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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores and analyses the intricate relationship between ethnoreligious mechanisms, political activities, and their mutual impact on the socio-economic development of Ghana. Against the backdrop of the diverse ethnic and religious landscape of the fourth republic of Ghana, coupled with a history of political changes, the study aims to determine the complex ways these elements shape the nation's developmental process. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses to carefully examine the political mechanisms of the Fourth Republic, its current state, and likely future trends. The study uses electoral results, archival research, case studies, and a subjective approach to find critical factors influencing the relationship between ethnoreligious and political parties and their role in shaping social integration, government structures, and economic policies.

The exploration covers a wide range of variables, including but not limited to the importance of ethnicity and religion in Ghana, the influence of ethnic and religious beliefs in shaping public policies, the impact of political power struggles since the fourth republic, and the role of cultural identities. Also, the research examines the perceptions and experiences of various stakeholders, from Ghanaian electorates to political leaders and parties, to provide a holistic understanding of the complexities involved. The findings of this research suggest that Ethnicity and religion are so important in the lives of Ghanaians that they influence, however minimal, political discourse, refuting the assumption that these elements are the only constant variable in Ghanaian politics. In addition, the involvement of social identities in Ghanaian politics showcases the Ghanaian community's cultural diversity and social cohesion. Finally, ethnoreligious, and political activities prove dysfunctional in Ghanaian politics in terms of ethnic divisions, religious discrimination, and economic inequalities.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NDC – National Democratic Congress

NPP – New Patriotic Party

PNDC – Provisional National Defence Council

CPP – Convention People’s Party

PNC – People’s National Party

CCG – Christian Council of Ghana

AMMG – Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana

GICC – Ghana Interfaith Coordinating Council

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana which came into effect on January 7, 1993, provides the basic charter for the country's fourth attempt at republican democratic government since independence in 1957. It declares Ghana to be a unitary republic with sovereignty residing in the Ghanaian people. After re-democratization in the early 1990s, the Fourth Republic of Ghana has successfully completed multiple elections and party alternations. (Morrison & Woo Hong, 2006). These echoes (Boafo-Arthur, 2008) when he states that, 'Ghana's relative stability, generally acknowledged by development partners, happens to be one of the positive democracy dividends and this has been contributed to by the comparatively transparent mode of election management' (p. 9). Indeed, Ghana has had the least tension when it comes to political activities. However, these are not at the forefront of what Boafo- Arthur (2008) states as being assessed against the backdrop of several years of militarism and dictatorship that has engendered a volatile and unstable political environment with its concomitant negative impact on the building of democratic culture and institutions of governance (p. 9).

In the face of the rapid growth of the developing democracy in Ghana, electoral politics has been systematically skewed towards ethnicity and religious identities. Ethnic politics, despite severe vacillations in regime types and ideological predilections, have come to play an increasingly prominent role in Ghanaian politics since independence in 1957. Ethnicity has been put to manifold uses (and misuses) in the Ghanaian political context. (Chazan, 1982). Religion, like ethnicity, is another cultural variable; the appeal to a standard religious belief system can unite members under a common political party. It can serve as a mobilizing agent for party members as they canvass for votes. (Takyi et al., 2010).

There have been scholarly articles focusing on these cultural attributes in political contexts. All too often, some focus mainly on ethnicity and politics in Ghana and others on the religious affiliations and electoral process with special emphasis on Christianity, neglecting Islam, and others. Most of the articles are very enlightening, and others are very vague.

Structurally, this research will explore ethnoreligious and political activities in Ghana by critically facilitating an understanding of the deep structures of both cultural variables in a Ghanaian political context. My research questions are as follows:

Research Questions

1. What significance do ethnicity and religion have in Ghana?
2. Under what circumstances do ethnic and religious identities prove dysfunctional in Ghanaian politics?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the dominant ethnic and religious identities prevalent in Ghana.
2. To analyze the roles of ethnic identities and their intersection with political mechanisms in shaping Ghana's policies, government, and economic structures
3. To analyze the roles of religion and various religious groups and their influence in Ghanaian elections.
4. To explore to what degree ethnicity and religion influence elections in Ghana.
5. To investigate other variables and factors affecting Ghana's voting behavior and political activities.

BACKGROUND

Almost all African democratic governments are threatened by unbridled ethnoreligious tendencies. The pathetic case of Nigeria, where since 2000, thousands of people have died in clashes between Christians and Muslims. The conflict has deteriorated into a more deadly phase since 2009 when the Islamist organization Boko Haram initiated an armed insurrection against the secular government. Many Nigerians claim that the true cause of the violence is a race for land, scant resources, and political influence, rather than ethnic or religious divisions.

