Stigmaier 2008; Lewis-Beck and Stigmaier 2009; Keulder 2000). With the latter, voters rely on indicators such as GDP, unemployment, inflation, and interest rates to assess the economic performance of the country’s government (Bratton et al. 2012). Regarding the time dimension of voter evaluation, voters decide whether to assess the performance of the incumbent government either retrospectively or prospectively. A prospective vote is one in which voters base their choices on predictions of future economic performance, whereas the retrospective view sees voters as basing their decisions on appraisals of past economic performance. When the latter is considered, elections essentially become “a referenda on the incumbent administration’s handling of the economy” (Fiorina 1981:26; Lewis-Beck and Steigmaier 2000:191).

The retrospective and prospective dimensions of voting have ignited debate among scholars. Proponents of the prospective theory, including Achen (1992), contend that retrospective voting cannot be considered a rational act in the sense that a “rational chooser looks forward and not backward. The rational voter is a prospective voter and the past is useful only for its clues about the future” (Achen 1992:199). Others argue that the rational voter uses evaluations of past performance in order to guide their predictions as to how the party is likely to manage the economy in the future. According to Fiorina, the rational voter makes voting decisions based on evaluations of past economic performances by the parties being considered
Basically, the voter relies on the past to imagine the future (Fiorina 1978; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000). The third dimension for analyzing rational voting behavior is the context of the evaluation. It is argued that voter preference is dependent on economic and political factors; therefore, vote choice can change at different times and in different elections (Andersen and Heath 2000).

In sum, the rational-choice model has been useful in providing insight into how unattached voters make up their minds during elections. Additionally, it helps explain why election results remain unchanged in some countries while others experience frequent changes in electoral outcomes. Furthermore, the approach explains how self-interest can drive voters to abandon their original political predispositions and party loyalties, resulting in a switch in voter preference from one election cycle to the next. However, despite the utility and value of this theory, it has been criticized for over-emphasizing rationality as the main determinant of voting behavior. The approach fails to explain why a significant number of voters keep their party support intact from election to election, regardless of the changes in political, environmental, and economic circumstances. Again, the approach fails to sufficiently explain why incumbents win re-election despite dwindling economic performance, or why incumbents lose elections during times of significant economic prosperity.

Despite these criticisms, a number of empirical studies has underscored the relevance of the rational choice model. For example, a study by Strong (1977) gave support to the rational

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4 It must be noted that the rational-choice perspective is not the only model that highlights the role of self-interest in driving vote choice. As discussed in the previous section, voters may vote on issues or choose candidates they perceive as representing their group’s interest. However, it is clear from the above information that the rational-choice theory offers a convenient explanation on how self-interest determines the voting behavior of independent and unattached voters.
choice perspective of voting behavior. He asserts that American voters will vote out incumbent parties and candidates if they performed poorly. This observation indicates that voters are in tune with performance, and elections are mostly a referendum on incumbent governments. On the other hand, Evans (2004) identifies group benefits, material gain, and party ideology as the main determinants of voter choice for a particular party or candidate. Nonetheless, he points out that personality of the candidate and how voters—whether as individuals or in a bloc—stand to benefit from campaign promises may influence voters to change their initial predispositions in an election.

Another study supporting the rational-choice approach was done by Anebo (2001) on voting behavior in Ghana elections. According to him, the 2000 presidential elections in Ghana (which brought about the first democratic change of government) was influenced by economic conditions and citizens’ perceptions of the future performance of the two main political parties. Thus, in discounting the saliency of ethnicity in deciding the electoral outcome, Anebo (2001) argues that voting decisions are based on the voters’ living conditions, and the party that has the better prospect of improving their living standards earns their votes. Such rational evaluations caused significant numbers of voters to cast their ballots against the party that they supported in the previous elections. Therefore, the swing voters punished the incumbent for their inability to meet the aspirations and expectations of the electorate.

In a more recent study on Ghana, Harding (2013), using a data base on the 2004 and 2008 electoral results, reports that when the provision of public goods (particularly roads) can be attributed to political action, it is likely to affect electoral support, especially in the rural areas. This finding corroborates recent studies by Bossuroy (2011) and Dendere (2013), which revealed that rural voters differ from other voters in terms of their understanding of democracy, policy
preferences, knowledge of opposition political parties, and access to private media, all of which have a strong influence on the support for or against the ruling party.

Debrah (2009), in studying the nexus between the economy and regime change asserts that Ghana’s politics has always been dominated by economic issues rather than issues of personality, regionalism, and ethnicity. According to Debrah, the majority of Ghanaians voted for change in the 2000 general elections simply because they anticipated that the new government would improve their living conditions. The study suggests that the voters are rational people who consciously evaluate their economic conditions and the incumbents’ performance before making their vote choice.

2.2.3.1 The Case of Ghana: Economic Voting Theory

This theory argues that voters are primarily influenced by their economic circumstances when making voting decisions. The economic voting theory presupposes that every voter wants prosperity or a good economy; as a result, a voter will pay particular attention to how the economy is managed. The economic voter will reward the incumbent when the economy is flourishing and punish it when it is not.

Using the rational-choice approach, this study will assume that economic voting is a significant factor shaping electoral outcomes in Ghana, particularly in its swing regions. This assumption is underlined by the fact elections are highly competitive in the four swing regions of Ghana. These regions have never voted for the same political party for three consecutive elections. Thus, the swing regions are the key to determining who wins Ghanaian presidential elections. Indeed, it is the variations in the electoral outcomes from the swing regions that has made possible the alternations of power in the elections of 2000, 2008, and 2016. It is argued that voters in the swing regions make a conscious evaluation of the candidates, the incumbent party’s
performance, and their personal economic conditions when determining their vote choice (Lindberg and Morrison 2005). In brief, the economic voting model will be employed in an attempt to explain the motivations of voters in these regions.

### 2.2.4 The Literature on Swing Votes

There is extensive research on the nature of swing voters and their impact on electoral outcomes in established democracies like the United States. Campbell (2007) describes swing voters as those who are relatively uncertain about who they will vote for in an election. They are not firmly committed to a particular candidate or party and may change their vote preference from one election to another. Studies on swing voters have become significant in recent years because of the crucial impact they have on electoral outcomes. As recent electoral results have shown, most American presidential elections are usually decided within 55-45 percentage range. Even in landslide presidential elections, winning candidates rarely reach a margin of victory larger than 60-40 percent. The scholarly and electioneering attention given to swing states like Ohio and Florida is premised on the assumption that swing voters decide the outcomes of elections (Campbell 2007; Silver 2012).

According to Silver (2012), swing states like Ohio and Florida are elastic states because they are relatively sensitive and responsive to changes in political conditions. Thus, as in economics, an elastic good is one whose demand is sensitive to changes in prices; in comparison, the votes of an elastic state respond to changes in political conditions of the state. In an elastic state, voters have a relatively equal likelihood of voting for either party’s candidate because the electorate is not firmly attached to any political party. The voters are mostly independent, devoid of characteristics that are likely to be strong predictors of voting behavior other than economic
performance. In nations with strong core voters, like the United States, swing votes are crucial to electoral victories. The swing voters will vote for incumbents in good times or in response to policies that reflect their interest. Equally so, swing voters will vote against the government in bad times or as reprimand for unpopular policies.

Following the above discussion, Lindberg and Morrison (2005), argue that much of what we know about electoral and democratic political processes in established democracies may also apply to new democracies in Africa. In the case of Ghana, electoral outcomes under the Fourth Republic have established some regions as core and others as swing. Eighty-five percent of the voting population are core voters who are equally divided between the two parties, while nearly 10-15 percent of the voting population is classified as swing voters. Because the two parties have relatively equal electoral strength, the support of swing voters is key to winning elections.

According to Adams and Agomor (2015), swing voters are characterized by a conscious evaluation of government and candidate performance. This is a sign of relatively ‘mature’ democratic voting behavior. To Lindberg and Morrison (2005) the proportion of swing voters in Ghana is sufficient to sustain a high level of competition and the prospect of peaceful transitions of power in the future, which is a hallmark of a functioning democracy. The swing voters may shift their electoral support back and forth from one party to another depending on fluctuations in the voters’ economic circumstances. It is worth studying swing votes in Ghana, where the two major parties have managed to develop stable, multi-ethnic bases of support. While each party has its strongholds which are regionally and ethnically defined, a candidate cannot win the presidency without appealing to the unattached voters.

The literature on the West and Africa seems to concur that swing voters differ from core voters in that the former do not have electoral loyalty to any candidate or political party. They
are rational voters, whose votes are largely dependent on their own evaluations and judgements. Unlike core voters, swing voters are not influenced by stable sociological factors, partisan affiliation, ethnicity, or non-evaluative factors (Campbell 2007; Kim 2016). This study hypothesizes that ethnicity determines voting behavior in the core regions, while economic factors best predict vote choice in the swing regions. Therefore, the study will explore the most significant factors that influence vote choice in the swing and core regions. Additionally, it will seek to examine the extent to which ethnic and economic factors impact electoral outcomes in Ghana.

2.3 Summary

In conclusion, three major schools dominate the voting behavior theory. The Sociological School contends that one’s social background determines their voting response. Those who embrace the psychological model also argue that a person's vote is the result, not of his social background, but of his psychological evaluation of the election forces surrounding him, namely political parties, issues, and candidates. Thus, one’s race, religion and wealth cannot simply predict their voting voice. The rational-choice model also offers a different line of reasoning. Its supporters contend that voting is a rational, self-interest act, where individual voters weigh the pros and cons of the available options when determining their vote choice. Thus, voters are guided by their self-interest when exercising choice.

This study does not make a case for or against any school of thought. Instead, it acquaints the reader with the major viewpoints that dominate the voting behavior literature and considers the extent to which the three main models are reflected in the behavior of Ghanaian voters.
CHAPTER THREE

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ELECTIONS IN GHANA (1951-1992)

3.0 Introduction

This chapter mainly presents the Pre-1992 political and electoral history of Ghana. In an attempt to trace the historical undercurrents of voter choice, this chapter will also explore the main issues that dominated the pre-independence elections, as well as elections under the First, Second and Third Republics.\(^5\) In all, this section seeks to present and analyze the empirical data on the various elections, the electoral context, and the importance of ethnicity in the trajectory of Ghana’s electoral politics. Topics discussed in this chapter include the ethnic composition and political party traditions in Ghana, as well as the pre-independence and post-independence elections.

3.1 The Ethnic Composition of Ghana

According to United Nations’ estimates, Ghana’s current population is about 29.3 million people (Worldometer 2018). Like most other African states, Ghana is a multi-ethnic country, which is inhabited by approximately 92 separate ethnic groups. These groups are often classified into five major linguistic and ethnic groups (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004; Frempong 2001). According to the 2010 housing and population census, Akan is the predominant ethnic group in Ghana (47.5%), followed by the Mole Dagbani (16.6%), the Ewe (13.9%), and the Ga-Dangme (7.4%). The Mande form the smallest ethnic group (1.1%) (Ghana Statistical Service 2012).\(^6\)

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\(^5\) Elections under the current Fourth Republic is discussed in the next chapter.

These ethnic groups congregate regionally across the country. The Akans are dominant in five of the ten regions in Ghana, namely the Ashanti, Eastern, Brong-Ahafo, Central and Western regions. The Ewes are largely found in the Volta Region, whereas the Ga-Dangme are found mostly in the Eastern and the Greater Accra Region. Lastly, the Mole-Dagbani are located in the northern part of Ghana, in the Upper East, Upper West, Northern regions (2010 Housing and Population Census). See Figure 1 (page 69) for the map showing the ten regions of Ghana.

Notably, Ghana’s census data reveals that the ethnic groups are not confined to specific geographical areas. Over the years, internal migrations and movements have rendered most regions and areas less homogenous. Although some ethnic groups are predominant in specific regions, no one region is fully ethnically homogeneous. Despite this ethnic heterogeneity, Ghana’s ethnic map appears coterminous with its electoral map. The various regions have become associated with specific political parties because of their consistent voting patterns. The Volta region, Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions have been tied to the NDC because of the consistent electoral support the party receives from these regions. Similarly, the NPP is identified with the Ashanti and Eastern regions in that most of its highest electoral support comes from these regions. The remaining four regions, namely Brong-Ahafo, Central, Greater Accra and Western regions, are considered swing, or neutral, regions because they are not electorally devoted to any one specific political party. It is instructive to note that although three out of the four swing regions (Brong-Ahafo, Central, and Western regions), are predominantly ethnic ‘Akans,’ the NPP has been tagged as an Akan party because of the overwhelming electoral support they receive from the other two Akan regions, the Ashanti and Eastern region. Similarly, the NDC, despite their seven consecutive victories in the three northern regions, has been
labelled as an ‘Ewe’ dominated party because of the huge support they receive from the Volta region (Osei 2015).

3.2 Political Party Traditions in Ghana

The first-ever political movement organized for power in what is now Ghana was the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which was established on August 4, 1947, with the purpose of championing the country’s independence pursuit from the British colonial administration. It was led by Joseph Boakye Danquah, an astute lawyer, philosopher, and a politician. The expressed aim of the UGCC was to ensure “that by all legitimate and constitutional means the direction and control of the government should pass into the hands of the people and their chiefs in the shortest possible time.” (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004:22). Because members of the UGCC were made up of lawyers, businessmen and other professionals, they were unable to devote themselves full-time to party and grass-roots organization (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). As a result, Ebenezer Ako Adjei, a member of the UGCC, recommended Kwame Nkrumah, whom Adjei had met at Lincoln University in England to be offered the position of general secretary of the UGCC. Nkrumah returned to the British colony and accepted the role of UGCC Secretary General on December 10, 1947. Upon the assumption of duty, Nkrumah devoted full attention to establishing party structures and mobilizing support across the country (Birmingham 1998).

However, almost two years into his role as secretary-general, Kwame Nkrumah clashed with the leadership of the UGCC over the strategy and direction of the independence movement. Indeed, there were ideological and political contradictions between the Nkrumah and other UGCC members. The UGCC’s strategy was to achieve independence gradually in the shortest
possible time, but the more radical and charismatic Kwame Nkrumah wanted an immediate grant of independence to Ghana. To Kwame Nkrumah, the UGCC's approach to the freedom fight lacked the necessary vehemence, urgency, and pragmatism to achieve their stated goals; thus he favored a more radical approach. Nkrumah eventually broke away from the UGCC and formed his own party, the Convention People’s Party (CPP) on June 12, 1949, with the motto ‘Self-Government Now.’ While the UGCC was dominated by the intelligentsia, the CPP focused on the ordinary people, with the masses contributing to the party’s momentum. Ideologically and politically, Nkrumah’s CPP was socially inclusive, broad-based, populist, and left-wing. In contrast, the UGCC was perceived as elitist, liberal-democratic, pro-market, and right-wing (Lindberg and Morrison, 2005; Whitefield, 2009). Other political ideas and principles associated with the Nkrumah-CPP tradition are socialism, Pan-Africanism, anti-imperialism, and advocacy for a state-controlled economy. For the Danquah-Busia tradition, the core values are the liberty of the individual, multi-party democracy, rule of law, advocacy of the free market system and private enterprise. Ultimately, these two parties have been the foundations of the major political traditions in Ghana (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004).

The philosophy and principles of the Danquah and Nkrumah political traditions have dominated Ghanaian politics throughout the pre-independence and post-independence periods as well as during the Fourth Republic. The CPP won the general elections of 1951, 1954, 1956 and 1960, thereby dominating the politics of Ghana from 1951 until Nkrumah’s administration was toppled by a military junta that ruled between 1966 and 1969. The next election in 1969 was won by Kofi Abrefa Busia of the Progress Party (PP), an off-shoot of the UGCC. The Danquah-

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7 The UGCC tradition became known as the Danquah-Busia tradition, referring to the names of the tradition’s first two leaders, J.B. Danquah of UGCC and K.A Busia of the Progress Party (PP).
Busia tradition dominated from 1969 until it was overthrown in a military coup in 1972. Ghana returned to civilian rule in 1979 in an election won by the People’s National Party (PNP), a political party from the Nkrumahist tradition. The PNP ruled from 1979 until 1981, when the military, led by Jerry John Rawlings, overthrew the civilian government. The military administration remained in power until 1993, the year in which Ghana adopted a constitutional democracy which established the country’s Fourth Republic.

Under the Fourth Republic, most of the emerging political parties are seen as following one of the two historical political traditions. Political parties and voters in Ghana have been organized and mobilized along these traditions. The politics of the Fourth Republic has been dominated by two main political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), an offspring of the UGCC/Progress Party of the Danquah/Busia tradition, and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), founded by Jerry John Rawlings. Since the formation of the NDC, it is commonly held that a Rawlings tradition has been established in Ghanaian politics, drawing its support from the already established older traditions (Gyimah-Boadi 2009). The NDC often claims a connection, through its socialist ideology, to the Nkrumah’s tradition. Indeed, most of the top members of the NDC identify as Nkrumahists; for example, the late John Atta Mills, who served as vice-president from 1996 to 2000 and president from 2008 to 2012, was a known CPP member. It is widely believed that because the NDC draws most of its support from Nkrumahist supporters, they have contributed to the dwindling electoral fortunes of the traditional Nkrumahist parties, the CPP, and the People’s National Convention (PNC). In sum, the two main parties under the Fourth Republic, the NPP and NDC, have respectively laid claims to the basic orientation of the Danquah-Busia and the Nkrumah traditions (Nugent 1999).
Currently there are approximately twenty-four registered political parties in Ghana; however, only the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have been able to win presidential elections. The other smaller political parties do not have the electoral strength to challenge the dominance of the NPP and NDC. Ghana’s political system thus represents a de facto two-party system. The NPP and NDC together have always won more than 80 percent of the presidential votes in all of the seven elections held under the Fourth Republic. These two parties have been the main contenders in all elections, and consequently, the three alternations in power since 1992 have been between them. The NDC ruled from 1992 to 2000 and again from 2009 to 2016. On the other hand, the ruling NPP was in power from 2000 to 2008. After losing the 2008 and 2012 elections, the NPP regained political power, having won the elections on December 7, 2016 (Electoral Commission of Ghana 2016).

The NPP and the NDC have the elephant and umbrella as their political symbols respectively. In terms of ideology, the NPP is seen as classically liberal, pro-market and pro-business. The NDC is regarded as social democrats, a party for the socially disadvantaged groups. However, it is important to note that none of these parties has lived up to every tenet of their respective ideologies when in power. When governing, both parties have implemented a mixture of capitalist and socialist policies. Therefore, political ideology, or issue orientation, is not the distinctive factor defining these two political parties. Though contentious, Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2006) assert that it is ethnic affiliation rather than ideological persuasion that has been the draw for the NPP and NDC.

Nonetheless, while the two political parties each have a multi-ethnic support base, they also draw disproportionate support from particular regions and ethnic coalitions. The NPP is associated with the Akan ethnic group (which constitutes about 45% of the population),
particularly the Ashanti subgroup. At the regional level, the NPP draws its largest support from
the Ashanti and Eastern Region which are predominantly ethnic Akan settlements. The NDC, on
the other hand, is identified with the Ewe ethnic group, and derives its greatest support from
Volta Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions (Ichino and Nathan 2013; Faanu and
Graham, 2017). Even though the two parties draw support from across regions and ethnic
groups, the overwhelming support from the Ashanti and Volta regions have led many to describe
the NPP and NDC as Akan/Ashanti and Ewe/Volta-based parties, respectively. While the other
regions are electorally competitive, the Volta and Ashanti Regions overwhelmingly votes for
their respective home-based parties in all of the seven elections under the Fourth Republic
(Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). These two regions have demonstrated their bias in the form of
bloc voting for the party associated with the region. The common perception is that these regions
vote the way they do because it is the home region of most of the founding fathers of the
respective political parties. For instance, the first two presidents under the Fourth Republic, J.J.
Rawlings of the NDC and J.A. Kuffuor of the NPP, came from the Volta and Ashanti region,
respectively, and unsurprisingly, they received the full endorsement of their home regions during
elections (Adjei 2012).

Additionally, it is suggested that it is the mutual fear of the Ashantes and the Ewes’
political hegemony which underlines the support they give to their respective parties. To some,
bloc voting in the Volta region is seen as part of a strategy of counteracting Ashanti efforts at
domination and vice-versa (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). However, the two parties have
strong political support in most of the ten regions of Ghana, and generally support for a party is
based on cross-cutting cleavages of which ethnicity is only one factor (Whitefield 2009). This
study will investigate factors other than ethnicity that influence voter choice in Ghana. The
following section examines the electoral system and electoral bodies throughout Ghana’s electoral history.

3.3 A Brief Political History of Ghana

On March 6, 1957, Ghana gained independence from the British, becoming the first Sub-Saharan African country to attain this feat in colonial Africa. The country’s electoral and democratic development dates back to the colonial regime when nationalist agitation for self-rule pushed the British to conduct a series of elections in Ghana. The first election with universal suffrage was held for the legislative assembly on February 8, 1951, under British colonial administration (Osafo-Danso 2015). Subsequently, general elections were held in 1954, 1956 and in 1960, the year Ghana became a republic. Since then, the country has gone through a series of democratic experiments and military coup d'état which led to the establishment of four constitutional republics. The First Republic commenced in March of 1960, and ended in February of 1966, when the military toppled the regime of the first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The Second and Third Republics were established between October 1969 to January 1972 and September 1979 to December 1981, respectively. In 1992, the military, led by Jerry John Rawlings, initiated processes that returned the country to a constitutional democracy, thereby ushering in the Fourth Republic of Ghana in 1993. Under the current Fourth Republic, seven successive general elections have been held, which has produced three alternations of political power. Prior to the seven successive elections under the current Fourth Republic, general elections were also held in 1951, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1960, 1969, and 1979 all of which

\[8\] Although elections had been held for the Legislative Council since 1925, the Council did not have complete control over legislation, and the voting franchise was limited to councils of chiefs (Dunlop Roberts 1986). This was the first election to be held in Africa under universal suffrage (Brown and Roger Louis 1999).
are important when discussing the history of electoral politics in Ghana. The following section will examine the trajectories of the elections held in the pre-independence and post-independence Ghana, particularly the elections held in the First, Second and Third Republics.

**Table 3.1: A Chronology of Ruling Administrations in Ghana (1957-2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period/Date</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Party/Group</th>
<th>System of Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1957 – June 1960</td>
<td>K. Nkrumah</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Civilian-Parliamentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1960–December 1964</td>
<td>K. Nkrumah</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Civilian-Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1978–June 1979</td>
<td>F.W.K. Akuffo</td>
<td>SMC II</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1979–Sept. 1979</td>
<td>J.J. Rawlings</td>
<td>AFRC</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009-June 2012</td>
<td>J.E.A Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>Civilian-Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2012-January 2016</td>
<td>J.D. Mahama</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>Civilian-Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2016 to date</td>
<td>N. Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>Civilian-Presidential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** AfriMAP and Open Society Initiative for West Africa (2007)
3.4 The Pre-Independence Elections

The pre-independence elections of 1951, 1954, and 1956 as well as other plebiscites and referenda were supervised by the colonial government, and the elections were to a large extent, devoid of political manipulation and state control. This efficient and credible electoral management climate fostered a fair and effective competition among the political parties. Moreover, the election management during the pre-independence period was deemed largely impartial by most stakeholders (Gyimah-Boadi 2008).

According to Gocking (2005), the politics surrounding the 1951 elections were quite elusive and historic because it was the first election to be held under universal adult franchise in Ghana. The election was a contest between two main parties, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) led by J.B. Danquah, a lawyer and philosopher, and the Convention People’s Party (CPP) led by Kwame Nkrumah, a Pan-Africanist. The Nkrumah’s CPP was a break-away party from the UGCC. The main divide between the two parties relates to ideology and issue orientation. The UGCC was more of center-right, modern liberal ideology while the CPP was a leftist, socialist party. The leadership of the two parties also disagreed over a range of issues as well as over strategy and approach toward the independence struggle. The CPP for instance advocated for a confrontational and aggressive approach to the independence course but the UGCC favored a more collaborative and peaceful approach. Also, the two parties differed on the timeline for reaching self-rule. The UGCC believed that independence should follow a slow process and be attained within the shortest possible time. Conversely, Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP wanted an immediate grant of independence status to Ghana. It was such issues and differences that dominated the 1951 elections. The electorate made voting decisions based on their ideological preference and positions on the various issues that dominated the election cycle.
The CPP won the majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly and its leader, Kwame Nkrumah, became the leader of Government business. He subsequently became the Prime Minister (Oquaye 1982; Abdul-Gafaru 2009).

In his quest to hasten the pursuit of independence, Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah tabled a motion popularly called the “Motion of Destiny” on June 10, 1953, in the Legislative Assembly calling for constitutional reforms, one of which Nkrumah demanded an immediate self-government. Consequently, a new constitution was promulgated in 1954, and a new election was held on June 15, 1954. This election introduced some interesting dynamics into the electoral scene. For the first time, there was the formation of political parties on the basis of geography, ethnicity, religion, and other parochial forms of identities (Ayoo 2013). Eight parties contested the 1954 elections. These political parties include the following: the Convention People’s Party (CPP), the Muslim Association Party (MAP), the Ghana Congress Party (GCP), the Togoland Congress (TC), the Anlo Youth Organization (AYO), the Ghana National Party (GNP), Northern People’s Party (NPP), and the Ghana Action Party (GAP) (Boahen 2000; Asah-Asante 2015).

The CPP again won the 1954 election by winning 72 out of the 104 seats available, while the main opposition, NPP, won 12 seats in the legislative assembly. Among the eight parties that competed in the election, it was only the CPP that had a national appeal. The remaining parties were regional, religious and ethnic in nature (Boahen 2000; Frempong 2012). Some scholars partly attribute to the success of the CPP to the use of its slogan ‘Self-Government Now.’ It is believed that although the NPP’s slogan of ‘Northern for Northerners’ created a sense of unity among the rank and file of the party, it was no match to the ‘Self-Government Now’ of the CPP which aptly reflected the aspirations of the people (Boahen 2000; Austin 1964; Asah-Asante
2015). Indeed, the collective desire for independence was the strongest unifying force of Ghanaians throughout the pre-independence years.

The succeeding election in 1956 had similar manifestations of ethnic and regional divides. Nonetheless, the elections was once again won by Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP. The abysmal performance of the identity based parties, and the eventual consecutive electoral victories of the CPP, a party with widespread representation across the country, seems to buttress the point that regardless of the sharp cleavages, the 1951, 1954, and 1956 elections were not won on the basis of identities.⁹ Indeed, Frempong (2012) asserts that the formation of these identity-based political parties did not have any significant impact on the outcome of the elections as it failed to prevent the incumbent CPP from winning.

Generally, 1951, 1954 and 1956 elections were largely considered to be free and fair by the key contestants partly because it was organized by the colonial administration, an entity considered to be neutral in the context of the elections. This invariably fostered an effective competition among the contesting political parties (Debrah, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2010).

### Table 3.2: Results of the February 8, 1951 Legislative Assembly Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Seats (38)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention People’s Party (CPP)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁹ The identity-based parties were too small and fractionalized to effectively challenge the incumbent
Table 3.3: Results of June 15, 1954 Legislative Assembly Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Seats (104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention People’s Party (CPP)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Peoples Party (NPP)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togoland Congress (TC)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana Congress Party (GCP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Association Party (MAP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anlo Youth Association (AYO)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Results of July 17, 1956 Legislative Assembly Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
<th>Number of Seats (104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention People’s Party (CPP)</td>
<td>398,141</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern People’s Party (NPP)</td>
<td>72,440</td>
<td>10.39%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Movement (NLM)</td>
<td>154,657</td>
<td>20.89%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togoland Congress (TC)</td>
<td>20,352</td>
<td>2.92%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Association Party (MAP)</td>
<td>11,111</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Youth (FY)</td>
<td>10,745</td>
<td>1.54%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>38,811</td>
<td>5.57%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Valid Votes</td>
<td>697,257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (Tables 1, 2 & 3): African Election Database (2018).

3.5 The Elections under the First, Second and Third Republics

Three general democratic elections were held in Ghana from the time of independence, and prior to the inception of the Fourth Republic: the 1960, 1969, and 1979 elections. Unlike the pre-independence era, Ghana’s electoral management system took a nosedive in the immediate post-independence period. The independence of the Electoral Commission (EC) was curtailed by
political manipulation and excessive executive control over the electoral process (Debrah, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2010). Under the 1960 (or First Republican) Constitution, the chief justice, who could easily be hired and fired by the president, became the head of the Electoral Commission (EC). In addition to this, the power to declare and announce an electoral outcome resided with the president. As a result, the Electoral Commission by 1964 had lost its tenets of neutrality, impartiality and independence on electoral issues (Gyimah-Boadi 2008).

On April 27, 1960 Ghana conducted its first presidential election, which was paired with a referendum to determine whether or not the country should become a republic under the new, 1960 constitution. The majority of the electorate (88%) voted ‘YES’ in support of a republican status, while only 12 percent of the electorate voted ‘NO’. The presidential contest was between the incumbent Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of the CPP and Joseph Boakye Danquah of the United Party (UP). Nkrumah won the election and was inaugurated on July 1 1960, replacing the colonial Governor William Hare as the head of state and becoming the country’s first executive president under the 1960 First Republican Constitution (Boahen 1975; Frempong 2012).

Table 3.5: Results of April 27, 1960 Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>1,016,076</td>
<td>89.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Boakye Danquah</td>
<td>UP</td>
<td>124,623</td>
<td>10.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Valid Votes</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,140,699</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Registered Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,098,651</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: African Election Database (2018)

Unlike during 1954 and 1956 elections, there were no identity-based political parties in the 1960 elections. This is because the CPP government passed the Avoidance of Discrimination
Act (ADA) in 1957, which outlawed the formation of political parties based on identity. This law (ADA 1957) forbade the formation of political parties along ethnic, religious or regional lines. As a consequence, all the opposition parties coalesced to form the United Party going into the 1960 presidential election. It must be noted that the CPP had nationwide support and did not identify with one particular region, ethnic group or religion. The passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act relegated ethnic and identity politics to the periphery during the 1960 elections. Thus, ethnic persuasions and expressions were not as profound as witnessed in the preceding elections (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

In 1964, the Nkrumah-led CPP government pushed for a referendum in Ghana to adopt a one-party state system with Nkrumah as the leader. In an unreal result, 99.9 percent of Ghanaian voters voted “YES” in support of a CPP one-party state, with Kwame Nkrumah becoming a president-for-life. As a result, multi-party activities were proscribed, and Kwame Nkrumah did not have to face popular elections when his first term expired in 1965 since the CPP was the only legally accepted political party. While supporters of the CPP and most government appointees viewed the referendum as free and fair, sections of Ghanaian society, particularly the opposition parties, described it as a rigged election (Krennerich, 2003). The CPP candidates for the 1965 parliamentary elections were declared victorious and elected without elections; in addition, there was only one candidate for the presidency. All the other parties, most of which were regional, ethnic or religious based, had already been outlawed by the 1957 Constitution. Hence, no non-CPP candidates contested in the general elections of 1965. Consequently, there was no opposition to Nkrumah, and even dissent within the CPP had been crushed purportedly to stimulate national unity (Krennerich, 2003).
However, on February 24, 1966, the CPP government was overthrown in a joint police-military coup. The coup makers accused Kwame Nkrumah of becoming authoritarian and dictatorial. The army and police set up the National Liberation Council, which dissolved the legislative assembly and suspended the constitution. The National Liberation Council (NLC) banned the CPP and ruled the country until 1969, when elections were held to return the country to civil constitutional rule (Anaman 2016).

The overthrow of Nkrumah’s one-party system opened up the search for viable ways of organizing and achieving credible elections. To overcome the lack of independence of the EC as experienced under the Nkrumah regime, the Constitutional Commission of 1968, led by Justice Akufo-Addo, recommended the establishment of a sole independent Electoral Commissioner, who holds the legal autonomy to manage the electoral process (Gyimah-Boadi 2008). Accordingly, an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was established in 1968. The new body became responsible for the registration of voters and managing all other matters related to the conduct of all public elections. To ensure effective election management, Article 30, Section 6 of the 1969 Constitution provided autonomy to the electoral commissioner. In addition, the commission was insulated from the direction or control of any other person or authority other than the constitution. In the end, the IEC was hailed for organizing a credible and transparent elections in 1969, which restored civilian rule in Ghana (Debrah, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2010).

The 1969 constitution, which established the Second Republic, provided for a unicameral parliamentary system with a president as a ceremonial head of state. K.A. Busia of the Progress Party became the head of government (prime minister), while Edward Akufo-Addo served as the ceremonial head of state (Debrah, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2010).
Although a range of issues dominated the 1969 elections, the political elite exploited identity and ethnic persuasion for electoral gain. In this election, the politicians focused on galvanizing ethnic votes and sympathies, with little or no premium placed on ‘bread and butter issues,’ public policy, and the state of the economy, or competence of the candidates. The main contending parties, the Progress Party (PP), an offshoot of the UGCC led Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), led by Komla A. Gbedemah, a close associate of the ousted president Kwame Nkrumah, played the ethnic card as a political tool to canvass electoral support. This approach worked to favor the Progress Party which had a larger ethnic base, drawing support mainly from the Akan group. For their part, the main opposition NAL had only the Volta Region to exploit, by playing the ethnic card (Ayoo 2013). As it is often the case in most ethnic elections, the Progress Party (PP), which drew support from the largest ethnic group, won the election by a landslide and also gained the majority of seats in the National Assembly (Osafo-Danso 2015). In fact, the great majority of successful Progress Party (PP) candidates were elected in constituencies with majority Akan populations, whereas only two PP candidates were elected in predominantly Ewe constituencies. The seats won by the PAP and UNP were in areas dominated by the Nzima and Ga populations, respectively (IPU Archive 2018).

The ethnic background of the leaders of the two leading parties in the 1969 elections had a significant impact on the voting outcomes. The Progress Party (PP) led by K.A. Busia (an Akan) won all the seats in Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Central regions. Further, the PP won the majority of seats in the two other Akan regions (Western and Eastern). However, the PP won only two seats in the Volta region, home region of the main opposition candidate. On the other hand, the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) led by K.A. Gbedemah (an Ewe) won all the seats
in the Volta region except Nkwanta and Kete Krachi, the Akan-speaking areas in the Volta region. In the mainly Akan areas of the Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Western and Central regions, the NAL party did not win any seats (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). The PP won 105 of the 140 seats in parliament, while NAL won 29 seats, and the remaining 6 seats went to other candidates (African Elections Databank on Ghana, 2012). In all, the two main candidates received their highest support from the regions and ethnic groups to which they belong.

**Table 3.6: Results of the April 29, 1969 National Assembly Elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
<th>Number of seats (140)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Party (PP)</td>
<td>877,310</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Alliance of Liberals (NAL)</td>
<td>463,401</td>
<td>30.81%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nationalist Party (UNP)</td>
<td>57,652</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Action Party (PAP)</td>
<td>51,125</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Peoples Republican Party (APRP)</td>
<td>27,328</td>
<td>1.82%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>27,216</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Voting was delayed in two constituencies: Chiana-Paga (in the Upper East Region, held on September 2, 1969) and Tumu (in the Upper West Region, held on September 3, 1969).

**Source:** African Election Database (2018).

**Table 3.7: Seats Won by the Political Parties in the 1969 Elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total Seats (140)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>NAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>seats</td>
<td>常委</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Twenty-eight months into Busia’s administration, the military led by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, on January 13, 1972 toppled the Busia-led Progress Party government, accusing it of corruption and mismanagement. By the time of the coup, there was a decline in living standards, high rates of inflation, rising budget deficits, reduced foreign exchange revenue, rising unemployment, and increasing indebtedness. By the early 1980s, the Ghanaian economy saw an overall decline in economic growth (Sulimani 2007). This military intervention brought an end to the second republican constitutional democracy (Keatley 2011). The coup leaders suspended the 1969 Second Republican Constitution, dissolved parliament and banned all political activities. Colonel Acheampong formed the National Redemption Council and later the Supreme Military Council (SMC). He ruled from 1972 until his regime was usurped in a palace coup in 1975 by his deputy, F.W.K Akuffo. Akuffo ruled under the Supreme Military Council II until June 4, 1979, when he was ousted in another coup, which was led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings (Anaman 2016). At the time of the Rawlings’ coup, the SMC II had rolled out plans for holding multi-party elections. Consequently, Rawlings stayed loyal to the SMC II's plan of returning Ghana to democratic rule, which permitted the elections of June 1979 to take place as scheduled.
After almost a decade of military rule, processes were initiated to return the country to a democratic regime. The Rawlings-led Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) maintained the election timetable set by the SMC II, and a new constitution was crafted and adopted. The new 1979 Constitution provided for a presidential system and a unicameral parliament (Krennerich, 2003). The promulgation of the 1979 constitution ushered in Ghana’s Third Republic. As the country returned to civilian administration on September 24, 1979, the practice of appointing a sole electoral commissioner to oversee elections continued from the Second into the Third Republic, as the Electoral Commission was re-established under Article 37 of the 1979 Constitution. In July of 1979, the Electoral Commission conducted and supervised the parliamentary and presidential elections which were largely appraised as free, fair, and impartial by various political parties. At the same time, the military administration at the time did not contest the elections nor did it back any of the political parties. The regime provided a level playing field for the contesting parties and candidates. It is believed that the Second and Third Republics experimented with the most preferred model of sole electoral commissioner because both electoral commissions were neutral, transparent, and free of executive manipulations. For example, Justice Kingsley-Nyinah demonstrated neutrality and impartiality throughout the conduct of the 1979 elections that brought Hilla Limann to power (Gyimah-Boadi 2008).