Ghana is a sub-Saharan African country that gained its independence in 1957. It was formerly Gold Coast, the then British colony. With independence, much was anticipated and hoped for from Ghana, but like with other new countries, Ghana faced great difficulties. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, was deposed nine years after the country gained independence. After five successful military coup interventions (Bofo- Arthur, 2008), Ghana reverted to democratic control in 1992, and it has since established a reputation as a relatively stable country. This was termed the fourth republic of Ghana. Ghana is a multi-party system as stated in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. However, there are two dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Due to its single-member district-plurality electoral system, the country has functioned virtually as a two-party system, privileging its two major parties – the NDC and the NPP (Morrison & Woo Hong, 2006). The multi-party system of Ghana is camouflaged to fit this structure of government. This then begs the question of how these two political parties have contended with each other since the fourth republic and after 8 elections since 1992. Are ethnicity and religion determinants? Why Ghana is largely perceived, fittingly, or incorrectly, as a relatively stable and nonviolent nation, regarding ethnoreligious politics, is a central contention in this paper.

Observably, the central contention of this research per my research questions is that ethnicity and religion is indeed very important to Ghanaians and may play a significant role in elections in Ghana. This varies from a selection of candidates and running mates, through campaign periods to canvassing for votes and to some point, at the polls as some ethnic groups and religious sects identify with certain parties and urge their members to support or vote for either the NPP or NDC.

Ethnicity and Religion

According to Sefa-Nyarko (2021), ethnicity in Africa is an essential determinant of identity. He asserts that people are socialized to believe that everyone belongs to a community with shared origins, history, and identity. He highlights the utilitarian perspective that ethnicity is an ascribed identity formed from shared history, language, and way of life (p. 300). Ethnographically, Ghana's population distribution according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census is as follows: Akan 46.1%, Mole Dagbani 18.3%, Ewe 12.3%, Ga-Adangbe 7.1%, Guan 3.2%, Gurma 6.3%, Grusi 2.7% and Mande 1.9%. The Akan, Mole-Dagbani, and Ewe, out of the nine major ethnic groups, constitute more than three-quarters (77%) of the population (Ghana Statistical Service). Although the larger groupings (i.e., the Akan and Ewe) tend to have significant cultural legacies and symbols, many of these ethnic groups have entirely different political origins, languages, customs, and traditions. Ghana is a predominantly Christian country with a religious profile of approximately 71.3% Christians, 19.9% Muslims, traditionalists 3.2%, and 4.5% other religions (Ghana Housing and Population Census, 2021). Various worship places, churches, mosques, and prayer camps can be found nationwide.

The term 'ethnicity' as defined by Eriksen (2010) refers to 'relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive, and these groups are often ranked hierarchically within a society (p 10). For instance, we have the Akan ethnicity which is considered the largest ethnic group in Ghana and dominates the country with the most spoken language called 'twi'. Also, we have the Ewes who are known to practice the patrilineal system of inheritance and lineages, and the Ga ethnic group who in the past, had unique identifying tribal marks. Thus, ethnic groups in Ghana are diversified and have their unique way of life. Additionally, Eriksen (2010) asserts that ethnic interactions emerge and are made significant through social situations and encounters, and through people's ways of dealing with the demands and challenges of life (p.1-2).

Scholars in social science have explained religion in several ways among which is William James in *The Varieties of Religions Today: William James Revisited* views religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (Taylor 2003, p. 5). Durkheim (1912) also defines religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden". For instance, churches or mosques in Ghana are the most

prominent examples of ‘sacred’ things or places. One fundamental tenet of Durkheim's concept of religion is the belief that religion stems from an unknown impersonal power that is present in every human as a life force. It acted as a totem principle, connecting individuals in society by its relationship to the sacred. (Possamai & Blasi, 2020).

Ghana demonstrates the potential impact of a model amenable to the great importance of cultural diversity with reference to Ethnicity and Religion, which have always been part of pre-independent and post-independent Ghana. Eriksen (2010) highlighted that most social scientists, among whom Weber held the position that the ‘primordial effect’ of ethnicity is transitory and would decrease in importance and become extinct because of modernization, industrialization, and individualism, was proven wrong. Ethnicity, nationalism, and other forms of identity politics increased in political prominence in the world after the Second World War, continuing into the twenty-first century (p.2).

Similarly, ‘secularization’ in social science expresses the view that religion will experience a decline in modern times. Perhaps there is evidence of this in developed or industrialized countries such as countries in the Global North. However, this is not the case for many African countries. In Max-Wirth’s (2018) approach to religion, Ghana proves that religion plays an “authoritative role in understanding the world—the foundation for ethical and political discourses” in Africa and influences almost all facets of life in modern African societies, particularly politics (p. 73).

Ethnicity and Religion have always been a bastion of politics in many African countries among which is Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, and Liberia, among others. For instance, in Ghana, there are terms given to towns, constituencies, and regions such as ‘NPP strongholds’ and ‘NDC strongholds. This means that the NPP and NDC get most of their winning votes from these areas.

Religious computations also fundamentally impact how parties select their candidates and running mates. Since 2000, religious calculations have largely been part of the NPP’s choice of Christian presidential candidates, and Muslim running mates. The main motive is to appeal to both Christians and Muslims across the country to vote for their party (Aidoo & Botchway, 2021). However, such alliances are also strategically made by the NDC. For instance, in Ghana’s 2012 presidential election, NDC had John Dramani Mahama as its Presidential candidate, and although Christian, is also from Bole, a suburb in the Northern Part of Ghana where Muslims are predominant, garnering vote from both religions. His running mate, the late Kwesi Amissah Arthur

was a Christian. Likewise, Nana Addo Dankwa Akoffo Addo, the NPP presidential candidate, is a Christian from Kyebi in the Eastern region of Ghana. He had his running mate, Mahamudu Bawumia, a Muslim from Tamale in the Northern region of Ghana.