The Third Republican preliminary election was held on June 18, 1979, with a run-off election on July 9. Hilla Limann of the Peoples National Party (PNP) won the run-off election, and he was inaugurated as president on September 24, 1979 (Damwah 2011; Jeffries 1980; Debrah, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2010). In the first round of elections, Hilla Limann won 62 percent of valid votes cast and 71 seats; Victor Owusu of the Popular Front Party (PFP) obtained 38 percent of the votes and 42 seats; the United National Convention (UNC) won 13 seats, and
the Action Congress Party (ACP) won 10 seats. Overall, ten candidates contested in the 1979 presidential elections, but it was a straight race between Hilla Limann of the People’s National Party (PNP) and Victor Owusu, of the Popular Front Party (PFP).\textsuperscript{10} According to Oquaye (1980), the 1979 elections re-awakened the old rivalry between the traditions of the CPP and United Party (UP), but it was in a reformed style and with different political actors. The PFP was seen as representing the UGCC, UP, and Danquah traditions, while the PNP followed the Nkrumahist traditions (Oquaye 1980).

The electoral outcome appears to indicate that ethnic considerations may have manifested in the 1979 elections. The Ewes voted decisively as a bloc against Victor Owusu, the presidential candidate of the Popular Front Party, because of the perception that he was an “arch tribalist.”\textsuperscript{11} On the other hand, the presidential candidate of the People’s National Party received his highest support from the northern regions due in part because it was his home region (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). Although the electoral data shows an ethno-regional voting cleavage, the political parties over the years have adopted an inclusive approach in order to have a regional (north-south) and ethnic balance for the presidential and vice-presidential positions (Oquaye 1980).

As Ghana returned to civilian rule on September 24, 1979, the country’s Third Republic was inaugurated. But as it happened to the previous republics, the 1979 constitution was short-lived following a military coup staged by Jerry John Rawlings on the eve of December 31, 1981. Following the script of past military takeovers, the coup leaders accused the civilian

\textsuperscript{10} The PFP is seen as a remnant of the Progress Party whose administration was suddenly toppled in the 1972 coup (Jeffries 1980).

\textsuperscript{11} Owusu is perceived as one who looked down on other ethnic groups
administration of incompetence and mismanagement. Rawlings and his military junta, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), scrapped the democratic structures and the Third Republican Constitution. They ruled from 1981 until the inception of the current Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992. This Rawlings-led regime is marked as the longest period of uninterrupted military rule in the history of Ghana. He was able to strengthen his grip on power by intimidating the opposition and eliminating threats to his power, an act which instilled a culture of silence in the Ghanaian populace (Osafo-Danso 2015; Abdul-Gafaru 2009).

3.6 Summary

This chapter presented a historical account of the politics and elections in Ghana during the pre-independence and post-independence periods. In doing so, the study found that the each election has been dominated by specific issues. The 1951 election, for instance, was mainly contested on party ideology as well the candidates’ strategy and approach towards the struggle for independence. The 1954 and 1956 elections, on the other hand, were dominated by some form of regional and ethnic cleavages. The analysis shows that the pre-independence elections, as well as those under the First, Second and Third Republics, were influenced by various factors including ethnic and regional cleavages, personality of the candidates, party ideology and campaign promises. Ethnic politics was found to be more pronounced in some elections than in others. Therefore, even decades ago, ethnicity was not the main determinant of voter choice in Ghana; instead, it is one of a host of variables including ideology, campaign issues, and economic conditions, which altogether influenced electoral politics in Ghana prior to the inception of the Fourth Republic.
CHAPTER FOUR

ELECTIONS UNDER THE FOURTH REPUBLIC: 1992 AND BEYOND

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the preceding one. Focusing on the current political system, it examines politics and elections under Ghana’s Fourth Republican democracy, providing context and general background information on Ghana’s electoral system, the Electoral Commission, and electoral reforms undertaken since 1992.

4.1 The Electoral System under the Fourth Republic

The 1992 constitution of Ghana adopted a hybrid presidential and parliamentary system of government. According to Article 63 of the Constitution, the election of the president is based on universal adult suffrage. The presidential election is won by securing more than 50 percent of the valid votes cast. A run-off election is held in cases where no presidential candidate attains the 50 percent plus one threshold. The candidates for the run-off election shall be the top two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the first-round of the election. An elected president serves a four-year term, and is limited to a maximum of two four-year terms (COG Report 2008).

Ghana has a unicameral legislature, with 275 members of parliament. The members are elected directly by a universal adult enfranchisement from single member districts for a four year term. Unlike presidents, there are no legal restrictions or limitations on the number of terms that a legislative member can hold office. The parliamentary election is won by a simple majority. It is argued that this first-past the-post, single-member district system of voting has helped turn Ghanaian politics into a de facto two-party system, making it difficult for the smaller political
parties to improve their electoral fortunes. Indeed, in the 2016 elections, no other political party aside from the NPP and NDC won a seat in the country’s 275-member parliament (Electoral Commission 2016).

The 1992 Constitution permits members of the legislature to also serve in the executive branch. The president is required to appoint the majority (about half) of his ministers from among existing members of parliament. The winner-takes-all system, where one candidate or party exercises full control of executive power to the exclusion of other contestants and parties, has raised the stakes and rendered most elections highly competitive (Aniekwe 2017). However, the constitution was designed to require that more than 50 percent of votes are needed to win the presidential elections. This provision has encouraged political parties and candidates to broaden their base of support to include voters outside their traditional ethnic and regional strongholds. For instance, after years in opposition, the NPP won the 2000 elections only after successfully repackaging and marketing itself as a national party rather than an ethnic-Akan party (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). In sum, the nature of elections under the current presidential system of the Fourth Republic has fostered the building of coalitions across Ghana’s main ethnic and regional lines. It appears that candidates and parties have difficulty winning elections without appealing to a broad array of groups in the country.

4.1.1 The Electoral Commission of Ghana

On May 10, 1991, the Rawlings-military government officially announced the time-table for Ghana’s return to constitutional rule. As a result, an Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established on February 28, 1992, tasked with overseeing a referendum regarding the constitution of the upcoming Fourth Republic and the 1992 national elections. The INEC was to be an independent body, not subject to the control of the executive or any other authority.
However, by 1992, the public perceived the INEC as lacking complete autonomy and independence because of the unilateral PNDC government appointment of INEC members without consultation of other interested parties of the opposition (Gyekye-Jandoh 2013). Consequently, the opposition parties denounced the outcome of the presidential elections because of perceived manipulations of the electoral processes through the incumbent’s control of the INEC. Insisting that the elections had been rigged, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the People’s National Convention (PNC), and the People’s Heritage Party (PHP) boycotted the subsequent parliamentary elections held on December 7, 1992 (Frempong 2008). They also claimed that the electoral processes followed in the 1992 presidential elections gave unparalleled advantage to the NDC. The opposition parties, led by the NPP, launched the ‘Stolen Verdict,’ a compendium of electoral fraud and manipulations purportedly perpetrated by the active collaboration of NDC and INEC agents during the elections. The disgruntled opposition called for sweeping electoral reforms to be undertaken before they would return to the electoral front and participate in future elections (Gyampo 2018; Debrah 2015). These challenges called upon the drafters of the 1992 Constitution to provide a neutral and independent Election Management Board. As the Fourth Republic was inaugurated in January 1993, the work of the largely discredited INEC officially came to an end and the new Electoral Commission (EC) was inaugurated in August 1993.

The Electoral Commission was established as the only state institution mandated by law to organize and manage public elections in Ghana. Since 1992, all elections have been organized and supervised by the Electoral Commission. Article 46 of the Constitution gives the Commission its autonomy and authority:
“Except as provided in this Constitution or in any other Law not inconsistent with the Constitution, in the performance of its functions, the Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.”

Article 43 of the 1992 Constitution provides for a seven-member Electoral Commission consisting of a chairman, two deputy chairmen, and four other members appointed by the president in consultation with the Council of State (Articles 43 & 70; Frempong 2008). The EC’s responsibilities, as set out in Article 45, include compiling and revising the electoral register, demarcating and revising electoral boundaries, overseeing the conduct and supervision of public elections and referenda, educating citizens on the electoral process, and other such functions that may be prescribed by law (Omotola 2013). Since 1992, the EC has been managing the presidential and parliamentary elections, which occur simultaneously every four years. The head of the Electoral Commission is the sole person mandated by law to declare the outcome of the presidential elections (Constitution of Ghana 1992).

To prevent executive control and manipulations, the current EC model has been backed by statutorily guaranteed mechanisms meant to ensure and protect the administrative and institutional autonomy of the commission. The 1992 Constitution and the Electoral Commission Act 451 ensure that the EC, in the performance of its functions, shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority. Members of the EC have security of tenure and enjoy the same conditions of service as the justices of the Superior Court, which means they are permitted to serve in that capacity until they reach the mandatory retirement age of 70.

12 The Council of State is a body of eminent citizens partly elected and partly appointed to advise the president and other state institutions on the discharge of their functions (The 1992 Constitution of Ghana).
constitution also stipulates that “members of the EC cannot be dismissed by any person except on grounds of incapacitation arising from ill-health” (1992 Constitution, quoted in Omotola 2013:27). Additionally, the commission is financed directly from the Consolidated Fund, meaning that the executive cannot deny the EC of the necessary funds required to execute its constitutional mandate (Omotola 2013).

4.1.2 Electoral Reforms Undertaken Since the Founding Elections in 1992

Aside from the 1992 founding election which was administered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the current EC has supervised all subsequent elections under the Fourth Republic. According to most electoral observers, the EC has demonstrated a reasonable measure of independence, competence, and legitimacy in the discharge of its responsibilities (Omotola 2013). The Electoral Commission has been largely successful in managing six consecutive peaceful and credible parliamentary and presidential elections. Through this period, the EC has undertaken a number of reforms, invariably enhancing the credibility of the electoral process. An important reform was the establishment of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) in March 1994 as a platform for stakeholders to discuss and build consensus to resolve contested electoral issues (Gyampo 2017). The IPAC is comprised of representatives from the various political parties and the EC. Although the IPAC is a purely advisory body that can only make non-binding decisions, several major controversial issues have been resolved through the IPAC mechanism (Frempong 2008).

Unlike the 1992 elections where the parliamentary elections were held a month after the presidential contest, the two elections are now held simultaneously to avert providing an unfair advantage for the party that wins in the presidential election. The opaque ballot boxes used for the 1992 elections were replaced with transparent boxes in the 1996 presidential and
parliamentary elections to forestall allegations and suspicions of ballot boxes being stuffed with ballot papers prior to voting day. Since 1992, the EC has consistently reviewed and updated the electoral register as well as the electoral process. Additionally, the counting of votes and the declaration of results take place immediately following the close of voting, in the presence of party agents and voters (Gyampo 2017; Electoral Commission 1996).

Another important reform has been the introduction of biometric registration and voter verification to prevent fraud and other abuses in the electoral process. The objectives of the biometric system are to eliminate occurrences of multiple voting, delete ‘ghost’ names from the register, and remedy other irregularities associated with the voting registers (Electoral Commission 2012). The slogan “No Verification, No Vote” (NVNV) has been popularized by the media and political parties, which is indicative of the support of key stakeholders for the system. In essence, the NVNV requires that eligible voters are verified biometrically at the polling stations before being allowed to vote.

Furthermore, the Presidential Transition Act (PTA) of 2012 has been implemented to regulate the transfer of power from one democratically elected regime to another in a manner devoid of rancor, acrimony, and tension. The PTA is a regulatory framework to ensure the smooth transfer of political power from the incumbent to the opposition (Gyampo 2017).

Generally, the performance of the Electoral Commission has gradually improved over time and become accepted by the major political parties and the voting populace as a credible institution for the management of elections (Gyimah-Boadi 2008; Omotola 2013). However, despite the significant strides made in reforming Ghana’s electoral process, it continues to face some constraints and challenges. Although the electoral results since 1996 have been accepted by all parties, the 2012 election reflected an ominous twist in the hitherto sacrosanct nature of the
electoral legitimacy in Ghana. The results of the 2012 presidential elections were challenged at the Supreme Court by the then-opposition NPP, which alleged various forms of infractions, including ‘the failure to comply with regulations requiring mandatory biometric verification, failure by presiding officers at some polling stations to sign the official results sheet, “over-voting” at a number of polling stations, and discrepancies in the size of the voters register. Additionally, the NPP also contested the outcome of more than 10 percent of the parliamentary elections (Gyimah-Boadi 2013; Omotola 2013).

Following an eight-month election petition hearing, the Supreme Court announced its judgement on August 29, 2013, which upheld the results initially declared by the EC. The petition was dismissed and the incumbent John Mahama of the NDC was upheld as the validly elected president in the 2012 elections. Nonetheless, the court’s ruling exposed some flaws in the electoral process that needed urgent attention if free and fair elections are to be ensured in the future. Among the notable reforms subsequently implemented in the 2016 election cycle, there was the creation of a unique serial numbering system for all the Statement of Poll and Declaration of Result sheets as well as the sanctioning of election officials who breach electoral laws (Omotola 2013; Gyampo 2018).14

In sum, Ghana’s Electoral Commission under the Fourth Republic has been able to establish itself as one of the most vibrant institutional foundations in Ghana’s successful democracy. Through various reforms, the EC has won public trust and confidence as well as a well-grounded reputation for its autonomy, political neutrality and professionalism needed to ensure the credibility of future elections (Osafo-Danso 2015; Frempong 2008; Aniekwe 2017).

14 Prior to the post-2012 electoral reforms, election officials were not liable for prosecution in court. They were deemed to be acting on the delegated powers of the chairman of the Electoral Commission.
4.2 The Fourth Republican Elections (1992-2016)

As you may recall, the origins of the Fourth Republic is traced to events in the late 1980s, when the military-led government came under intense pressure from opposition groups, civil society, and the international community, particularly foreign donors and development partners, all of which called for a return to a participatory and democratic government. As a result of the foreign and domestic pressure, the PNDC government revised its policy and initiated an eventual return to civilian rule. On May 10, 1991, Rawlings officially announced Ghana’s return to constitutional rule (Oquaye 1995). Subsequently, a new constitution was drafted by a consultative assembly, which was approved by 92.59 percent of voters in a referendum held on April 28, 1992. The ban on multi-party politics was lifted on May 18, 1992, followed by presidential elections on November 3, 1992. The Fourth Republic was inaugurated on January 7, 1993 (Oquaye 1995).

Since then, Ghana has successfully held elections every four years which has bolstered the country’s image as the beacon of democracy in Africa (Osafo-Danso 2015). Within this period, seven successive presidential and parliamentary elections have been conducted, with three of them resulting in an alternation of power between the two main political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Although the next section will look into the issues involved in all seven elections, for reasons of brevity, critical attention will be paid to the founding elections in 1992 (the first election under the Fourth Republic), and the three elections in which a change of government occurred in Ghana: the elections of 2000, 2008, and 2016.
4.2.1 The 1992 Elections

The presidential elections held on November 3, 1992, were contested by five political parties: the National Democratic Congress (NDC), an off-shoot of the Rawlings led military junta, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC); the New Patriotic Party (NPP), an off-shoot along the UGCC, UP, PP traditions; the People’s Heritage Party (PHP); the National Independence Party (NIP); and the People’s National Convention (PNC). The military-turned-civilian leader J.J. Rawlings, who competed as the presidential candidate of the NDC, won the election with 58.4 percent of the total valid votes cast, while his main opponent, Albert Adu Boahen of the NPP, obtained 30.3 percent of the votes (Asah-Asante 2015; Nugent 1995). The table below shows the political parties that contested in the 1992 election as well as their respective leaders and votes obtained.

Table 4.1: Results of 1992 Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerry John Rawlings</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>2,323,135</td>
<td>58.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Adu Boahen</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>1,204,764</td>
<td>30.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilla Limann</td>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>266,710</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena Darko</td>
<td>NIP</td>
<td>113,629</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Erskine</td>
<td>PHP</td>
<td>69,827</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission 1992; African Election Database 2018

The outcome of the elections evoked mixed responses. The international election monitoring teams from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth of Nations, and the Carter Center—although with reservations in some cases—endorsed the results.

---

15 The NDC was formed from the military-led PNDC government. In other words, it was the civilian form of the PNDC. It just rebranded itself to contest the 1992 elections (Anaman 2016).
of the presidential election. The electoral process was described as largely free and fair. Nonetheless, the opposition parties led by the NPP pointed to some serious voter irregularities and lapses that they believe may have compromised the integrity of the presidential elections. They subsequently boycotted the parliamentary elections that were slated for December 6, 1992. The boycott by the opposition parties rendered the parliamentary contest essentially a one-horse race for the NDC. The NDC won 189 out of the 200 available seats, while the Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE) party won one seat, independent candidates won two seats and the National Convention Party (NCP) won eight seats (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004; Asah-Asante 2015; Ghana Electoral Commission 1992).

A number of issues dominated the electoral and campaign activities of the 1992 elections. The political parties employed various campaign mechanisms and strategies to convey their message to the electorate in order to canvass voter support. The incumbent NDC centered their message on continuity, asking the electorate to give them the opportunity to continue building on the progress they have already achieved (Safo-Danso 2015). They cited the gains made from the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which was undertaken in the 1980s in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as one example of improvement made under their rule (Abdul-Gafaru 2009). The NDC also took credit for initiating the transition from military to civilian rule. On the other hand, the opposition parties, in their zealous attempt to wrestle power, rubbed the claims of the incumbent. They pointed to the abysmal economic performance that sent the country into the IMF-supervised Structural Adjustment Program and the accompanying hardships stemming from its austerity measures as reasons why the NDC should no longer lead the country. The opposition mocked the ‘continuity’ message of the incumbent by referring to it as an absurd continuity of atrocities, incompetence, and poor economic performance. They
tagged the incumbent NDC and Jerry Rawlings to the atrocities that occurred during the military regime by suggesting that it was the same Rawlings who had evolved from a military dictator to a civilian candidate (Abdul-Gafaru 2009). In sum, the 1992 election season was a fierce contest between the NDC and the NPP, which was characterized by acrimony, accusations and counter accusations.

In the end, the electoral results reveals that numerous considerations may have impacted the decision making of the voters. According to Bawumia (1998), the state of the economy, particularly the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program, had an impact on the electorate as well as the fortunes of the political parties. He found that the rural voters voted overwhelmingly for the incumbent, whereas the urban voters did the opposite because the SAP implementation benefited the rural households, not necessarily urban settlers. These findings suggest that the execution of the Structural Adjustment Program had an impact on vote choice, in the sense that the rural population voted more for the incumbent than the urban voters did. This indicates that some voters, whether positively or negatively affected, were responsive to changes in their economic circumstances, resulting primarily from the Structural Adjustment Program.

Despite this economic explanation, an interesting pattern was observed in the 1992 elections. Some ethnic groups and regions voted as blocs for particular political parties. Two main regions and ethnic groups were exceptional in their expression of support. The Volta Region, which is dominated mainly by the Ewe ethnic group, voted decisively for the NDC and J.J. Rawlings, who happens to be an Ewe himself and also from the Volta Region. On the other hand, the Ashanti Region, which is heavily dominated by the Ashanti ethnic group, provided overwhelming support to the NPP. The presidential candidate of the NPP, Adu Boahen, received his highest vote (60%) from the Ashanti Region, as against his lowest vote (3.6%) from the Volta
Region. Similarly, Rawlings, the candidate of the NDC, received his highest vote (93.2%) from the Volta Region and the lowest (32.9%) from the Ashanti Region (ECG Report 2005). This ethno-regional voting dynamic partly explains how the leader of the NDC won in 9 out of 10 regions, except in the Ashanti region which was won by the leader of the NPP. In subsequent elections under the Fourth Republic, the Volta Region and Ashanti Region continue to be the strongholds of the NDC and NPP, respectively. However, as shown in Table 3.8, electoral support in all the remaining eight regions were very competitive for the contesting political parties, but the Ashanti and Volta Region demonstrated their bias by reserving their votes as a bloc for their preferred parties.

Table 4.2: Regional Results of the November 3, 1992 Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rawlings (NDC)</th>
<th>Adu Boahen (NPP)</th>
<th>Limann (PNC)</th>
<th>K. Darko (NIP)</th>
<th>Erskine (PHP)</th>
<th>Total Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>234,237 (32.87%)</td>
<td>431,380 (60.54%)</td>
<td>17,620 (2.47%)</td>
<td>25,298 (3.55%)</td>
<td>4,049 (0.57%)</td>
<td>712,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>243,361 (61.95%)</td>
<td>116,041 (29.54%)</td>
<td>20,646 (5.26%)</td>
<td>8,979 (2.29%)</td>
<td>3,837 (0.98%)</td>
<td>392,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>222,092 (66.49%)</td>
<td>86,683 (25.95%)</td>
<td>6,308 (1.89%)</td>
<td>11,631 (3.48%)</td>
<td>7,312 (2.19%)</td>
<td>334,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>288,726 (57.26%)</td>
<td>190,327 (37.75%)</td>
<td>9,747 (1.93%)</td>
<td>11,730 (2.33%)</td>
<td>3,663 (0.73%)</td>
<td>504,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>270,825 (53.37%)</td>
<td>188,000 (37.05%)</td>
<td>22,027 (4.34%)</td>
<td>20,731 (4.09%)</td>
<td>5,861 (1.16%)</td>
<td>507,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>203,004 (62.97%)</td>
<td>52,539 (16.30%)</td>
<td>35,452 (11.00%)</td>
<td>4,682 (1.45%)</td>
<td>26,715 (8.29%)</td>
<td>322,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>108,999 (53.97%)</td>
<td>21,164 (10.48%)</td>
<td>65,644 (32.51%)</td>
<td>2,791 (1.38%)</td>
<td>3,348 (1.66%)</td>
<td>201,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>66,049 (50.96%)</td>
<td>11,535 (8.90%)</td>
<td>48,075 (37.09%)</td>
<td>2,329 (1.80%)</td>
<td>1,612 (1.24%)</td>
<td>129,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>446,365 (93.24%)</td>
<td>17,295 (3.61%)</td>
<td>7,431 (1.55%)</td>
<td>3,534 (0.74%)</td>
<td>4,105 (0.86%)</td>
<td>478,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>239,477 (60.74%)</td>
<td>89,800 (22.78%)</td>
<td>33,760 (8.56%)</td>
<td>21,924 (5.56%)</td>
<td>9,325 (2.37%)</td>
<td>394,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>2,323,135 (58.40%)</td>
<td>1,204,764 (30.29%)</td>
<td>266,710 (6.70%)</td>
<td>113,629 (2.86%)</td>
<td>69,827 (1.76%)</td>
<td>3,978,065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, the ethno-regional dynamics in the 1992 elections were manifested in the performance of Hilla Limann, the presidential candidate of the PNC. He received his highest votes from the three northern regions where he hailed from, namely the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions. Further analysis of the constituency elections also reveals that the political parties won massively in areas dominated by certain ethnic groups. Oquaye (1995) used Madina, a suburban community in Accra, to emphasize the role of ethnicity in the 1992 elections. He noted that the electorate in the Madina Township was divided along ethnic lines, with the ‘Zongo’ dwellers (mostly Northerners) voting for Limann. In addition, the residents of Ayigbe Town (Ewes) supported Rawlings, and those in Kotwikrom (Akans) supported Adu-Boahen. This observation seems to confirm the long-held position of scholars like Chazan (1988) and Horowitz (1985) that elections in Africa are nothing more than an ethnic census.

Nonetheless, the significance of ethnicity is not observed in all regions. The ethnic factor alone fails to account for the electoral patterns in many regions of the country. For instance, the presidential candidate of the NPP, Albert Adu-Boahen, who matrilineally hailed from the Eastern region, lost in his home region to J.J. Rawlings, a Voltarian. Similarly, Hilla Limann of the PNC lost his home region to the incumbent J.J. Rawlings, as well. The perceived Akan party and the NPP and its Akan-presidential candidate (with the exception of the Ashanti region) lost in the other four Akan-dominated regions: the Central, Western, Brong-Ahafo and Eastern Regions. The incumbent, Jerry John Rawlings, won in all the four swing regions (Brong-Ahafo, Central,

16 In Ghana, all people from the Northern sector are referred to as Northerners, regardless of whether one is from the Upper West, Upper East or the Northern Region.
Greater Accra and Western region) in addition to its stronghold regions, which suggests that the electorate makes various considerations when voting. While it would be disingenuous to discount the ethno-regionalist factor identified in the 1992 elections, it is my contention that ethnic considerations were limited to some regions, which means that ethnicity may not have been the sole or main determinant of voters’ decision making across Ghana (Whitefield 2009).

4.2.2 The 1996 Elections

On December 7, 1996, Ghanaians again went to the polls to elect a president and legislative members. It was the first time in Ghana’s history that multi-party elections were being held for a second time in succession, since its independence in 1957. The parliamentary elections were contested by five political parties and other independent candidates. The five main parties were the NDC, NPP, PNC, People's Convention Party (PCP), and Democratic People's Party (DPP). However, unlike the 1992 elections which were contested by five political parties, the 1996 presidential election had only three parties: the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and the People’s National Convention (PNC) (Ayee 1997; Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) Report 1997). Moreover, only three parties contested in the presidential elections, with the exception of the PNC, the rest formed two alliances in order to develop a stronger base of support in an attempt to either retain the incumbent Rawlings’ regime or end it. Those who sought to end the Rawlings regime joined the Great Alliance (GA), which was made up of the NPP and PCP.\textsuperscript{17} On the other hand, the parties that desired to extend

\textsuperscript{17} All the parties in the Great Alliance contested the previous 1992 elections independently. See the Electoral Commission of Ghana, 1992 Presidential Elections Results; Ayee 1997. The PCP was a combination of the National Independence Party (NIP), People’s Heritage Party (PHP), and various elements of the National Convention Party (NCP).
Rawlings’ stay in power formed the Progressive Alliance, which consisted of the NDC, DPP, and Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE) party (Asah-Asante 2015; Ayee 1997; Anebo 1997).

In this election, campaign messages were heavily centered on the economy and general issues of national concern. Led by the NPP, the Great Alliance and its presidential candidate campaigned under the slogan “Change and Development,” alluding to several challenges relating to leadership style and competence, the state of the economy, security, and human rights abuses. They asked the electorate to examine their living conditions and circumstances and to vote out the incumbent regime for bringing unnecessary hardship and suffering into the lives of ordinary Ghanaians. The NPP promised an efficient management of the economy and an implementation of pragmatic policies that would improve the living conditions of the Ghanaian people, if given the mandate to lead.

On the other hand, the NDC-led Progressive Alliance launched their campaign under the theme, “Continuity and Stability.” They campaigned on Rawlings’ performance in power, which included the provision and expansion of social services and infrastructure, such as clean drinking water, schools, health facilities, the extension of electricity to remote areas, and improvements in telecommunication and transportation networks. According to Ayee (1997), there was no significant difference in the actual economic policies of the contesting parties. He argued that the respective campaigns of the three political parties were merely targeted at convincing the electorate that they were the best-suited to manage the economy and improve citizens’ living situations. All in all, the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections were more competitive than the 1992 elections. This was due in part to the formation of strong alliances by the political
parties in the run-up to the election. At the end of the 1996 elections, the losing parties accepted
the results and gracefully conceded defeat (Gyimah-Boadi 1999).

The outcome of the election shows that the NDC won by a landslide in both the
presidential and parliamentary elections. For the parliamentary elections, the NDC won 133 out
of 200 seats, while the NPP (61 seats), PCP (5 seats), and PNC (1 seat) won the remaining seats
(Electoral Commission of Ghana 1996). Once again, Jerry John Rawlings of the NDC won the
1996 elections with 57.37 percent of the votes, while John Agyekum Kuffuor of the NPP placed
second with 39.67 percent. Dr. Edward Mahama of the PNC obtained a meagre 2.9 percent
(Smith 2002).

A critical look at the 1996 elections reveals a pattern shared with the 1992 elections. In
both elections, the NDC came first, followed by the NPP and the PNC (Ayee 1998). The
incumbent NDC again won in all the four swing regions in addition to the Volta, Northern,
Upper East and the Upper West regions. A review of the election results shows that Rawlings
won constituencies in each of the ten regions, making him the only candidate with broad national
appeal, cutting across perceived regional party strongholds. As in the previous elections, the
NDC had won over 50 percent of the votes in nine out of the ten regions, except in the Ashanti
region, the home of the opposition NPP candidate (Ayee 1997). Additionally, as observed in the
1992 elections, the outcome of the 1996 elections showed an ethno-regionalized voting cleavage
in the core regions. Indeed, there was no significant change in the voting results from the Ashanti

\[18\] Voting was initially postponed in one constituency because of a legal issue. The NPP won in this
constituency in a by-election held in June 1997. With this added victory, the NPP increased their tally to 61 seats in
parliament (African Election Database 2018).
and Volta Region, the strongholds of the NPP and NDC, respectively. Again, the NDC won in all four swing regions.

Table 4.3: Regional Results of the 1996 Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Presidential Candidate</th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawlings (NDC)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>412,474</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>395,381</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>330,841</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>459,092</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>658,626</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>370,030</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>230,791</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>145,812</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>690,421</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>405,992</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>4,099,758</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>1,258,014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>640,473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>599,111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>853,940</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>1,219,833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>605,303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>334,528</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>195,437</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>730,251</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>708,584</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>7,145,772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation of results from the Electoral Commission of Ghana; Ayee (1997).

J.J. Rawlings of the NDC received his highest regional vote (94.5%) from the Volta Region and his lowest (32.8%) from the Ashanti. Conversely, J.A. Kufuor, leader of the NPP, obtained his highest vote total (65%) from his home region of Ashanti, while his lowest vote total (4.7%) derived from the Volta Region, the home region of the incumbent candidate. The PNC received its highest votes from the home regions of the candidate in the Upper West and Upper East Regions, However, the PNC’s performance in these two regions dwindled considerably if one compares the results of the 1996 elections with those of 1992 (see Table 3.2 and 3.3). It is useful to note that unlike the NDC, both the NPP and PNC presented new
presidential candidates for the 1996 elections. The NPP presented John Agyekum Kufuor as their presidential candidate, replacing the 1992 presidential candidate, Albert Adu Boahen. Similarly, Hilla Limann, the presidential candidate of PNC in the 1992 elections, was replaced with Edward Mahama.\textsuperscript{19} However, while the NDC and NPP had an improved electoral performance compared to the 1992 elections, the PNC’s performance declined in the 1996 elections. As a result, it has been argued that the personality of the presidential candidates may have had some impact on the electoral fortunes of these political parties (Anebo 2001).

In sum, just as it was evident in the 1992 elections, ethnic voting was a factor in the 1996 elections. However, the victory of the NDC in all four swing regions also indicates that other, non-ethnic factors such as regional identity, economic interest, and the personality of candidates influenced the electoral outcomes of the 1996 elections, as well.

\textbf{4.2.3 The Elections of 2000 and 2004}

The 2000 election was historic and remarkable; it is considered one of the most consequential elections in the country’s history since independence. It was the third election under the Fourth Republic, and for the first time, a constitutionally-elected government completed its full tenure in office without any military intervention. After almost two decades in power, this election marked the end of the Rawlings era. It was also the first time in Ghana’s history that power was transferred from an incumbent to an opposition party via the ballot box (Gyimah-Boadi 2001; Oquaye 2005).

\textsuperscript{19} It is important to note that the new presidential candidates and candidates they replaced both hailed from the same ethnic backgrounds and regions. With the NPP, both the 1992 and 1996 candidates were ethnic Akans who hailed from the Ashanti region. The PNC candidates for the two elections both hailed from the Northern sector of the country. It is believed that the personality and qualities of the candidates exerted an impact on the electoral outcomes in the 1992 and 1996 elections (Anebo 2001).
For the third consecutive time, Ghanaians returned to the polls for the presidential and parliamentary elections held on December 7, 2000. The election became a highly competitive battle for succession to the outgoing President Jerry John Rawlings of the NDC. After serving for two full terms, Rawlings was constitutionally ineligible to contest in further elections. He selected his vice-president, John Evan Atta Mills, as the presidential candidate for the NDC in the 2000 election. Out of the ten registered political parties, seven participated in the presidential elections that year. They were the incumbent NDC, NPP, CPP, PNC, Democratic People’s Party (DPP), the United Ghana Movement (UGM), and the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP). The presidential election turned out to be a contest between John Agyekum Kufuor, the presidential candidate of the NPP, and the incumbent vice-president and presidential candidate of the ruling NDC, John Evans Atta Mills (Anebo 2001).

As in the 1996 elections, the 2000 election season was fierce and intense. The campaigns were characterized by acrimony and insults, but also included vibrant discussions of economic and social issues, particularly between the two prominent parties, the NDC and NPP. The incumbent NDC campaigned under the banner “Continuity in Change” on the backdrop of the Rawlings’ achievements regarding general infrastructural and economic developments. The opposition NPP used the slogan “Positive Change,” promising to initiate much-needed reforms to ensure a positive transformation in the country. They invited the electorate to vote out the incumbent party, citing general economic mismanagement and insecurity as reasons for necessary change in leadership.

---

20 The NDC had the DPP and EGLE parties as its allies in the 2000 elections. The DPP, UGM, and the GCPP were new political parties that were formed post-1992 elections.
In the parliamentary elections, the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won 100 out of the 200 contested seats, while the incumbent NDC’s 133-seat parliamentary majority was whittled down to 92 (Anebo 2001). The rest of the seats were shared among the other parties and independent candidates. In the second round of the presidential elections, John Agyekum Kuffuor, the candidate of the NPP, won the presidential run-off elections after obtaining 3,631,263 votes, representing 56.90 percent of the total valid votes. His opponent, the NDC candidate John Atta Mills, managed to garner 2,750,124 votes, which accounted for 43.10 percent of the total votes (Ghana Electoral Commission 2000).

**Table 4.4: Results of the 2000 First and Second Round Presidential Elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>First Round</th>
<th></th>
<th>Run-off</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of Votes</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of Votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Votes</td>
<td></td>
<td>of Votes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Agyekum Kufuor (NPP)</td>
<td>3,131,739</td>
<td>48.17%</td>
<td>3,631,263</td>
<td>56.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Evans Atta Mills (NDC)</td>
<td>2,895,575</td>
<td>44.54%</td>
<td>2,750,124</td>
<td>43.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama (PNC)</td>
<td>189,659</td>
<td>2.92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hagan (CPP)</td>
<td>115,641</td>
<td>1.78%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustus &quot;Goosie&quot; Tanoh (NRP)</td>
<td>78,629</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Augustus Larney (GCPP)</td>
<td>67,504</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Wereko-Brobbey (UGM)</td>
<td>22,123</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Valid Votes</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,500,870</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6,381,387</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: African Election Database; Electoral Commission of Ghana (2017).*

Following the results of the run-off elections—albeit uncommon in most African nations at the time—the ruling party graciously conceded defeat and the presidential candidate of the opposition was inaugurated as president on January 7, 2001. This was an important point in the
politics of Ghana because it was the third successive free and fair election and the first-ever election that resulted in a transfer of power from an incumbent to an opposition party.

Table 4.5: Regional Results of the 28 December 2000 Presidential Run-off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>John A. Kufuor (NPP)</td>
<td>1,027,132</td>
<td>79.89</td>
<td>258,623</td>
<td>20.11</td>
<td>1,285,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>John Atta Mills (NDC)</td>
<td>342,961</td>
<td>58.30</td>
<td>245,300</td>
<td>41.70</td>
<td>588,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td></td>
<td>302,414</td>
<td>60.31</td>
<td>199,006</td>
<td>39.69</td>
<td>501,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td></td>
<td>447,154</td>
<td>62.41</td>
<td>269,270</td>
<td>37.59</td>
<td>716,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td></td>
<td>631,506</td>
<td>59.95</td>
<td>421,954</td>
<td>40.05</td>
<td>1,053,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td></td>
<td>265,076</td>
<td>48.90</td>
<td>277,038</td>
<td>51.10</td>
<td>542,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td></td>
<td>115,880</td>
<td>42.83</td>
<td>154,703</td>
<td>57.17</td>
<td>270,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td></td>
<td>64,163</td>
<td>38.03</td>
<td>104,533</td>
<td>61.97</td>
<td>168,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td></td>
<td>76,839</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>589,719</td>
<td>88.47</td>
<td>666,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td></td>
<td>358,138</td>
<td>60.90</td>
<td>229,978</td>
<td>39.10</td>
<td>588,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,631,263</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>2,750,124</td>
<td>43.10</td>
<td>6,381,387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The outcome of this election introduced some new dynamics into the electoral landscape. For the first time the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won in other regions outside their stronghold in the Ashanti region. The NPP won in 6 out of the 10 regions in Ghana and obtained more than a 50% majority in the Ashanti, Eastern, and all four swing regions. Conversely, the NDC won in only the Volta and the three Northern regions; it lost in all the four swing regions they had won in the past elections. The support of the swing regions was crucial in securing an electoral victory for the opposition NPP.

21 The NPP was able to win in other regions, but not in the core region of the NDC.
The core regions voted for the same party in all three elections, whereas the swing regions voted for a different party in the 2000 elections. These electoral dynamics make it difficult to accept that voting motivations in the various elections were solely based on one factor, ethnicity (Alabi 2007). Nonetheless, the ethno-regional voting pattern that has been observed in the past two elections in the core regions did manifest itself in the 2000 election. That is, similar to the 1992 and 1996 results, the NPP received its highest percentage of votes (79.89%) from the Ashanti region and its poorest performance (11.53%) was in the Volta region, the main stronghold of the NDC. The NDC also obtained its highest percentage of votes (88.47%) from the Volta region, while its poorest showing (20.11%) came from the Ashanti region. The NPP, in addition to winning the Greater Accra, won in all of the five ethnic Akan-dominated regions, namely the Ashanti, Eastern, Brong-Ahafo, Central, and the Western region. However, the NPP made less headway in non-Akan regions (Arthur 2009). The NDC also won in regions with smaller Akan populations, specifically in the Volta, Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. Peter Arthur interprets the voting pattern in these regions as a strategic vote against perceived Akan-domination (Arthur 2009).