Furthermore, in religion, prophecies about elections have been a common feature in Ghana elections. Some people claiming to be prophets will predict who will win an upcoming Presidential Election. Most of these revelations come from spiritualists who claim a supreme entity has revealed the outcome of an upcoming election to them. For instance, Prophet Owusu Bempah, a popular Ghanaian preacher, predicted in favor of the NPP before the run-up leading to the 2020 Presidential election. Likewise, a famous Islamic cleric in Ghana named Mallam Shamuna Ustaz Jibiril predicted that Ghana's 2020 general elections would go on a run-off. At a closer look, however, these predictions question the authenticity of some of these elections and may very well reveal a play on the minds of Ghanaians in directing them to which candidate to vote for.

Ethnicity and politics in Ghana

Evidently, the trend of general election results since 1969 portrays an ethnic voting pattern by the Ashantis within the Akan stock and the Ewes. In terms of population per ethnic group, the Akans of which the Ashantis are part dominate the others so the likelihood of having a sizable number of Akans in every government is high. (Boafo, 2008). Furthermore, voting patterns in the 1969, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections reflected ethnic disparities. Chazan (1982) states that 'ethnicity is distinct from, yet overlaps with, regional divisions. Similarly, socio-economic disparities between ethnic groups add a vital class component to ethnic determination' (p. 461). Ethnic proclivities were dealt with by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah through the promulgation of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act to prohibit the formation of religious, regional, and ethno-based political parties. But the 'ghost' of ethnicity and ethnic influence in voting, especially in the Volta and Ashanti Regions of Ghana has refused to die as the general elections of 1969, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004 portrayed (Boafo- Arthur, 2008). According to Frempong (2006), ethnicity thrives on half-truths and perceptions as much as on historical facts and is sustained by stereotypes and prejudices which help to explain why ethnicity remains a crucial weapon for political mobilization.

Religion and politics in Ghana

The literature on religion and politics portrays the ambiguity and diversity of religious organizations in African politics (Patterson & Kuperus 2016:321). According to Aidoo & Botchway (2021), religion in Ghana has grown and it has had both beneficial and detrimental effects on civic engagements in the country. The role religion plays in civic engagements and politics in particular dates to colonialism. During the colonial period, religious groups played an important role in the struggle for independence by joining forces with other civil society groups to embark on civil disobedience for the country's demands for self-governance. Religion pervades Ghanaians' life to the point that it appears that nothing gets done in the country without reference to religion. Ghana is, by all accounts, one of Africa's most religious countries. The country is officially secular, but church and state have not always been separated (Takyi et al, 2010). According to Kuperus (2018), "after Ghana's transition to democratic rule in the early 1990s, the CCG (Christian Council of Ghana) has continued to support democracy's consolidation and advocate for the improved welfare of Ghanaian citizens. During national elections, its public role looms large. It encourages Ghanaians to vote, educates them regarding their rights, and urges peaceful participation in the electoral process" (p.35).

Certainly, there has been more political mobilization in some countries and religious organizations than in others, and in various moments of regime conflict, religious groups have been more mobilized (Riedl, 2012). Ghana is such an example where Christianity dominates Islam. Under cross-national analysis in her work, Riedl, (2012) found out that, 'In Ghana, the Muslims responded in much greater numbers affirming the importance of politics, with 32%, whereas only 23 per cent and 22% of Protestants and Roman Catholics felt politics was very important.' This goes to show that even though Christians dominate in Ghana and in politics, Muslims are very much aware of and influenced by political activities. Additionally, Tusalem (2009,) as cited by Aidoo & Botchway (2021), found that religion played a dual role in legitimization and protestation. The author argued that the church utilizes protest as a tool for social change. However, politicians have also embraced religion, and utilize it as a means of socialization and campaigning in Ghana. In what circumstances are religious identities politically mobilized, and to what political effect? This is also a central area of investigation for this research.

Two-Party System and Voting Patterns.

During the latter decade of the twentieth century, Africa saw a slew of multiparty democracy experiments.: the so-called third wave of democratization, which brought to bear severe pressure on authoritarian leaders in Africa to adopt freer political systems in the early 1990s (Aidoo& Botchway, 2021). Ghana fits this mold since its transition in 1992, sustaining multiple elections and alternating the ruling group (Morrison 2004). The two-party dominant partisan grouping of the Ghanaian political environment is evident in the elections from 1992 to 2020. A two-party system according to Nordlund & Salih (2007), ‘is duopolistic in that two ‘major’ parties that have a roughly equal prospect of winning government power dominate it’ (p. 46).

According to Morrison & Woo Hong (2006), while Ghana has a stable two-party system at the national level, there are variations in party system types in the regions. But instead of these variations acting against the national two-party arrangement, they rather sustain and reinforce it. This occurs in several ways. First, to reap the political prize of rule, the two main parties are the only game in town, sharing nearly 95 % of the votes. Second, these two parties animate all the regions (Morrison & Woo Hong, 2006).