Similarly, the 2004 electoral outcomes replicated the voting trends of the 2000 elections. The campaign was based on rather ambitious but similar economic policies and programs outlined by the political parties in their manifestos. While the NPP campaigned on promises to continue the rigorous fiscal policies that they initiated in its first term, the NDC campaign promised that “a new NDC government will move the economy from dependency on foreign donor charity to self-help, domestic initiative and indigenous entrepreneurship.” But far from these lofty political ideologies, the real campaigns were unfortunately not based on an assessment of the potential of the parties to achieve these objectives. The campaigns in many
cases were characterized by conscious efforts to lure the electorates through giving out personal gifts and benefits especially in the rural areas where poverty and illiteracy are most prevalent (Konrad 2004).

At the end of the polls, the incumbent John Agyekum Kufuor, candidate of the NPP won the presidential elections, obtaining 52.4% of the total votes cast. The NDC and PNC candidates placed second and third, with 44.6% and 1.9% of the total votes cast respectively (Boafo-Arthur 2006). Indeed, the regional breakdown of the results did not deviate from the previous pattern. The NPP once again won in 6 out the 10 regions; it won in all of the four swing regions, and in the Ashanti and Eastern regions. Additionally, the electoral results confirmed the dominance of the NPP in the Akan-dominated regions. All of the five previously identified Akan regions voted for the NPP and its presidential candidate, John Agyekum Kufuor, against his main contender, John Atta Mills of the NDC. It is important to note that the three Akan regions (Central, Brong Ahafo and Western) voted for the NDC in the 1992 and 1996 elections, even though the NDC had a non-Akan candidate. Ethnicity, therefore, is not the primary force driving electoral outcome in these regions. As it was evident in the previous elections, the presidential candidates of the NPP and NDC obtained their lowest percentage of votes in each other’s strongholds. In the 2004 elections, Atta Mills obtained 83.8 percent of votes in the Volta Region, while Kufuor obtained 14.2 percent in that same region. In the Ashanti Region, Kufuor received 74.6 percent of the votes, while Mills got only 24 percent (Electoral Commission 2004).

**Table 4.6: Results of the 2004 Presidential Election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Agyekum Kufuor</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party (NPP)</td>
<td>4,524,074</td>
<td>52.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 The swing regions were won by the NDC in the 1992 and 1996 elections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Atta Mills</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress (NDC)</td>
<td>3,850,368</td>
<td>44.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama</td>
<td>People’s National Convention (PNC)</td>
<td>165,375</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Agudey</td>
<td>Convention People’s Party</td>
<td>85,968</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,625,785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s compilation from the Electoral Commission Database.

A number of factors including economic conditions, candidate personality, and ethnic and regionalized voting have been cited as factors that influenced the 2000 and 2004 electoral results (Anebo 2001; Frimpong 2006; Debrah 2009). A factor commonly identified as crucial in the defeat of the NDC was the absence of Rawlings as a contender. Most analysts suggest that Rawlings won the 1992 and 1996 elections largely because of his personality, charisma and leadership traits, hence the defeat of the NDC in the 2000 elections has been attributed to the absence of Rawlings as a contender (Anebo 2001; Walraven 2002).

Additionally, the economic conditions of the country also contributed to the defeat of the NDC in the 2000 elections. The economy was in deep crisis at the time. Inflation stood at roughly 25 percent. As a result, the prices of basic food staples were continuously rising. Increases in unemployment, and the prices of cocoa and gold, on which the country’s main revenue depended, had plummeted on the international market. The country’s currency was in a free fall, performing poorly against the major currencies (Walraven 2002). Furthermore, a pervasive perception of corruption among government functionaries reduced the chances of the NDC retaining power (Ayee, 2002).

However, notwithstanding the extent to which the personality and economic conditions influenced the outcome of these elections, ethnicity was evident in some campaigns when the
presidential candidates resorted to ethnic persuasions to canvass support. For instance, the presidential candidate of the NDC, Atta-Mills’ placards and billboards in the Central Region, his home region, carried the slogan “Adze wo fie a oye,” which translates literally to “it Is better to Have Your Own,” which implies that Atta-Mills was urging voters in the Central Regions to support him simply because he was from their ethnic group and region (Gyimah-Boadi 2001:63). The use of such ethnic appeals may have impacted the voting preferences of segments of the population.

4.2.4 The Election of 2008 and 2012

The election of 2008 is significant in the electoral history of Ghana in that it was the fifth successive election under the Fourth Republic and the second to result in a change of government. As occurred in the 2000 election, the 2008 election advanced to a run-off, as no presidential candidate received the required majority of votes. The election campaigns were intense, especially as the run-off election drew closer. The first-round election was largely based on issues such as job creation, free versus quality education, the National Health Insurance scheme, and economic measures to alleviate the plight of people. The two main political parties campaigned on the platforms of progress and change: the NPP’s main campaign slogan was “We are Moving Forward” and the NDC’s main campaign theme was the promise of change for “A Better Ghana.” However, the tenor of the campaign began to shift in the lead-up to the run-off to focus more on personality and partisan politics. There were personal attacks and insults, leading to increasing levels of tension in some areas. Issues of ethnicity also began to appear in the campaign. The ethnic politics became prevalent in areas perceived to be strongholds of the NPP and NDC, such as in the Ashanti and Volta regions. There were also complaints by both parties regarding the intimidation of their party’s activists, especially in each other’s strongholds.
Despite these tensions, the overall conduct of the campaign was mostly orderly, and the political parties graciously accepted the outcome of the elections, even if it did not favor their specific party or candidate (COG Report 2008; Refugee Review Tribunal Report 2009).

Seven political parties, namely the NPP, NDC, CPP, PNC, DPP, and two new entrants, the Reformed Patriotic Party (RPP) and the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), competed in the presidential elections held on December 7, 2008. As usual, the contest was largely between the NPP and NDC. The NDC was represented by John Atta Mills, who had also led the party in the elections of 2000 and 2004. However, the incumbent president of the NPP was legally disqualified from contesting again, having served two terms in office. Thus, the NPP presented a new candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo, for the 2008 presidential elections. At the end of the first round of elections, once gain none of the presidential candidates had secured the constitutionally required 50-percent-plus-one vote to win the election. Consequently, a run-off election was held between the candidates of the incumbent NPP and the opposition NDC (Electoral Commission of Ghana 2008).

In the run-off election, John Atta Mills secured 50.23 percent of the votes, whereas Nana Akufo-Addo won 49.77 percent of the votes cast. The NDC also won the majority of the seats in the parliamentary elections, and its presidential candidate won in eight of the ten regions in Ghana. The NPP only won in its stronghold region of Ashanti and in the Eastern region, where the presidential candidate resided. The loyal support for the NPP and NDC in the Ashanti and Volta regions, respectively, was once again manifested in the 2008 presidential election. Nana

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Akufo-Addo won 13.9 percent of the votes in the Volta Region, while Atta-Mills obtained 86.12 percent; conversely, in the Ashanti Region, Akufo-Addo and Atta-Mills garnered 75 percent and 25 percent of the votes cast, respectively. Again, across all ten regions of Ghana, both parties’ poorest performances came from the opponent’s stronghold region (Electoral Commission of Ghana 2008).

Similar to the 2008 election, the 2012 general election was heated and intense. The two main political parties promised to utilize the country’s resources to bring prosperity to Ghana, including the new-found oil to fuel an industrial revolution while also making improvements to education, job creation, health services, and infrastructure. According to the 2012 Commonwealth Observer Group report, the campaign was heavily centered on educational reforms and policies. In response to the NPP promise of free senior-high education, the NDC described the promise as unrealistic and cautioned the electorate to reject it. As an alternative, the NDC promised to improve the quality of education and expand educational infrastructure to increase access. In addition to this, politicization of ethnic issues manifested themselves in the 2012 elections. Generally, the run-up to the elections saw a rise in tension due to the fiercely contested nature of the political campaigns. In the end, the candidate of the NDC won the presidential elections in the first round by a margin of nearly 300,000 votes. The opposition NPP challenged the results at the Supreme Court, alleging various forms of infractions, rigging, and electoral fraud. After eight months of deliberation, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition and

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upheld results as originally declared by the Ghana Electoral Commission (COG 2012; Afful 2016).

The results of the 2012 election were consistent with the previous patterns. The election held on December 7, 2012, featured seven political parties and an independent candidate. The parties included the following: the NDC, represented by John Dramani Mahama; the NPP, led by Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo; the People’s National Convention (PNC), represented by Edward Nasigirie Mahama; the Convention People’s Party (CPP), represented by Michael Abu Sakara Foster; the Progressive People’s Party (PPP), represented by Dr. Papa Kwesi Nduom; the United Front Party (UFP), represented by Akwasi Addai Odike; and the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP), led by Henry Herbert Lartey. The only independent candidate was Jacob Osei Yeboah. Once again, the main contest was between the incumbent candidate President John Dramani Mahama of the NDC and Nana Akufo-Addo of the main opposition party, the NPP.25

The NDC’s John Dramani Mahama won with 50.70 percent of the vote against Nana Akufo-Addo, who won 47.74 percent of votes. Once again, the NDC won in eight of the ten regions, leaving the NPP with a win in only two regions, the Ashanti and Eastern regions. Further, the NDC won in the four swing regions in both the 2008 and 2012 elections. The past electoral results show that electoral victory requires political parties to win a majority in all the four swing regions. An interesting dynamic in the 2012 election was that the NPP—despite being perceived as an Akan party and represented by an Akan presidential candidate—lost in three Akan-dominated regions to the NDC’s non-Akan candidate. The electoral results from the

25 John Dramani Mahama, who was then the vice-president, was sworn in as president on July 24, 2012 following the sudden death of President John Atta Mills. He completed the unexpired term of the president and contested that year’s elections, which he subsequently won (Kpodo and Valdamis 2012).
Central, Western and Brong-Ahafo regions, which are all traditionally Akan and also swing regions, suggest that voters in these regions are not primarily influenced by ethnicity when making their voting decisions (Electoral Commission).²⁶

Nonetheless, the NPP and NDC continued to receive their highest support from the Ashanti and Volta regions, respectively. Akufo-Addo of the NPP had his strongest performance (70.9%) in the Ashanti region and his lowest performance (12.9%) in the Volta region. In contrast, the NDC’s John Mahama secured his highest vote total (85.5%) in the Volta region and his lowest vote (28.4%) in the Ashanti region. The consistency in the voting pattern of these regions illustrates ethno-regional factor at play within Ghanaian politics.

Table 4.7a: Results of the 2008 First and Second Round Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate (Party)</th>
<th>First Round</th>
<th></th>
<th>Second Round</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>% of Votes</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>% of Votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Evans Atta Mills (NDC)</td>
<td>4,056,634</td>
<td>47.92</td>
<td>4,521,032</td>
<td>50.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo (NPP)</td>
<td>4,159,439</td>
<td>49.13</td>
<td>4,480,446</td>
<td>49.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paa Kwesi Nduom (CPP)</td>
<td>113,494</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama (PNC)</td>
<td>73,494</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Ansah-Antwi (DFP)</td>
<td>27,889</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwasi Amoako-Yeboah</td>
<td>19,342</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Ward-Brew (DPP)</td>
<td>8,653</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena Adjei (RPD)</td>
<td>6,889</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.7b: Results of the 2012 Presidential Election

²⁶ Note that these three Akan-dominated regions, together with the Greater Accra region, constitute the swing regions of Ghana. Together, these regions have voted for the winner in all elections. It is therefore not the first time that an Akan candidate has lost against a non-Akan in the Akan-dominated regions. The NPP’s Akan candidates lost against Jerry John Rawlings in these regions during the 1992 and 1996 elections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Dramani Mahama</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>5,574,761</td>
<td>50.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>5,248,898</td>
<td>47.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa Kwesi Nduom</td>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>64,362</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Herbert Lartey</td>
<td>GCPP</td>
<td>38,223</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayariga Hassan</td>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>24,617</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Abu Sakara Foster</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>20,323</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Osei Yeboah</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>15,201</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwasi Addai Odike</td>
<td>UFP</td>
<td>8,877</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation from results released by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (2018); COG Report (2012).

4.2.5 The Election of 2016

The elections held on December 7, 2016, constituted the seventh consecutive election under the Fourth Republic, and more significantly, the election outcome marked the third alternation of power in the country. Nana Akufo-Addo of the NPP, the main opposition candidate, defeated the incumbent President John Mahama of the NDC by securing 53.72 percent of the votes, while Mahama won 44.53 percent of the total valid votes. Notably, this made Mahama the first sitting president to lose an election; he served only one term in office.\(^{27}\)

In addition to its landslide victory in the presidential elections, the NPP won almost a two-thirds majority in the parliamentary contest, obtaining 169 out of the 275 available seats. The NDC won the remaining 106 seats. The presidential candidate of the NPP won in six of the ten regions in Ghana: the Ashanti and Eastern Regions, plus all four of the swing regions. These four regions

\(^{27}\) Until Mahama’s defeat in the 2016 elections, all elected presidents since 1992 had been elected to serve two-terms in office.
are described as swing regions because they have alternated their support between the two main political parties—the NPP and NDC—from election to election. The NDC, in addition to winning the Volta Region (described as their World Bank), also won in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions.

As it has been the case in all elections since 1992, the candidates of the NPP and NDC received their highest support from the Ashanti and Volta regions, respectively. In the Ashanti region, NPP’s Nana Akufo-Addo won 76.3 percent of the votes, while John Mahama obtained 23 percent of the total valid votes. In the Volta region, however, John Mahama and Nana Akufo-Addo obtained 81 percent and 17.4 percent of the votes, respectively. As happened in the 2000 and 2004 elections, the NPP won in all five traditionally Akan regions, but apart from winning the Greater Accra region, the NPP lost in the other non-Akan regions: the Volta, Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions. Indeed, throughout the Fourth Republic, the NPP has received its poorest electoral performance from these four non-Akan regions. This observed voting pattern has led some to characterize the NPP as an Ashanti party and the NDC as Volta party.

Therefore, the electoral results from 1992 to 2016 show some elements of an ethno-regional pattern. While four regions have always swung their support between various parties from one election to another, two key core regions have become attached to certain parties. This observation supports the assertions that the founding leaders of these political parties exploited

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28 With the exception of the 1992 and 1996 elections, the NPP have won the majority in every election in the Eastern region under the Fourth Republic. Together with the Ashanti region, the Eastern region has been identified as another core region of the NPP (Abdul-Gafaru and Hickey 2016).
29 The Volta Region is christened the World Bank of the NDC because it is the stronghold of the party. The NDC has won in the region by more than 80% in every election (Adjei 2012).
30 The four non-Akan regions are also the core regions of the NDC. The NDC have won the majority of votes in every election in these regions.
ethnicity in the early periods of the multi-party democracy in order to establish a strong and loyal support base for their party. Unsurprisingly, the voting pattern helps explain why some political activist seek to portray the opposition NPP as an ‘Ashanti party’ and the NDC as ‘Volta party.’

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that three Akan regions—the Brong-Ahafo, Central and Western regions—have, in various elections, voted for or against the perceived Akan Party, the NPP. Together with the Greater Accra region, it is the variation in the voting pattern of these swing regions that made the alternation of government possible in the 2000, 2008, and 2016 elections. The voting dynamics in these regions indicate that voters in these regions consider factors other than ethnicity when determining their vote choice.
Table 4.8: Regional Results of the Fourth Republican Presidential Elections for the NPP and NDC in Percentages (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s compilation of presidential election results from the Electoral Commission of Ghana (1992-2016).

**Note:** * indicates a second round or run-off election.
4.3 Analysis of Voting Patterns (1992-2016)

The electoral data presented above show an interesting dynamics regarding the politics and elections in Ghana. The elections are highly competitive between the two main political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). They are the only political parties that have won presidential elections in Ghana. The NPP and NDC have relatively equal electoral strength, turning Ghana into a dominant two-party system. Under the Fourth Republic, none of the political parties has won the majority in three consecutive presidential elections. The Ghanaian electorate has always voted out the incumbent after two terms in office, resulting in the three alternations of power between the two main political parties. These voting patterns suggest that the behavior of the Ghana voter is sufficient enough to sustain a high level of electoral competition, and the prospect of future changes in government, an attitude indicative of a relatively mature voting behavior, which is a hallmark of a functioning democratic system (Lindberg and Morrison 2005).

The study also reveals that there are swing and core electoral regions in Ghana. In the swing regions, the elections are highly competitive, making it equally possible for either the NPP or NDC to win in these regions. The NDC won in these four regions in the 1992 and 1996 elections, but they lost all of the swing regions to the NPP in the elections of 2000 and 2004. The NDC again won the majority of votes in these four swing regions in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Then, in the 2016 election, the NPP won back all of these regions. All things equal, it is expected that the two-term cycle will continue in future elections. As such, the NPP is highly favored to win the 2020 elections. Interestingly, no political party has won three consecutive elections in the swing regions. These regions have always decided the winner in the country’s general elections. As opposed to other regions, electoral results have been very close in the four swing regions, and as a result, the swing regions have become the battleground of
presidential elections in Ghana. The records have shown that in addition to winning in the core regions, the political parties need the majority support of all the four swing regions in order to cross the 50-percent-plus-one vote threshold needed to win the presidency. In fact, since 1992, the winners of the presidential race have won the vote in all of the four swing regions in addition to their respective core regions. The voting patterns suggest that voters in the swing regions are not primarily influenced by stable and distinctive factors such as ethnic or regional ties, but rather they make voting decisions after conscious evaluation of government performance, economic conditions, and campaign issues.

On the other hand, a cursory look at the electoral results from 1992 to 2016 shows that ethnic and regional bloc voting influence electoral competition under the Fourth Republic (Haynes 2003; Gyimah-Boadi 2001). The Ashanti region has been the stronghold or a core region of the NPP, while the Volta region remain the geographic stronghold of the NDC. These two parties have always won more than 80 percent of the votes in the respective regions. This overwhelming support has led some political observers to describe the NPP as an Akan-Ashanti party and the NDC as Ewe-Volta party. To a lesser extent, the Eastern Region could be added to the Ashanti Region as a stronghold of the NPP because of their consistent support for the party, beginning in the election of 2000. On the other hand, the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West Regions are also considered strongholds of the NDC, following the party’s consistent victory in all of the seven presidential elections since 1992. The voting pattern in the core regions reveals a pronounced ethno-regional trend. Some regions and ethnic groups vote as blocs for particular political parties. According to Bratton, Bhavnani, and Chen (2012), ethnic voting occurs “whenever members of a cultural group show disproportionate affinity at the polls for a particular political party” (2011:1). Based on this characterization of ethnic voting, I argue that ethnic and regional considerations influence voting decisions in Ghana, especially in the core regions.
Nonetheless, the analysis from the 1992 to 2016 elections indicates that the so-called ethno-regional voting is limited to the Ashanti and Volta regions. It is the Ashanti and Volta regions that have unequivocally demonstrated a biased, unalloyed, and untouchable allegiance to the NPP and NDC, respectively. However, past elections have shown that victory in the core regions alone are not enough to ensure electoral victory. Thus, even if ethno-regional considerations drive voting outcome in the core regions, it does appear that ethnicity is not the most important factor in winning elections in Ghana. This is because in all the seven elections held under the Fourth Republic, electoral victories have depended on garnering support beyond a party’s ethnic region or core base (Ayee 2001).