Table 1. 1996 and 2020 Presidential Elections results of the Ashanti and Volta region

Year	Region	Total votes	NPP	Votes in (%)	NDC	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
1996	Ashanti	1,258,014	827,804	65.80	412,474	32.79	17,736	1.46
	Volta	730,251	34,538	4.73	690,421	94.55	5,292	0.72
2020	Ashanti	2,467,351	1,795,824	72.78	653,149	26.47	18,378	7.44
	Volta	714,330	100,481	14.07	606,508	84.91	7,341	1.02

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

As evident from the table above, we can distinguish between the voting system of these two parties especially in the Ashanti and Volta region. Since 1992, eight consecutive elections have been held

(1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020), with three successive power alternations (2000, 2008, and 2016). As a result, multiparty elections have become critical pillars in the development of Ghana's democracy. However, serious efforts are still needed to resolve some problematic issues, such as ethno-regional and religious squabbles, which are linked to and affect the integrity of Ghana's elections.

Religion continues to be a major and important determinant in sustaining the dominant two-party system in Ghana. Politicians for their part have found religion and used it as an important socialization and campaign platform in Ghana. As such, both major parties (NPP and NDC) try to woo religious leaders by soliciting votes in electioneering periods. For instance, as part of both major parties' (NDC and NPP) strategy to win votes from religious constituencies, their manifestos usually try to wade into issues sensitive to various religious groups to score a political point with it. For instance, during electioneering periods, their policy statements or manifestos capture crucial religious issues or problems such as Zongo development, Hajj pilgrimage, and moral and human or religious rights appeals to win their leader's and members' support. Even though segments of established religious denominations in Ghana find it difficult to adopt a wholly neutral approach, in fact, religion, in contrast to ethnicity, has hardly been used as a divisive electioneering campaign tool as the efforts of organizations such as the Christian Council and others attempt to ensure sanity in the airwaves. (Aidoo & Botchway, 2021).

Arguably, ethnicity plays an even major role in sustaining the two-party system in Ghana. According to Aidoo & Botchway, ethnicity in politics in Ghana has, to a large extent, become very divisive, especially between Ewes and Ashantis regarding their support for the two main parties - NDC and NPP respectively. For instance, in almost all the eight elections organized in Ghana since 1992, ethnicity has played a major role in the selection of candidates or running mates. For political expediency and convenience, politicians have branded their respective opponents' parties as either Akan or Non-Akan party. For example, the NDC has been branded as non-Akans (at least, Ewes' party) by the NPP. The NPP, on the other hand, is branded Akan (at least, Ashantis party) by the NDC (p. 432). The political party arrangements in Ghana lead to a complicated set of party systems. There is a clear two-party pattern at the national level, sustained and reinforced by ethnoreligious activities.

Understanding Ghanaian Politics and How the State Works

Ghana had ten regions before the year 2020. On December 27, 2018, it held a referendum to form new regions. This resulted in the formation of six new regions, which led to the division of existing regions. Ghana today has 16 regions. The political map of Ghana has, over the years, been typically categorized into ‘north’ and ‘south’. The regions of the savannah belt (Northern, North East, Savannah, Upper East, and Upper-West) are lumped into what is commonly referred to as ‘the north’, while the seven coastal and middle-belt regions (Greater Accra, Western, Western North, Central, Volta, Oti, Eastern, Ashanti and Bono, Bono East, Ahafo) are categorized as ‘the south’.

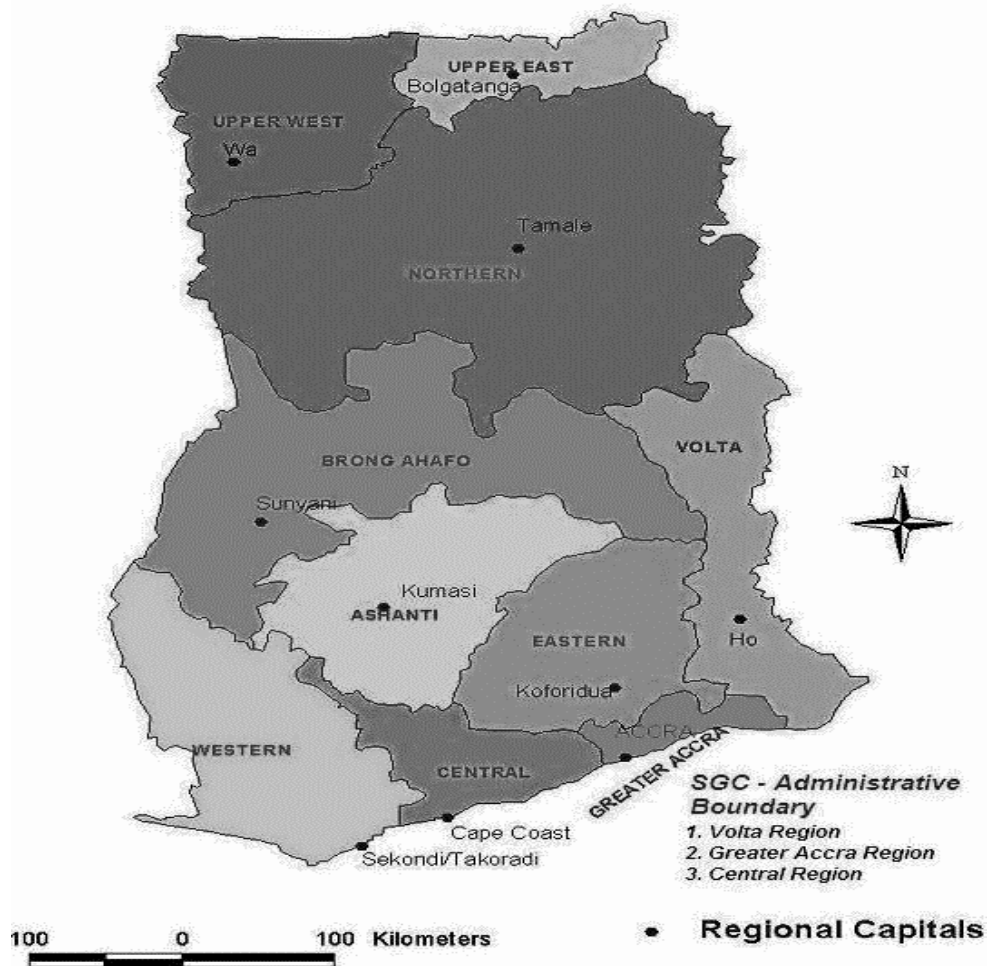


Fig 1.1 Administrative Map of Ghana before 2018.

Source: GlobalSecurity.org

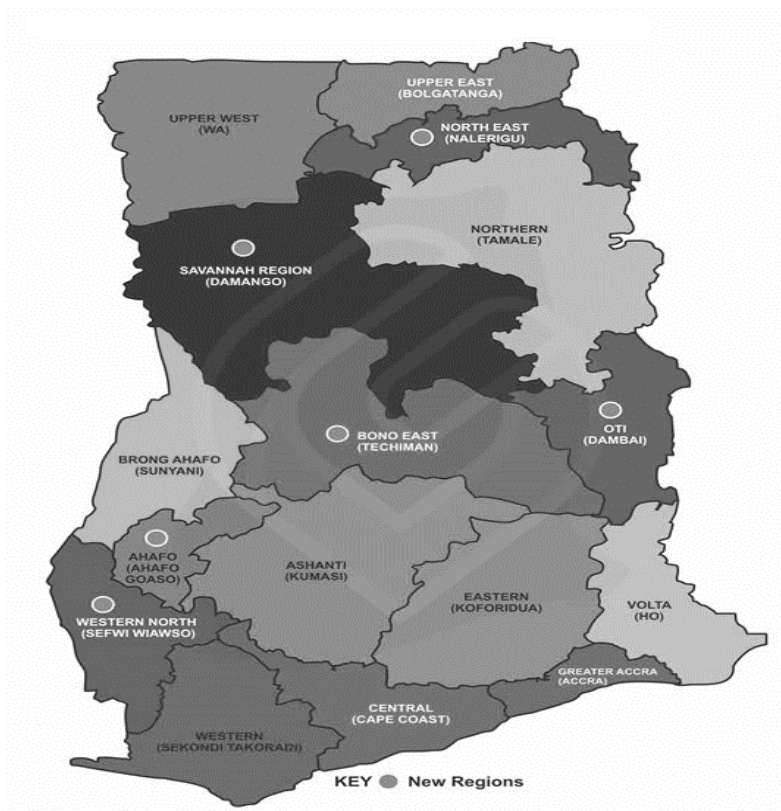


Fig 1.2 Administrative Map of Ghana after 2018

Source: ghstudents.com

Ghana, like most other countries with presidential constitutions, concentrates political authority in the presidency. As a result, the presidency is a highly prized position. Presidential elections are always fiercely contested. Presidential candidates vying for office meticulously investigate and capitalize on any chance that can boost their political fortunes (Iddi, 2016 p. 64). Leadership orientations are inextricably tied to political community conceptions. Attitudes toward the political

community help us understand how people perceive and connect to various levels and contexts of political activity. For instance, various frameworks for the formation of concepts of the political community have emerged in Ghana over time, ranging from the kinship-based village, the traditional political and/or cultural system, and the colonial regional administrative entity to the modern territorially delimited state (Chazan, 1978 p. 12).

In the poignant words of Chazan 1978, “the awareness of national symbols does not imply primary identity with or loyalty to the country” (p. 13). In her data analysis, she noted that what was more important to 50% of the respondents of Ghana, was the country, however, the remainder divided their responses among towns or villages, region, and ethnic group (Chazan, 1978).