However, ethnic and regional considerations do influence the selection of presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Since 1992, the political parties have always tried to have a regional (north and south) and tribal balance (Akan and non-Akan) on the presidential ticket. There is a conscious effort on the part of the political parties to present ethnically mixed presidential tickets in elections. Yet, the two main political parties have, on various occasions, played the ethnic card when selecting their presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Each of the parties has ensured that its presidential ticket reflects an ethno-regional balance, so that if the presidential candidate is an Akan or from the southern part of Ghana, the running mate is chosen from the northern part or from a non-Akan ethnic group, and vice-versa. The main aim of this selection pattern is to win votes from both the ‘Akan’ and ‘non-Akan’ ethnic groups. However, these ethnic considerations do not always directly affect the outcome of elections. For instance, the NPP has never won in the three northern regions (Upper East, Upper West, Northern regions) despite consistently having a non-Akan, northerner as the vice-presidential candidate. Similarly, in 2000 and 2004, the NDC selected an Akan presidential candidate with a northern running mate, but the party was defeated in all Akan-dominated regions, including central region, the candidates’ home region (Faanu and Graham 2017).
Therefore, taken together, it is overly simplistic to portray ethnicity as the defining element of electoral behavior in Ghana or to characterize elections in Ghana as an “ethnic census.” Ethnicity may significantly influence vote choice in the core regions, but that is not the case in the swing regions. This is partly because electoral results would have remained unchanged for a long period of time if voting decisions in all regions were determined by stable sociological factors like ethnicity. Additionally, the perceived Akan party—in this case, the NPP—would have always won the Akan regions, a development which would have kept them in power for a long time, if not forever. However, that was not what happened. The voting pattern in the four swing regions indicates that besides ethnic and identity, other factors such as the state of the economy, the personality of the candidates, and the message of the campaigns have altogether influenced the voting behavior in Ghana. Although the Volta and Ashanti regions can be regarded as having particular party preferences, the remaining eight regions, especially the four swing regions, do not fit the ethnic voter label. According to Lindberg and Morrison (2005), unlike core voters, the swing voters are characterized by rational evaluation of government and candidate performance. Lindberg and Morrison add that apart from ethnicity, core and swing voters cannot be distinguished by structural factors, like level of education, the rural-urban divide, income, or occupation. On top of this, the stark difference in the voting patterns of the swing and core regions makes it difficult to accept the assumption that ethnicity is the basis of electoral behavior in Ghana as a whole.

In sum, the analysis shows that ethnic bloc voting is prevalent in the Ashanti and Volta regions, the strongholds of the NPP and NDC, respectively. However, the electoral data suggest that a host of factors such as economic conditions, incumbent performance, candidate personality, and campaign issues influence electoral outcomes in the swing regions. Therefore, the trail of electoral politics in Ghana shows that the ethnic vote alone has never been enough to win elections. To become electorally
viable, political parties and candidates must have the wherewithal to win the unattached voter, particularly voters in the four identified swing regions (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

The crucial question, then, is what other variable(s) drives voting behavior in the electoral politics of Ghana and to what extent? Further, what are the significant factors that influence voters in the swing regions? The survey data on the determinants of voter choice in Ghana is presented in the next chapter.

*Figure 1. Map Showing the Ten Regions of Ghana*
CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the survey data obtained from the selected swing and core regions in Ghana. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, the demographic profile and social affiliations of the participants will be presented. The second section captures the participants’ political opinions and involvement in politics, while the last section primarily deals with the elections and the specific issues voters consider when they vote. The survey data is analyzed using a simple frequency distribution and regression analysis.

5.1 The Demographic Characteristics and Social Affiliations of Respondents

This section analyzes the demographic characteristics of the study participants, namely their age, sex, educational background, occupational status, and constituency. This information will help the reader to better understand the electorate’s collective responses regarding the factors that influence their vote choice.

In order to determine their social affiliation, the research participants in this survey were asked to indicate their gender, age, religion, constituency, level of education, occupation, and marital status. In the sections that follow, supporting tables and figures are provided to complement the analysis. As Dzorgbo (2006) contends, the demographic characteristics of respondents are important because they could have some influence on how voters make their choices.

5.1.1 Gender

According to Norris (1996), gender can sometimes have an impact on electoral choice. Men and women may perceive and evaluate electioneering issues from varying viewpoints. In addition, they may
rate and prioritize issues differently when making voting decisions. Therefore, gender composition and representation is essential in understanding and explaining electoral outcomes. In this study, the data relating to the gender of respondents has been presented in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed from Table 5.1 that both males and females were largely represented equally in all regions. On average, the proportion of men in the sample was greater than women by about five percentage points. A possible reason for the predominance of the male respondents is the fact that they were more willing to participate in the survey than their female counterparts. Most men showed a greater disposition to talk about politics with the male investigator than the women did. Additionally, the lower rate of female participation in this study could partly be attributed to the assertion made by Allah-Mensah (2001) who claims most Ghanaian women are less politically conscious and less active in issues relating to politics than men. As indicated by Frempong (2004), women from some cultures, especially those in rural areas, require permission from their husbands in order to speak to strangers. This societal feature may have accounted for the lower participation of women in this survey.

**5.1.2 Age Distribution**

According to Holland (2013), age is one of the strongest predictors of vote choice in the most recent presidential elections. Her survey of voters in the 2012 United States presidential election revealed that younger people are usually more liberal than older people; in addition, younger people
usually prefer insurgent candidates over mainstream candidates when compared to their older counterparts. Therefore, age is an important factor which helps shape the voters’ views on specific issues. Various age groups may perceive issues differently, as a result, they will make varied considerations in their vote choice. Table 5.2 shows the age distribution of the study participants.

**Table 5.2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and Over</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.2, adults between the ages of 25 and 54 account for the largest portion of survey participants, representing 62.3 percent of the total respondents. Those 55 and over are the least represented (18.7%), while young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 constitute 19 percent of the survey participants. In all, the majority of the respondents are aged 25 and older, indicating that most of them were eligible to vote in the past three elections and therefore able to understand and respond to the issues raised in the survey.

**5.1.3 Level of Education**

According to Marshal (2015), formal education is a key predictor of voting behavior. In his opinion, individual’s level of education determines their political party preference and electoral choice. Thus, formal education may have an impact on people's reasoning, attitudes, and understanding of any particular phenomenon at hand. The voter’s responses in this survey are likely to be shaped by their
level of education; hence, it becomes important to know the educational status of the study participants (Burden 2009). The data pertaining to the educational levels of respondents is presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Educational Level of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Below</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer not to say</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the educational background, Table 5.3 indicates that the majority of the respondents (about 77.3%) had some form of education up to the secondary and tertiary levels. Seventeen percent of the respondents were educated up to the primary level, while 1.3 percent had no formal education at all. Taken together, the table shows that approximately 18.6 percent of all respondents had either only primary or no formal education. This suggests that a large proportion of the research subjects are educated beyond the primary level, and as a result, they are likely to have made informed choices regarding the political and economic issues that dominate elections. Therefore, the composition of this sample is acceptable, as it includes representatives from each major educational level.

The table further reveals that there are no significant differences in the educational backgrounds of respondents in the swing and core regions. As evident in Table 5.3, the majority of respondents (92%) from the swing regions had some form of education in the primary, secondary, or tertiary levels, representing 18.7 percent, 33.3 percent, and 40 percent respectively. Only 1.3 percent of respondents reported that they had no formal education at all. In the core regions, 97.4 percent of the 150
respondents had primary, secondary, or tertiary education, while 1.3 percent had no formal education. It is clear from the table that the majority of respondents from core regions is more highly educated than those in the swing regions. Therefore, contrary to mainstream perceptions, the data shows that educational level of voters may not be as strong an explanatory factor as previously noted when it comes to voting behavior.

5.1.4 Occupational Status

The employment status of a person could have a bearing on his or her political and economic interests, values, and voting decisions (Grafstein 2005). One’s occupation and the income derived from it may determine an individual’s quality of life. Hence, a person’s employment or occupational status could potentially influence one’s evaluation of political leaders, the economy, and various campaign issues. To this end, the respondents’ employment and occupations were investigated, and data pertaining to it is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Occupational Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Status</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from Table 5.4 that in the swing regions, the majority of the respondents (64%) reported that they are employed while 18 percent reported being unemployed. Respondents who identified as either retired or student represented 4 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Similarly, in the
core regions, a large proportion of the sample reported being employed (66.7%), followed by unemployed (14.7%), student (10.7%), retired (6%), and disabled (2%). A comparison of the core and swing regions reveals no significant variation in the occupational status of subjects. Based on this data, the study claims that employment status does not provide much insight into how swing and core regions vary in their vote choice. The majority of the respondents (over 60%) in both regions reported their status as employed, while a low percentage (less than 20%) in either region reported being unemployed. According to Bluwey (1998), many people will not admit that they are unemployed due to the stigma attached to unemployment. As a result, this factor could partially account for the unusually low unemployment figures recorded in both regions.

5.1.5 Linguistic Composition

In a study of the social and demographic bases of voting behavior, Lijphart (1979) found that language is a powerful variable that impacts vote choice. Language is the basic medium of communication and interaction among people. Moreover, the number of languages a person speaks may influence the extent to which they engage and understand others’ viewpoints. Hence, a person who speaks only one language is more likely to associate and interact with in-group members as opposed to outsiders, and consequently, they are more likely to make electoral decisions that reflect the interest of their linguistic or cultural group. Conversely, a multilingual person may have a higher propensity to be open to the outside world. In addition, multilingual voters may be more susceptible to vote for persons who do not necessarily belong to their primary linguistic group. A voter’s linguistic status is considered an important variable in studying the consistency and change in voting patterns. The data presented in Table 5.5 shows the results of this investigation.

Table 5.5: Languages Spoken by Respondents
It is clear from Table 5.5 that the majority of respondents in both the swing and core regions are multilingual, representing 62.7 percent and 56.7 percent for swing and core regions, in that order. However, there are more unilingual respondents in the core regions (43.3%) than in the swing regions (37.3%). The difference in the percentage of unilingual voters in the swing and core regions suggests that language could be a key factor in explaining the different voting patterns in these regions. Thus, there are more likely to be core or bloc voters in a unilingual community than in a multilingual community.

**5.1.6 Rural and Urban Constituencies**

Where an individual resides, whether rural or urban, may determine what factors are important to voters, subsequently impacting their electoral choices. Voters in different geographical settings may make different considerations during an election. Studies by Bossuroy (2011) and Dendere (2013) reveal that rural voters differ from other voters in some key areas, namely their understanding of democracy, policy preferences, knowledge of opposition political parties, and access to private media. All of these aspects has a strong influence on a voter’s support or opposition of the ruling party.

*Table 5.6: Rural and Urban Constituencies*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Constituency</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, it is clear that in the swing regions, the majority of the respondents (72%) resided in urban areas, while only 28 percent resided in rural areas. In the core regions, the urban respondents accounted for 79.3 percent of the core region sample, while rural respondents accounted for 20.7 percent of that same sample. The data shows that a large number of the respondents in both regions are urban dwellers, who—with all things equal—face similar challenges and prospects. The figures indicate that a person’s geography, whether urban or rural in nature, do not have any significant influence on how the electorate makes their voting choices. This study involved a relatively equal number of respondents from both urban and rural constituencies.

Using descriptive statistics, this section has presented several aspects of the demographic backgrounds of the respondents, and the information provided so far indicates that the selected sample was broadly representative of the study population. In sum, there were no significant variations in the demographic profiles of respondents in the swing and core regions. The next section will focus on election-related issues and the political opinions of respondents.

5.2 Political Opinions and Involvement of Respondents

This section presents the participants’ political opinions and their level of involvement in politics. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they identified with either of the two
dominant political parties in Ghana and the extent to which they were interested in government and political issues. Furthermore, they were asked to provide information on their previous voting history and their views on the economic performance of the two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

5.2.1 Attention to Government and Politics

Political awareness has been known to play a significant role in explaining variations in political participation (Converse 2000). According to Delli Carpini and Keeter, regular attention to governance issues helps to acquire enough information about political and current affairs that is considered to be important in allowing individuals and groups to effectively participate in politics. It can be assumed from this that the higher the level of political awareness, the higher the level of participation in electoral activities (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Therefore, people who rarely follow politics and related issues will be less likely to participate (Kuotsu 2016). This study surveyed people’s political awareness because of its role in helping voters make informed choices.

When participants were asked how often they paid attention to governmental and political affairs, the following responses were recorded in both the core and swing regions, as presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Respondents’ Attention to Government and Politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention</th>
<th>All Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Week</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Days</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from the table above that more than half of the respondents in the core and swing regions reported that they do not follow political and government related issues on a daily basis. Approximately half of the respondents in the swing (44%) and core regions (42.7%) reported that they pay attention to political issues every day. In the swing regions, a large majority of the respondents (49.3%) said they followed politics on some days, while 6.7 percent do so once a week. Similar findings are observed in the core regions. Based on these results, the study finds that there is no positive association between people’s interest in politics and the voting patterns in the swing and core regions. Nonetheless, this variable is included in the survey to show that the sample is fairly representative of individuals who pay daily attention to politics, as well as those who did not. In summation, the majority of responses in both regions indicated an overall low interest in politics.

5.2.2 Party Identification

According to Campbell et al. (1960), party identification generally has a strong influence on vote choice. Moreover, most voters identify with political parties, and it is those partisan loyalties that influence their evaluations of candidates, assessments of government performance, and perceptions of political events. Thus, partisanship becomes the perceptual screen through which voters view the political world (Campbell et. al 1960).

In order to gain further insight into the voting behavior of respondents and their predispositions during elections, subjects in the regions of study were asked to indicate the extent to which they identified with either of the two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The data relating to the political associations of the research participants have been presented in the table below.

Table 5.8: Respondents’ Political Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral NDC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral NPP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong NDC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong NPP</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak NDC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak NPP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, it can be concluded that a large percentage of the respondents in the swing (71.3%) and core regions (89.3%) identified themselves with a political party, irrespective of the strength of affiliation with the party. In the swing regions, almost 29 percent of the respondents identified as complete neutrals, with no affiliation to either the NPP or NDC. However, only 10.7 percent of respondents identified as neutrals in the core regions. This suggests that there are more unattached voters in the swing regions than in the core regions. Taken together, the findings indicate that the majority of the voters (more than 80%) in both regions identify with a political party. Furthermore, this finding supports the estimates by Braimah (2016) that the NPP and NDC altogether have the loyal support of nearly 80 percent of the voting populace. The data suggests that party identification significantly influences vote choice in Ghana.

5.2.3 Perception of Government’s Economic Performance

Many performance-based theories of voting argue that voters rely more on evaluations of the government’s handling of the economy when making voting decisions. Incumbents who have presided over economic prosperity will be rewarded at the polls, while those who are deemed responsible for economic decline are punished. Therefore, according to Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2013), voters’
perceptions of the capacity of candidates and political parties to effectively manage the economy are crucial in guiding their vote choice.

To gather information on this topic, participants were asked their opinion on how NPP and NDC governments handle and manage the economy. Table 5.9 presents subjects’ responses to the question: Which party best manages the economy?

**Table 5.9: Perception of Government’s Economic Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Party</th>
<th>Swing Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Core Regions</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Much Difference</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9 shows that, among the three indices measured, a majority (34.7%) of respondents in the swing regions indicated that there is ‘not much difference’ in how the two main political parties manage the economy. Nearly one-third (33%) of swing region respondents reported that the NPP handles the economy better than the NDC (32%). Overall, voters in the swing regions did not see any significance differences in how the two parties manage the economy. In the core regions, most of the respondents (46%) indicated that the NDC manages the economy better than the NPP (41.3%). Only 12.7 percent reported that there is no difference in how the two parties handle the economy. The striking feature present here is that though the majority of the respondents in the swing regions (34.7%) sees no difference in how the two parties handle the economy, the reverse is true in the core regions. Only 12.7 percent of respondents in the core regions believed that neither party is better than the other in terms of economic performance. This finding suggests that the respondents in the swing regions do not rate the
two parties favorably compared to their counterparts in the core regions. Consequently, it could be said that respondents in the swing regions see the NPP and NDC as two sides of the same coin and are more likely to vote for either party than voters in the core regions. This observation is also grounded in the electoral history of Ghana, where a consistent voting pattern has been firmly established in the core regions. It is the changing electoral outcomes in the swing regions that have made possible the three alternations of political power under the Fourth Republic.

5.3 Factors that Influence the Electorate: Regression Results and Analysis

This section presents and interprets the results of the survey data in order to identify the most significant factors that influence vote choice in the core and swing regions. The main voting data is analyzed through a regression analysis to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (vote choice) and the various independent variables (economy, identity, campaign, and personality factors). The use of these modes of analysis is to allow for a simultaneous examination of multiple independent variables to see if they have any significant effect on the dependent variable.

Hence, the study employs the linear regression model in an attempt to provide statistical evidence that supports or rejects an assumed relationship between vote choice and the individual independent variables. The regression method will provide the possibility of holding other factors constant while investigating a relationship between a dependent and a predictor variable. It will help to clarify the individual associations between the variables. This study will examine the extent to which each relevant independent variable significantly influences voting behavior in Ghana.

31 The study seeks to examine the extent to which voters consider the following factors when they go to the polls: economic factors such as their living conditions, standard of living, and food prices; identity factors such as ethnicity, regional, and religious backgrounds of candidates; campaigns, involving the manifesto and various other issues that dominate particular elections; and personality factors, which include the political experience of the candidates, their educational background, and their positions on issues.
In this case, the voting dataset is run using SPSS, a statistical software. The dataset produced two models: one for core and one for swing voter behavior. In each model, the study will first and foremost analyze the direction of the relationship between the dependent and the predictor variables in order to establish the statistical significance of the independent variables. Second, the study will examine whether or not an identified relationship is real. In addition, the magnitude and robustness of a relationship will be tested separately in each model. Finally, the regression model is utilized to help identify the most significant variables that impact vote choice.

5.3.1 Regression Model 1: Swing Voting Behavior

Table 5.10: Swing Regions Model

|                     | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | Pr (>|  |
|---------------------|----------|------------|---------|---------|
| Campaign_Index      | 0.1500   | 0.0793     | 1.89    | 0.0586  |
| Identity_Index      | -0.0581  | 0.1066     | -0.55   | 0.5856  |
| Personality_Index   | 0.2579   | 0.0821     | 3.14    | 0.0017  |
| Econ_Index           | 0.0351   | 0.0691     | 0.51    | 0.6112  |
| Age: 25-34           | 2.2468   | 1.0221     | 2.20    | 0.0279  |
| Age: 35-54           | 2.5545   | 1.0257     | 2.49    | 0.0128  |
| Age: 55 and over     | 2.6855   | 1.0280     | 2.61    | 0.0090  |
| Religion: Muslim     | 0.2025   | 0.3258     | 0.62    | 0.5342  |
| Religion: Other      | 0.5675   | 0.3435     | 1.65    | 0.0985  |
| Location.of.Constituency: Urban | -0.5051 | 0.2459 | -2.05 | 0.0400 |
| (Intercept)          | -5.0586  | 1.1455     | -4.42   | 0.0000  |

Table 5.10 represents the regression results of the determinants of vote choice in the swing regions. The analysis of the voting preferences in this model will involve two steps. First, the study will identify the independent variables that matter to the model by looking at the absolute value of their z-score. An independent/predictor variable with a z-score greater than or equal to 1.95 indicates a real relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. Additionally, it will imply a positive relationship between vote choice and the independent variable. From this, Table 5.10 shows that campaign promises, identity, and economic conditions all have z-scores below 1.95, meaning they have
no real impact on vote choice in the swing regions. The only independent variable that has statistical significance on voting behavior is the personality index (z value: 3.14). Candidate personality, therefore, is the only independent variable that matters as a determinant of vote choice in the swing regions. At this stage, all the other statistically non-significant variables (those with z-scores below 1.95) are discarded and removed from further analyses. Next, we compare the size of the impact of the significant variables by using the absolute value of their coefficient or estimate.