Overall, in Ghana, political changes have always been occasions for certain people to rejoice and others to mourn. They reopen old cleavages and establish new ones, dividing society along various fault lines, resulting in conflict as well as a fierce and frantic political rivalry. Transitions have also created tension and uncertainty, raising concerns about individual and collective survival, identity, and national cohesiveness (Ninsin, 2016 p. 154). Notably, he continues by asserting that in such a highly adversarial political environment as Ghana, neither the ruling nor opposition political parties' election mobilization is driven by a set of policy alternatives. Rather than ideas and policies, each of the competing political parties mobilizes primal identities such as tribe/ethnicity and region. When a single tribal or ethnic group dominates a region, the entire region becomes the focus of electoral mobilization. (Ninsin, 2016p. 157).

Ultimately, Ayee (2016), argues that elections in Ghana are analogous to a political market with several competitors, in which voters can demand the delivery of certain products, mostly social welfare policies and programs, while politicians are under pressure to produce policy replies to such requests if they are to win elections. To be successful in the political market, one must have political products such as personalities, manifestos, ideologies, past performance, and dependability (p. 84).

I hope that by reading this research, the reader will have developed an understanding of the complex relations of Ghanaian political parties, with a constituency divided by ethnicity, religion, language, culture, region, and class, and at the same time will better understand what Ghanaian people also must endure, having to put their faith in these political parties.

CHAPTER TWO

CORE CONCEPTS, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

CORE CONCEPTS

This chapter seeks to throw more light on the core concepts of religion and ethnicity and find out how political activities are associated with adherents of both in Ghana. Added to this, is to assess the position of scholars and researchers on ethnicity and religion in politics under the Fourth Republic. Many Ghanaian social structures and communal activities are intricately linked to ethnicity, religion, and the hereafter. Politics has always been influenced by the metaphysical. Unobtrusively, religion has also influenced traditional politics in Ghana and continues to do so in modern and contemporary politics. (Pobee, 1987). In the field of politics, ethnicity, and religion have played an instrumental role in the fourth republican political campaign. This is symbolic of the stronghold they have on the political lives and preferences of Ghanaians. Is this perspective conclusive or there is more to it? With the help of different research knowledge, we will be able to broadly understand these variables in Ghanaian politics.

Review of Ethnicity in Ghana

Ghana from a political standpoint has ideals of patronage, tolerance, and mutual respect for the numerous ethnic groups shared by the populace. It has a diverse cultural and linguistic population that strives for the same goals. The most basic meaning of ethnicity in Ghana highlighted by the Ghana Statistical Service (2021) states that ‘Ethnicity is a grouping defined by common language, culture, and history with which a person identifies, or by mother tongue’ (p.25). This among all the explanations in research best suits ethnicity in Ghana. According to Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2004), the main language groups are often referred to as ‘tribes’. There are over seventy ethnic tribes scattered equally across the country. Each tribe is frequently subdivided into subgroups, for example, the Akans.

However, ethnicity and tribalism may have some similarities but different meanings. The above explanation simply means ethnic groups are quite big and encompass several tribal groups. An example is the Ashantis, the Akyems, the Bonos, etc. are all different tribal groups in Ghana yet they are all Akans. Tribalism on the other hand refers to strong allegiance to one's tribe, party, or group. "Group" here may include religious groups, political groups, social groups, etc. Tribalism can be good for example showcasing how Ghanaians take pride in their most different but unique festivals, marriages, and rites of passage. However, it becomes a bad idea especially when people take it too far. For instance, the Konkomba–Nanumba conflict, which was also known as the Guinea fowl war, was a tribal war in Northern Ghana in 1994. It is worth noting, then, that Ghana has not had a large outbreak of ethnic-regional conflicts, and connections between socioeconomic classes and religious groups have remained reasonably stable, even throughout neoliberal structural adjustment efforts in the 1980s according to Gyimah& Asante (2004). There have also been tribal conflicts in Rwanda, Nigeria, and Kenya. Ghana has also experienced some small-scale inter-ethnic conflicts which include the Dagbon, Bawku, Bimbilla, Bolga, and Bole chieftaincy conflicts. Perhaps these may have made an impact but not overly much as compared to the other countries.

Nonetheless, from the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1992 to 2020, the various political leaders have had their own style of relating to the various ethnic groups and religions in Ghana. Not being oblivious to the electoral strengths of the ethnic constituency, these leaders have sought to placate these ethnicities during the campaign periods.

The 'ethnics' of Ghanaian Politics

Ghanaian electorates will vote for a specific candidate or political party based on the candidate's or party's identification with the voter's 'tribal' group. With Ghana's return to democratic governance in 1992, ethnicity has been a major source of political capital for politicians, even though Ghana's 1992 constitution forbids the use of ethnicity in politics. (Prempeh, 2015).

This here assesses whether Ghanaian politics is indeed deeply wrapped in the clothes of ethnicity by way of tribal or ethnic groups, language, and structures such as the chieftaincy institution.

Affiliation to Ethnicity, Tribe, and family

If I ask any Ghanaian which political party, I am likely to support, they will tell me without hesitation that it is the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Such a notion originates from the fact that my family is from Aflao, a suburb in the Volta Region of Ghana, also belonging to the Ewe ethnic group. The late Jerry John Rawlings founded the NDC after ruling Ghana as a military ruler and democratically elected president from 1981 to 1992 and 1993 to 2001, respectively. Because Rawlings' father was Scottish and his mother was from the Volta region, the party he established still receives more than 80% of the vote there (Nazzah, 2022).

Also, Sakyi (2014), clearly asserts that Rawlings fueled and fanned the tribal ember in Ghana throughout his 19 years of reign when government organizations were primarily filled and led by Ewes. He further highlighted that John Kufour, who won the elections in 2000 as an NPP flagbearer, made matters worse by nominating his brother as Minister of Defense and other relatives to government positions. Likewise, some Ghanaians and media outlets have the opinion that Ghanaian politicians appear to be running family dynasties rather than a democracy. For example, the incumbent Minister of Finance and President Akuffo Addo are cousins. Ken Ofori-Atta is one of Akuffo Addo's relatives who occupy government positions, and the President is said to be loyal to his family members. It is also said that John Mahama, Akuffo Addo's predecessor of the NDC, is the worst offender in terms of populating government with persons of Northern descent.

With the history left behind by JJ Rawlings and Kufour, these ethnic and tribal sentiments have become entrenched in Ghanaian politics. Nazzah (2022) echoes this point when he stated that, 'after the 1992 and 1996 elections, the Rawlings effect on Ghana's ethnically aligned voting pattern had become entrenched and is likely to remain the case for many more decades to come'. The argument here is that our leaders may have started their political agenda by basing things on narrow relationships embedded in family, ethnicity, tribe, and nepotism.

Use of the local language and manifestoes.

Politicians in Ghana employ local languages to transmit their views or manifestos during campaign trials. They make every effort to talk in languages that individuals of a certain ethnic or religious group can comprehend.

Moreover, Nordlund & Salih (2007) highlighted the diversity of African languages and the complexities they create for the development of state-wide political parties where language, the primary means of communication, could be used to cement national unification by aggregating the interests of distinct language groups (p. 29). For instance, political candidates in Ghana on their campaign trials make use of the local languages in relaying their messages or manifestoes. They try as much as possible to speak the languages that the people of a certain ethnic or religious group can understand. Twi is the universal official vernacular language in Ghana, thus the incumbent Vice President, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, is said to have learned diligently the Akan language (Twi) before and during his political endeavors to effectively communicate with the constituents. This tactic has been widely used by politicians in Ghana, particularly during election campaigns, where it is believed to be an effective means of engaging with voters who may not be fluent in English, the country's official language. According to a study by Ewurabena Agyeiwaa Boakye and Bright B. Kwame, "the use of local languages enhances the emotional appeal and strengthens the candidate's message" (Boakye & Kwame, 2021). Politicians may develop rapport and trust with the electorate by speaking in a language that voters understand and are comfortable with, which can ultimately result in votes.

One of the central features of multi-party elections is the use of manifestoes. It serves as a roadmap for the policies that each party intends to implement during its four years in power. A successful manifesto rollout can revitalize or save a party's campaign. Just before and after independence, Ghana's administration and politics included elections, as they still do today. The belief of Ghanaians in elections as a crucial tool for fostering socio-economic development and raising their standard of living can be ascribed to their interest and passion for elections (Ayee, 2016). Ayee (2016), further states that 'manifestos are more of intangible promises – or utopia – that are designed to woo the electorate into voting a party into power' (p. 93). The two main political parties produced eight manifestos each between 1992 and 2020.

These manifestos recognized the problems that faced Ghanaian society and set the agenda for debate and discussion but whether it largely shaped voter behavior ethnically or religiously may be quite challenging to analyze. The changing terrain notwithstanding, these political parties may have communicated their policies to the various ethnic groups and religious bodies through social platforms and forces such as during cultural festivals and the use of music artists. For instance, some political candidates use the Homowo festival of the Ga people, and the Hogbetsotso of the Ewes, mostly celebrated in August and November respectively as a platform to make known their policies and ambitions. These festivals we can see are celebrated close to the end of the year, which has always been perfect timing for the run-up to elections in December.

Chieftaincy Institution

Political elites, youth groups, and local politicians in Ghana have all used chieftaincy institutions to further their political and economic goals with reasonable levels of success. Political actors recognize that chiefs are crucial allies in winning elections. And it goes both ways. Applicants for chieftaincy positions rely on the support of local and national authorities to gain control of traditional territory. According to Arthur, "chieftaincy is a highly respected traditional institution that is widely recognized and accepted by the people, and politicians often seek the support of chiefs to win elections" (Arthur, 2016, p. 61).

Politicians frequently pay courtesy visits to traditional chiefs during elections, offering them presents and other sorts of patronage. This is done to secure the chiefs' support and endorsement, who then use their authority to sway voters in favor of the person they have endorsed. Even more so, politicians have been known to use the chieftaincy system to incite tribal or ethnic sentiments to garner votes. Also, they have used the chieftaincy institution to obtain support and legitimacy during elections. While traditional leaders' endorsement can be a useful asset to politicians, it is critical that the institution not be used to incite tribal or ethnic feelings, which can be divisive and destructive to the country's democracy.