From Table 5.10, personality has a coefficient of 0.2575. The statistical strength of this variable or the accuracy of its coefficient can be tested by looking at the p-values. A lower value represents the probability that we can trust the coefficient. As a standard rule, a p-value of less than 0.05 means that there is 95% confidence that the coefficient is accurate and the relationship is positive. Table 5.10 shows that personality has a p-value of 0.0017, which indicates a more than 95% confidence that personality does indeed have a statistically significant effect on voting behavior.

The regression results show that candidate personality is the best predictor of voting behavior in the swing regions. The other indices of vote choice—namely campaign promises, identity, and economy—have no statistically significant influence on how people vote in the swing regions. As a result of these measures, the findings do not corroborate the initial hypothesis. Initially, it was assumed that the economic index would best predict how a person votes in the swing regions. Contrary to this hypothesis, it is the personality of the candidate that significantly influences voting behavior. One possible explanation for these findings is that while economic factors may be important, they do not influence how the majority of the electorate votes. Again, because most Ghanaians (more than eighty

32 In other words, candidate personality is the only variable that has a positive relationship or effect on voting. Simply put, the majority of voters in the swing regions are affected by candidate personality more than all the other factors measured.
percent) are partisan voters, the economic variable may actually influence only a small percentage of the electorate (about 10-15%) who are known to swing elections in Ghana. In sum, the regression shows that voters in the swing regions are more greatly influenced by candidate personality than by all the other remaining factors: economy, ethnicity, and campaigns. Put simply, candidate personality is the most important determinant of voting behavior in the swing regions of Ghana. It influences how the majority of the electorate makes their voting decision in the regions that decide the elections.

5.3.2 Regression Model 2: Core Voting Behavior

**Table 5.11: Core Regions Model**

| Predictor                          | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | Pr (>|    |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Campaign_Index                    | -0.4892  | 0.1706     | -2.87   | 0.0041    |
| Identity_Index                    | 0.0409   | 0.1805     | 0.23    | 0.8209    |
| Personality_Index                 | -0.5335  | 0.1746     | -3.06   | 0.0022    |
| Economy_Index                     | 0.1045   | 0.1197     | 0.87    | 0.3826    |
| Age: 25-34                        | -3.1277  | 1.2735     | -2.46   | 0.0141    |
| Age: 35-54                        | -4.1527  | 1.3121     | -3.16   | 0.0016    |
| Age: 55 and over                  | -4.5733  | 1.3678     | -3.34   | 0.0008    |
| Religion: Muslim                  | -0.5997  | 0.6223     | -0.96   | 0.3353    |
| Religion: Other                   | -1.7072  | 0.8117     | -2.10   | 0.0354    |
| Location.of.Constituency: Urban   | 1.0938   | 0.5254     | 2.08    | 0.0373    |
| (Intercept)                       | 7.4346   | 1.6739     | 4.44    | 0.0000    |

Table 5.11 presents the predictors of vote choice in the core regions of Ghana. The analyses of the survey results in this model will follow the same steps as the previous model. First, to find out whether or not the independent variables have any real impact on vote choice, the absolute value of the z-scores is examined. A variable with a z-value greater than 1.95 suggests a significant relationship to the dependent variable and is thus a meaningful addition to the model. Table 5.11 shows that only campaign index (z value: -2.87) and personality index (z value: -3.06) have a significant relationship to vote choice. The other remaining variables, identity and economy, have a low z-value of 0.23 and 0.87, respectively, meaning they are statistically non-significant to the model and thus have little to no impact.
on how people vote. The table shows that among the four independent variables, only campaign promises and personality have the predictive strength to explain voting behavior in Ghana. The statistically non-significant variables are rejected and removed from the study.

Next, the study compares the size and magnitude of the impact that the remaining two statistically significant variables have on the dependent variable. This is done by looking at the absolute values of their coefficient, otherwise called the estimate. Table 5.11 shows that between the two variables, candidate personality which has a coefficient of 0.5335 has a greater effect on vote choice than campaign promises (coefficient: 0.4892). The robustness of the relationships between the predictor variables and the dependent variable as well as the accuracy of the coefficient can be ascertained by testing the p-values. A low p-value of less than 0.05 means that there is more than 95% confidence that the relationship is statistically significant and that the coefficient is accurate. From Table 5.11, candidate personality and campaign promises have low p-values of 0.0022 and 0.0041 respectively. This indicates a more than 95% chance that both factors have a real and significant impact on voting behavior, with candidate personality having the greatest impact of the two.

In sum, the regression results from the core regions indicate that among the four determinants of voting behavior examined in this study, only candidate personality, and the campaign index have any influence on voting preference, with the former wielding the greatest predictive strength. The identity and economic index have no statistical significance on how voters make their voting decisions.

The results in Table 5.11 reveal that the great majority of voters in the core regions is not influenced by economic considerations (performance of the ruling government included) when making their vote choice. This finding is supported by the analysis of electoral results under the Fourth Republic (1992-2016). The core regions have always voted for one political party irrespective of changing economic situations and alternations of power. These results also support the position of Gyimah-Boadi
(2007), who emphasizes that elections in Africa are not based on issues and policies but rather on factors like personality and party loyalty.

Furthermore, evidence from Table 5.11 also shows that identity (including ethnic, religious, and regional backgrounds) does not determine how the majority of people in the core regions vote. Surprisingly, this finding contradicts the conventional wisdom on voting behavior in the Ashanti and Volta regions.\(^\text{33}\) It challenges the widely held notion that voters in these regions are primarily ethnic voters who are influenced by ethnic affinity and other non-evaluative factors when making vote preference. The regression results establish that identity with its accompanying elements does not predict electoral outcomes in the core regions. Thus, the majority of voters are not influenced by ethnicity when making voting decisions.

5.4 Evaluating the Main Finding: The Efficacy of Candidate Personality as Voter Choice

This study find candidate personality to be the most statistically significant determinant of voting behavior in both the swing and core regions of Ghana. However, some past research posits that candidate personality traits are short-term forces which have relatively limited influence on voter preference in the long-run (Hardy 2017). Studies by Miller and Shanks (1996), King (2002), and Hardy (2017) also concluded that presidential candidates’ personality characteristics had limited influence on vote choice and electoral outcomes. Similarly, although Bartels (2002) found a small detectable influence of candidate trait on vote choice, he asserts that the independent net effects of candidate trait assessments are generally quite modest in magnitude. Therefore, due to the fact that the findings of this

\(^{33}\) According to Adjei (2012), voters in the two core regions (Ashanti and Volta) are heavily influenced by ethnic considerations when making voting decisions.
study diverge from the dominant view, this section will critically examine the extent to which personality really impact voting behavior in Ghanaian elections.

The electoral outcomes in two recent presidential elections in Ghana give strength to the potency of personality as a determinant of vote choice. In the 2012 and 2016 elections, the NPP and NDC put forward the same presidential candidates in both contests, but the outcomes were different. John Mahama of the NDC, who had defeated the NPP’s Nana Akufo-Addo in the 2012 elections, lost to the latter in the 2016 elections (Ghana Electoral Commission 2016). It begs the question: how did this happen? According to Boateng (2018), John Mahama won in the 2012 election because of his personality. People voted for Mahama because of his calm character, pragmatism, and openness. Put briefly, Akufo-Addo lost because people felt more comfortable with Mahama’s personality. However, it is argued that the incumbent John Mahama lost credibility in the run-up to the 2016 election. His administration was accused of incompetence, poor economic performance, corruption, opulence, and abuse of power. As a result his approval ratings dipped, and the electorate found the opposition candidate more credible to run the country. The results of the 2012 and 2016 elections show how candidates’ credibility can influence electoral outcomes. This finding lends credence to research in Ghana and elsewhere which indicates that candidate’s personal qualities and credibility may be the most important issue in determining voter behavior (Stephen 2004).

Nonetheless, although the survey results shows that personality traits influence electoral outcomes, it does not explain how and why people vote based on personality. Therefore, if majority of the Ghanaian electorate vote primarily on personality, why is there so many core/stable voters who never change their voting preference for certain parties irrespective of the contesting candidates. Based on this observation, I assume that voters in Ghana engage in motivated reasoning when exercising electoral choice. Thus the survey respondents’ choice of personality is underlined by some hidden
motivations (Taber and Lodge 2006). They use personality as a cloak to conceal their true motive for preferring one candidate or party over others.

This study contend that personality as established in this case is actually a proxy or a code for party voting. Thus, voter’s preference for candidates is buried in their love for political parties. This is because each of the two main political parties, the NPP and NDC, has always won more than 40 percent of the votes in every election since 1992. Additionally, More than eighty five percent (85%) of the voting populace are core voters who do not switch votes or ever change their party preference regardless of the contesting candidates. Fewer than 15% of voters who are considered the swing or unattached voters actually cause the alternation of power in Ghana. Therefore, because majority of electorate are core voters, this study argues that personality albeit critical cannot solely suffice to be the most important determinant of voting behavior because a huge proportion of the electorate will vote for their preferred party no matter who the candidate is. Put simply, voters are motivated by their partisan inclinations when making vote choice.

This viewpoint is premised on the fact that, throughout all the elections under the Fourth Republic, it is observed that the dominant political parties have always won their home regions irrespective of the ethnic, regional, and personal qualities of the presidential candidates. Between 1992 and 2016, all presidential candidates of the NPP have won in their core region (Ashanti region). Similarly, all presidential candidates of the NDC have won in their core regions, as well. The core voters have always voted for their party regardless of the presidential candidate. In light of the foregoing facts, the study argues that candidate personality alone may not have the magnitude of predictive strength previously established by the findings of this study. However, a combined analysis of the regression data and the electoral results suggests a powerful relationship between candidate personality and party identification in the sense that most people’s political affiliation influences their support for candidates.
This perspective is supported by the psychological theory of voting which posits that voters do not independently evaluate candidates; instead, they do so through a partisan lens. From this perspective, the study assumes that the personality index which forms the main findings of this work do not act in isolation, but rather tied into a decision making mechanism with party identification. In this chain of decision making, the researcher argue that majority of the electorate are first influenced by partisanship, which in turn influences how they process information and eventually, their evaluation of candidates. Simply put, people’s loyalty to parties creates a “perceptual screen” which becomes the filter through which voters’ makes evaluation of candidates which finally guide their vote choice (Campbell 1964:133; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Evans 2004; Erdmann 2007a).

Thus, the psychological model of voting shows that candidate personality, although tied to party identification, is the most important predictor of voter in Ghana. The psychological theory emphasizes the notion that there is a direct relationship between partisanship and how people assess candidate personality. This theory offers the understanding that voters do not select candidates in a vacuum, rather there is a motivated reason for doing so. The voter is simply influenced by his or her original political inclinations when making electoral choice on candidates. This viewpoint is supported by Danny Hayes’ (2005) “theory of trait ownership,” which also argues that the political affiliation of voters influence their support for contesting candidates. Partisanship therefore is a psychologically meaningful identity that inspire voters to engage in motivated voting.

I argue that party loyalty may bias how people view candidates, and as a result, voters may fail to distinguish between political parties and representing candidates. In these circumstances, party identification may weaken the independent effects of candidate personality. Therefore, although candidate personality is important, it is not an independent driver of voting behavior. As a result, the survey finding which indicates that personality is the best determinant of voting behavior is artificial or
incorrect. I assume that the survey participants concealed their true voting motivations, while providing socially desirable responses in order to create an image of a matured or sophisticated voter. The majority of the respondents were simply reluctant or unwilling to admit that they are partisan voters. As a consequence, the results of the survey data ended up underestimating the influence of party identification on voter choice.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, the main predictors of electoral outcomes in Ghana were investigated through descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The results indicate that only candidate personality has a strong influence on vote choice in the swing regions (Central and Greater Accra regions). The other remaining variables such as management of the economy, ethnicity, and campaign promises have no statistical significance on voting behavior. In addition, the regression results in the core regions (Ashanti and Volta regions) established candidate personality and campaign promises as the most important determinants of electoral outcomes, though personality has the greatest effect. In sum, this study finds candidate personality to be the most important predictor of vote choice in Ghana.\(^{34}\)

The findings of this research do not support the initial hypothesis of the study.\(^{35}\) Originally, it was hypothesized that ethnic and economic factors were the main determinants of vote choice in Ghana. However, both the ethnic and economic index are disproved as strong determinants of vote choice in the core and swing regions. This study finds that only candidate personality and campaign promises have statistically significant influence in how voters make up their minds. The findings of this study diverge

\(^{34}\) The study measured personal qualities such as political experience, educational background, physical appearance, and ability to provide strong leadership.

\(^{35}\) The study originally hypothesized that ethnic and economic factors were the main determinants of vote choice in Ghana.
from the dominant view, which claims that elections in Ghana are merely ethnic “head counts” (Horowitz 1985; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Barkan 1979; Ferree 2004; Ferree 2008; Lindberg et al. 2008). Nonetheless, the insignificance of the economy index as a predictor goes to validate the arguments made by Gyima-Boadi (2007), which asserted that elections in Africa are usually not based on issues relating to the economy, governance, or development. On the other hand, the main findings of this study suggest that the Ghanaian people are evaluative voters, who assess the qualities of contesting candidates and their campaign promises before deciding for whom to vote. In conclusion, the results of this study draw attention to the predictive strength of candidate personality and campaign promises as prominent determinants of voting behavior.

Finally, the study caution readers against over-simplistic interpretations of its findings. Thus, it argues against the dominant trends in the research, which treat the determining variables such as ethnicity, partisanship, candidates, and economic and campaign issues as isolated, unrelated factors. Instead, this study asserts that the determinants of vote choice are complex and may involve the interconnection of two or more variables. It is my contended view that the study participants engage in motivated voting, and as a result, voters preference for personality is actually a proxy for partisanship in the sense the majority of voting populace are core voters who consistently votes the same party irrespective of the ethnic, regional and personal qualities of the contesting candidates.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

What determines vote choice in Ghana? This study has aimed to investigate this question in attempt to identify the most significant predictors of voting behavior in Ghana. Additionally, the study sought to verify whether ethnic and economic factors have any decisive impact on how voters select candidates and parties. To address these objectives, the study employed a quantitative approach, which relied extensively on past electoral history and survey data collected from two core and two swing regions in Ghana.

This chapter therefore marks the conclusion of the study. In the sections that follow, it highlights the major findings as presented in the previous chapter, draw conclusions and closes with directions for further research.

6.1 Summary of Findings

First, the study establishes that the majority of the Ghanaian electorate in the core and swing regions are partisan or core voters. From Table 5.8, a large percentage of the respondents in the swing region (71.3%) and the core region (89.3%) identified with a political party. This finding is consistent with previous research which estimates that approximately 80 percent of the electorate are partisan voters, while only 10-15 percent of the electorate constitutes swing voters (Lindberg and Morrison 2005). This finding is further corroborated by the electoral results of the Fourth Republic (1992-2016) in which the two dominant parties, the NPP and NDC collectively have always obtained more than 80 percent of the votes (Electoral Commission of Ghana). The electoral results show that the two political parties have relatively stable electoral support. This study contends that because party loyalties are long-
term sociological attitudes, the majority of the electorate will be influenced by their partisan affiliation when evaluating the government’s performance, issues, and candidates during elections.

The study also found that there are more independent or unaligned voters in the swing regions than in the core regions. As found in the study, independent or swing voters make up approximately thirty percent of the electorate in the swing regions, while they barely constitute ten percent in the core regions. These findings give the indication that the observed difference in the voting patterns in the swing and core regions can be explained by the fact that there are more unattached voters in the swing regions who are susceptible to swing their voting preferences from one party or candidate to another in various election cycles. Therefore, the swing and core regions vote differently because almost a third of the voting populace in the swing regions are non-partisan voters who are up for grabs in every election. On the other hand, approximately ninety percent of voters in the core regions are loyal or partisan supporters with firm attachments to their political parties. Aside from the percentage of swing and core voters, no other demographic characteristics (age, gender, occupation etc.) can explain the differing electoral outcome from the swing and core regions.

Additionally, in referencing Tables 5.10 and 5.11, the study found candidate personality as the most important determinant of vote choice in both the swing and core regions of Ghana. Thus, among the four tested variables, voters were most influenced by the personal qualities of candidates, such as their political experience, educational background, ability to provide good leadership, or physical appearance. This finding suggests that majority of the electorate are evaluative voters who assess the competence of contesting candidates before deciding for whom they will vote. The relevance of candidate personality as determinant of vote choice is supported by Anebo (2001), who asserts that Jerry John Rawlings won the 1992 and 1996 Ghana elections largely because of his personality, charisma, and leadership traits; hence, the defeat of the NDC in the 2000 elections was caused by the absence of
Rawlings as a contender (Anebo 2001; Walraven 2002). Other case studies around the world find evidence that personality matters to political behavior. This includes studies by Caprara et al. (2006) on Italian national voters; Ha, Kim, and Jo (2013) on South Korea; Bekkers (2005) on the Netherlands; Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013) on Germany; and Gerber, Huber, and Dowling at al. (2011) and Mondak (2010) on the United States. Although all these studies provide evidence that personality shapes political behavior, the extent to which candidate personality influences political attitudes and behaviors often varies from place to place, which indicates that context is important (Ha, Kim, and Jo 2013). In the case of Ghana, the researcher contends that candidate personality may be a proxy for partisanship since the majority of voters in both the swing and core regions have always voted for their preferred political party irrespective of the personal qualities, ethnic and regional background of the candidates.

Moreover, a look at the magnitude of impact of the four tested independent variables (see Table 5.10 and 5.11) suggests that although a large proportion of the electorate is influenced by candidate personality, there remains a significant section of voters who are impacted by electioneering activities and campaign promises when making their voting decisions. The study, thus, found the campaign index as the second most important factor influencing vote choice. This finding suggests that vote choice in the swing and core regions is also heavily affected by short-term factors relevant to specific election campaigns. This is true given the fact that recent elections in Ghana have witnessed contesting candidates’ promises of undertaking infrastructural projects, utility price reduction, assurance of regular electricity and power supply, payment of salary arrears, and the elimination of school fees. Indeed, the relevance of the campaign index is supported by the electioneering promises and its accompanying electoral results. The NPP and NDC have benefited electorally from lofty campaign promises such as free education, salary increases, national health insurance, zero tolerance for corruption, reduction in petroleum prices, and the establishment of factories. The proposition that campaign promises matter in
Ghanaian elections is supported by studies by Ayee (2011) and Boafo-Arthur (2006), who both claim that the NPP’s election 2000 slogan “Hwe Wo Asetena Mu, Na To Aba Pa” which translates “Examine Your Life and Vote Accordingly” was appealing and thus successful in convincing voters to vote the party into power in the 2000 election.

Similarly, the NDC’s slogan “Better Ghana Agenda” and the promises it made, such as jobs-for-all and one-time premium payment of national health insurance, were critical in helping the NDC win power in 2008. Additionally, in the 2016 elections, the main campaign issues centered on education. While the incumbent NDC campaigned on increasing educational access through infrastructural developments, the NPP promised free senior high school education upon assumption of power. In addition to its flagship free senior high school policy, it is believed that the NPP’s campaign promises of restoring teacher and nursing training allowances, one-district one-factory, one-village one-dam, and one-constituency one-million dollars for projects helped ensure the party’s victory in the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. The NPP was successful in spreading a message of hope to the electorate, while the incumbent NDC merely campaigned on the records of their infrastructural developments. The opposition NPP’s campaign message was well accepted by the electorate, and as a result, they were voted into power. The study, therefore, asserts that campaign activities influence voting behavior in Ghana. These findings are in consonance with Popkin’s theory that campaign promises are key features in elections. In most cases, voters may turn to election campaigns for information to help them evaluate parties, candidates, and policy positions (Popkin 1994). The importance of the campaign factor is supported by Godbout and Belanger (2007) and Nordin (2010), who all claim that campaign messages help the electorate (mostly unaligned voters) decipher which party and candidate is better able to address their challenges and expectations. Jacobson (2015) also provides evidence that leaves no doubt that election campaigns do matter in a variety of important ways. Additionally, this study as well
as studies by Bob-Milliar and Paller (2010) find that although other factors influence voter behavior, campaign promises do contribute to electoral victory in Ghana.

Furthermore, the study also establishes that the identity (ethnic, religion and region) and economic indices have no significant influence on voting behavior. That is, economic and ethnic factors cannot significantly predict how the majority of people vote in Ghana. This finding goes against the original assumptions of the study. The study initially hypothesized that ethnicity would influence vote choice in the core regions, while economic considerations would determine vote choice in the swing regions. However, the study revealed otherwise. Instead, candidate personality and campaign promises were the most significant predictors of Ghanaians’ vote choice. This finding does not only contradict the initial hypothesis, it also diverges from the dominant views in the field. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher argues that the economic and identity factors as determinants of voting behavior are unstable, volatile, and statistically insignificant. However, this does not mean that the economic and identity factors do not have at least a slight influence on voting; rather, these factors do not rank as evenly important to other possible factors of voting behavior such as candidate personality and campaign activities. The data analysis shows that voters are not primarily influenced by ethnicity when making voting decisions. This finding is supported by Lindberg and Morrison (2007:34), who conclude that voters do not vote based on clientilism, or due to ethnic or group ties. According to these researchers, ethnic predisposed voting is a minor feature of voting behavior in Ghana. Similar to the findings of this thesis, Lindberg and Morrison found that voters cast their ballots after evaluating the candidates and parties.
6.2 Addressing the Claims of Ethnic Census in Ghanaian Elections: The Case of the Ashanti and Volta Regions

A substantial literature on elections in Ghana shows a correspondence between voters’ ethnicities and vote preference. The dominant theories have long maintained that elections in the core regions are influenced by ethnicity (Hoffman and Long 2013). This claim is premised on the fact that the two main parties, the NPP and NDC draw their natural and overwhelming support among two rival ethnic groups in the country, the Ashanti and the Ewe (Bossuroy 2011). Indeed, each party’s strongholds are clearly identified by ethnic interest: NPP has gained consistent and strong support from Asante voters, while NDC has maintained its electoral strength on the basis of the support of the Ewe people (Kim 2018; Arthur, 2009; Chazan, 1982; Nugent, 2001). The Asantes vote for the NPP and Ewes for the NDC. As a result, the Ashanti and Volta region have become affiliated with the NPP and NDC respectively (Ferree 2009; Ichino and Nathan 2013). It is hypothesized that Asantes support the NPP because most of the party’s founding fathers and leaders share their ethnicity or hail from the region. On the other hand, it is also argued that Ewes support NDC because its founder J.J. Rawlings, and most of the founding leaders are Ewes and/or from the Volta region (Hoffman and Long 2013). Apart from ethnicity, no other factor can conveniently explain why the Asante and Ewe people engage in bloc voting since 1992.

Also, the data from all of the presidential elections under the Fourth Republic as presented in Table 4.8 (Chapter 4) suggests an ethno-regional voting pattern in the core regions. Voters in the Ashanti region, the home region of most of the NPP’s founders, vote in a bloc for the NPP. Similarly, the NDC has always derived its highest percentage of votes from the Volta Region, the home region of

\[36\] It must be noted that the Ashanti Region which is the stronghold of NPP, is predominantly inhabited by the Asantes. On the other hand, the Volta Region is predominantly occupied by ethnic Ewes.
its founder. These regions have been termed the “World Banks” of the two parties because of the overwhelming electoral support the regions give to their respective political parties. Indeed, the NPP and NDC have received the poorest percentage of votes in the opponent’s home region. The electoral outcomes from the core regions suggests that political support is divided along ethnic lines, and as a result, votes are heavily determined by ethnicity in the Ashanti and Volta Regions. Thus, ethnic cleavages do indeed structure party support in the core regions of Ghana.37

Therefore, if party support follow ethnic cleavages in the core regions, why did results of the survey data diverge from this fact? This discrepancy is hard to reconcile if the survey respondents did not systematically under-report the importance of ethnicity in their voting decisions. One possible reason for this discrepancy is social desirability bias or inaccurate reports from study participants. It is my contended view that the responses from the core voters were affected by bias, particularly that which may arise from the social undesirability of ethnic voting. The sensitivity around ethnicity made the respondents report socially favorable responses, while hiding their true motivations of vote choice.38

From Table 5.11 the personality of candidate is the best predictor of vote choice in the core regions, however past studies have shown that personality has a short term influence on voter choice, and therefore cannot be the most important factor that can explain the stable electoral support that the Asante and Ewe people give to the NPP and NDC respectively. It can be argued that the respondents consciously reported personality as the most important factor in order to avoid appearing ‘tribalistic’ and therefore immature or unsophisticated.

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37 It is important to note, however, that the NPP and NDC have become firmly aligned with their respective ethnic group and region; hence, voters always support the party regardless of the ethnic background of the contesting candidates. The voters in the Ashanti and Volta regions do not consider the ethnic profile of the candidates, but are expected to always vote for the party affiliated with their ethnic group.

38 The respondents misrepresented themselves to show favorable images of themselves to interviewer.
Many voters consider open ethnic voting to be undesirable and will purposefully denounce making ethnic consideration during elections. For instance, a study on Zambia by Posner (2004b); Ghana by Morrison (2008) and in Kenya by Bratton and Kimenyi (2008) find that majority of voters do not make ethnic considerations. Nevertheless, in all three of these countries, ethnicity remains a strong predictor of voter choice when non-ethnic considerations such as perceived or actual economic performance are controlled for (Carlson 2014; Posner and Simon, 2002; Posner, 2004b; Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008; Bratton, Bhavnani and Chen, 2011). This suggests that voters have a tendency to misreport their original motivations of voting choice, especially if their preferences are not socially desirable. In this study, the survey results may have ended up underestimating the impact of ethnicity in predicting voter choice in the core regions because the respondents concealed or were unwilling to report their pure ethnic motivations.

From the preceding points, this study supports the dominant assertion that ethnicity play a role in elections in the Ashanti and Volta Regions. However, it challenges the research that portrays ethnicity as the most important determinant of voting behavior in all regions of Ghana. As the regression analysis indicates, ethnicity has a no statistically significant effect on how people vote in the swing and core regions. Even if patterns of ethnic voting is observed in Ghana, the so-called ethnic voting is confined to only the core regions (Ashanti and Volta regions), and not the swing regions that have played the role of kingmaker. Interestingly, the Asante and Ewe ethnic groups altogether account for approximately 28 percent of the population, leaving 72 percent of Ghanaians without a clear ethnic party (Hoffman and Long 2013). Additionally, the country consists of numerous ethnic groups that do not put forward a presidential candidate, leaving a majority of citizens without a co-ethnic candidate to support in elections. Therefore, candidates seeking national office are forced to attract the votes of all ethnic groups in order to be elected.
This suggests that ethnicity is not and has never been a decisive factor in who wins general elections in Ghana. If it were so, most of the presidential candidates since 1992 would have done better in their home regions. For instance, Atta Mills, the NDC’s presidential candidate, a “son of the soil” from the Central Region, did not perform well in the 2000 and 2004 elections (See Table 3.8). Yet, he did well in the Volta Region because of the Rawlings legacy (Ayee 2005:90). Therefore, this study rejects the prevailing viewpoint that ethnicity decides Ghanaian elections. This is not to wholly deny the fact that ethnicity to some extent plays a role on voting behavior. But, contrary to the dominant view in the literature, the role and efficacy of ethnicity on voting in Ghana is complex: ethnic voting plays a large role in Ghana, but ultimately in determining election outcomes, it is not efficacious.

In sum, this study argues although ethnicity drive electoral outcomes in the core regions, it has a far less influence on the general voting behavior in Ghana. This study shows how there would never have been an alternation in power if majority of the electorate were influenced by long-term sociological factors such as ethnicity. Three alternations of power in Ghana’s electoral history under the Fourth Republic suggest that factors other than ethnicity are better predictors voter preference.

6.3 Conclusions

This thesis has shown that candidate personality and (to a lesser extent) factors associated with campaigns are ultimately the most important determinants of vote choice in Ghana. The findings of this study do not corroborate the original hypothesis. The study initially theorized that ethnic and economic factors best predicted vote choice. Rather, the study revealed that ethnic and economic considerations have no statistically significant influence on how voters make up their minds. The study’s results challenge the mainstream assumption and literature on African politics that presume that ethnic bloc voting is pervasive in the country’s elections and that parties serve as little more than a cover for
ethnicity. The findings of this study, therefore, suggest that the Ghanaian electorate, particularly in the all-important swing regions is comprised of evaluative voters, who make their voting decisions after assessing the personal qualities of the contesting candidates and campaign promises. Generally, this study draws attention to how candidates’ personality and pragmatic policies may matter in winning elections in Ghana, and in other consolidating democracies. Accordingly, politicians need to be concerned about the public perception of their credibility and image, as well as the policies they advance on the campaign platform.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study contributes to the growing body of literature that identifies non-ethnic factors as determinants of voter choice in Ghana. The findings as presented above suggest a host of future research questions. First and foremost, future research should identify the conditions under which Ghanaians will use ethnicity and economic conditions to inform their vote choice. These study should also examine why, how and when non-ethnic factors such as candidate personality influence voting behavior. In addition, they should explore the conditions that increase the likelihood that a voter will vote for a particular candidate over another. In other words, future should ask the question: Are people simply motivated to vote for the candidate they already prefer, or do they make up their minds in the run-up to the election?

Future studies should also investigate why and how it is that voters move away from ethnicity as a major determinant of voter choice. They should attempt to investigate and measure possible changes in voters’ preferences over time by examining the survey data collected in this study as well as earlier survey data. This type of study could either employ a longitudinal analysis by critically reviewing past
electoral records or use past survey data that has similar research questions. The outcome of such a study could help analyze the changes in voters’ preferences over time.

Additionally, further studies should investigate how candidate personality and campaign promises influenced electoral outcomes in all seven elections held under the Fourth Republic and compare these findings with those from other case studies. Such analysis will help to identify whether (and when) personality and campaign promises have a significant impact on vote choice.

Furthermore, the findings of a single country study such as Ghana may raise questions about its generalizability. In order to achieve generalizable results, future research should rely on cross-national data to investigate the determinants of voting behavior in other countries that have similar electoral patterns. The findings of such a project could provide important insights about the robustness of a single country study and have the potential to offer important lessons for the promoting democratic consolidation and deepening.
Appendix 1. Operational Definition of Terms

**Voting Behavior**

Voting behavior describes the way in which people tend to vote (BBC 2018). Assessment of voting behavior focuses on why voters vote the way they do and how they make up their minds or arrive at the decisions they make. Understanding voting behavior is thus an attempt to understand the decision making process of voters. This decision making can be influenced by several factors such as campaign issues, economic conditions, ideological orientation, party identification, the personality of candidate and other sociological factors such as ethnicity and religion.

**Voter Choice**

This relates to the preference of the electorate in selecting one candidate or party over the other. The study assumes that voters choose for a reason, it is the how and why of voting that this study seeks to identify.

**Economic Considerations**

In this study economic voting is when the electorate base their voting decisions on their economic or living conditions. It is assumed that they will vote for incumbents when living conditions are good and vote against an incumbent government during economic downturns.

**Ethnic Consideration**

This means that voters make decisions based on stable sociological factors such as family and group ties. Voters are thus not affected by economic conditions, but will consistently vote for a member of their ethnic bloc. Ethnic voting in this study refers to vote choice based on ethnic affiliations and identity group solidarity.

**Mature Voter**
A “mature voter,” sometimes called the “wise voter” is one who is not content with just making voting decisions based on sheer sentiment, group solidarity or other stable factors but has the capacity for self-reflection and the ability to question one own choices. The mature voter is an independent, informed and rational voter who engages in a cost-benefit calculus of his or her voting position (Jurado 2010). The “mature voter” is thus assumed to be a rational voter.

**Swing Voter**

A swing voter is the voter who could potentially go either way: to support any of the candidates or parties in an election. The swing voter, sometimes called a floating voter, does not have a solid commitment to any political party or candidate and may change their choices in various elections. In this study, a swing region refers to regions where elections have been won by both political parties, the NPP and NDC in various elections. Sometimes called the battleground regions, the swing regions are those where the electorate has a high probability of being the deciding factor in presidential elections (Murse 2017). This study identifies the Greater Accra, Central, Western and Brong-Ahafo regions to be Ghana’s swing regions under the Fourth Republic. Electoral victories in these regions were crucial in bringing about the alternation of power in the 2000, 2008 and 2016 elections.

**Core Voter**

A core voter is one who is solidly attached or predisposed in favor of a candidate or party on stable grounds. A core voter is a loyal party follower who consistently votes for the same party. In this study, a core region refers to regions where the presidential candidate of either the NPP or NDC have consistently won in all elections under the Fourth Republic. They are the regions where only one political party has a reasonable chance of winning. Throughout the seven successive general elections since 1992, the Ashanti and Volta regions have been identified as the core regions of the NPP and NDC, respectively.
The Fourth Republic

Since independence in 1957, Ghana has experienced a number of both coup d’états and democratic elections that gave birth to the First, Second, Third and Fourth Republics. The Fourth Republic covers the period from the inception of the 1992 Constitution to the present day.
Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire on Voting Behavior in Ghana

Section A: Demographic and Socio-economic details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age group</td>
<td>18-24, 25-34, 35-54, 55 and over</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Region</td>
<td>GA, CR, BA, WR, AR, VR</td>
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<td>4. Religion</td>
<td>Christian, Muslim, Other, N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Location of constituency</td>
<td>Urban, Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Occupational status</td>
<td>Employed, Unemployed, Retired/disabled, Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Main occupation</td>
<td>Civil servant, Private Business, NGO worker, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Level of education</td>
<td>Primary education and below, Secondary education (JHS&amp;SHS), Tertiary Education (Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor), Masters +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Average monthly salary (GHC)</td>
<td>Less than 1000, 1k to 3k, 3k to 5k, 5k to 7k, 7k+ I prefer not to say</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Marital status</td>
<td>Single, Married, I prefer not to say</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Number of dependents</td>
<td>none, 1-5, More than 5, I prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ethnicity</td>
<td>Akan, Ga-Dangme, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Gurma, Guan, Grusi, Mande, Other, I don’t know</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Languages spoken</td>
<td>Unilingual, Multi-lingual</td>
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</table>

- Do you consider yourself NPP, NDC, neutral or what?

14. If NDC or NPP, how strong or not strong are you. If neutral, do you consider yourself closer to NPP or NDC?
   - Strong NPP
   - Weak NPP
   - Neutral NPP
   - Neutral
   - Neutral NDC
   - Strong NDC
   - Weak NDC
   - I don’t know

- Attention paid politics and government

15. How often do you pay attention pay attention to government and political issues?
   - Everyday
   - Some of the days
   - Once a week
   - Never
   - I prefer not to say

- Best party for the economy

16. Which party best manages the economy?
   - NPP
   - NDC
   - Not much difference
   - I don’t know
• Economy if NPP wins

  17. How does the economy perform when NPP wins power?
     Get better
     Stay the same
     Get worse
     I prefer not to say

• Economy if NDC wins

  18. How does the economy perform when NDC wins power?
     Get better
     Stay the same
     Get worse
     N/A

Voting Behavior

19. Have you ever voted in the presidential elections? Yes No

21. Which party did you vote for? Please indicate party against year of election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>NDC</th>
<th>CPP</th>
<th>PNC</th>
<th>PPP</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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</table>
22. Did you vote for the same party in the 2008 first round and second round presidential elections?

If NO, why did you vote for a different candidate in the run-off elections?

1. Was it due to the economic conditions of the country at the time
2. The personality of the candidates involved
3. The campaign promises and policies of the candidates
4. The identity and ethnic background of the candidates
5. I prefer not to say

23. What influences your voting decisions? Respond Yes, No, or Maybe to the questions below.

A. Economy

A01. Does the performance of the ruling party determines your vote choice?

A02. Does your standard of living influence your voting decisions?

A03. Do you consider your employment situation at the time when voting?

A04. Do you consider the current Governments ability to better the economy when voting?

A05. Do you consider future government ability to improve the economy when voting?

A06. Does prices of food stuffs impact your voting decisions?

B. Candidate

B01. Do you consider the political experience of the candidates when you vote?

B02. Does the educational background of the candidate matter?

B03. Does the appearance of the candidates influence your vote choice?

B04. Do you consider the ability of the candidate to provide strong leadership when you vote?

B05. Does the marital status of candidates matter when making your voting decisions?

C. Campaigns

C01. Does party manifestoes and campaign promises influence your vote choice?

C02. Do you consider educational policies when voting?
C03. Do you consider health policies when voting?

C04. Do industrialization policies influence your voting decisions?

C05. Do energy and petroleum policies matter in which party you for?

D. Identity

D01. Does the ethnicity of the candidate matter when you vote?

D02. Do you consider the region where the candidate comes from?

D03. Are you influenced by the religion of the candidate when you vote?

D04. Does your personal relations with the candidate or party influence your vote choice?

D05. Does the political party matter in making voting decisions?

24. Do you make same considerations in all general elections or this applies only to the 2016 general elections?
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