Review of Religion in Ghana

Ghana is a predominantly Christian country with a religious profile of approximately 71.3% Christians, 19.9% Muslims, traditionalists 3.2%, and 4.5% other religions (Ghana Housing and Population Census, 2021). We have the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Muslim Council. Traditionalists mostly consist of Chiefs and Chief Priests who practice African Traditional Religion (ATR).

The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) was instituted on 30th October 1929, by five churches namely African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Zion Church, English Church Mission (Anglican), Ewe Presbyterian Church (now Evangelical Presbyterian Church); Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Wesleyan Methodist Church (now the Methodist Church Ghana). The goal was to find unity, work with members on socially relevant issues, and speak for those in society who have no voice. Since it was established, the council has undergone various organizational changes. There are currently three Christian organizations and 26 churches there. These churches and denominations in Ghana are united under the auspices of the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG). The council has members from Charismatic, Pentecostal, Orthodox, and other churches. The influence of the churches in Ghana plays a significant role in the political sphere and can make or break political candidates and there is evidence that dates to post-independence Ghana during the Nkrumah reign. For example, under Nkrumah's leadership, the government was critical of the churches because they had not been overtly supportive of the war for national independence. The regime's marginalization of the churches contributed to the Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 (Mugambi, 1996).

Islam on the other hand was the first Abrahamic Monotheistic religion to arrive in Ghana. Today, it is the second most widely recognized religion in the country behind Christianity. It first appeared in Ghana around the tenth century. Negotiations have frequently been used to resolve religious, social, and economic issues affecting Muslims under the direction of the Muslim Representative Council. The National Chief Imam of Ghana is the country's highest Muslim authority (“Islam in Ghana, 2022”). In the 1950s, Muslims were urged to vote for a candidate based on their faith, and Islam became a component of national and municipal politics. The rallying cry "Islam" was utilized effectively to mobilize support for a certain candidate in the Zongo districts of the southern towns, where the Muslim community was closely grouped (Ahmed-Rufai, 2002).

However, The African Traditional Religion (ATR) was the only form of worship practiced by the populace in Ghana before the arrival of Christianity and Islam. African Traditional Religion (ATR) has not had the same level of public endorsement as Christianity and Islam. This is one of the limitations of this research because my focus on religion is more on Christianity and Islam. I believe African traditional religion has similar traits to ethnicity and tribalism which is an element in this research.

Religious leaders and Moral legitimacy

Politics, like any other corporate entity, is concerned with moral issues. Since the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1992, moral problems have consumed the campaign space of most parties as they attempt to defend themselves and/or accuse their opponents of immoral activities committed during their term or in opposition (Acheampong, 2013). For Instance, in 2011, Late President John Evans Atta Mill urged religious leaders to teach their adherents that decency in discourse was a requirement for order, stability, and peaceful co-existence. This was an address read on his behalf at the opening session of the 79TH National Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana (AMMG), in Accra, Ghana. He asserted that "...all religious bodies should continue to commit themselves and refuse to allow their members to be mobilized along religious lines by unscrupulous people to achieve their mercenary goals at the expense of the national interest..." Present was the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharabutu, who called for divine wisdom to guide the Presidency and its administration, and the late Dr. Maulvi Wahab Adam, head, and Missionary in charge of AMMGA, who praised the contributions that political leaders had made to stabilize and consolidate Ghana's democratic process.

Influence decision-making processes.

Rev. Dr. Opuni Frimpong, the former secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana during an interview on Joy News Ghana in 2016 was asked if a clear distinction can be drawn between religion and politics. He asserted that there is a yes and no answer to this question because both entities are in sync for the betterment of Ghanaians and for human development to be achieved both these bodies must work together. According to him, political leaders such as Presidents,

Ministers, and the local assembly call on religious leaders a lot when they need the approval of or help in decision-making matters. This is perhaps what Senior Presidential Advisor, Yaw Osafo Marfo, of the incumbent NPP government, refers to as the ‘code of conduct in Christendom’. He mentioned this as a Special Guest of Honor at a ceremony that awarded Most Rev. Sam Korankye Ankrah the Lifetime Achievement Award from the US government for his volunteer work at his church, Royal House Chapel International. According to Senior Minister Yaw Osafo Marfo, the ‘code of conduct in Christendom will perhaps reduce the work of government in Ghana’. (Joy news).

Additionally, just recently in May 2022, Archbishop Charles Gabriel Palmer-Buckle who is the Metropolitan Archbishop of Cape Coast, the capital of the Metropolitan District of Cape Coast and the central region of Ghana, called on the government to review the free Senior High School, SHS, policy. Free SHS is a policy of the government of Ghana, which started in September 2017. He highlighted that, despite fully supporting the policy, the time had come for the government to review it by holding broad stakeholder engagement.

Playing the religious card

Ghanaian political leaders, particularly power aspirants, use the religious card so frequently and openly that it becomes difficult to distinguish religion from politics when they are contending for votes (Dogbevi,2019). There are also a few mentions according to Acheampong (2013), in 1992 and 1996. The NDC and the NPP took the Christian population very seriously and thus concentrated on gaining their votes. The then NDC candidate Late J.J. Rawlings concentrated more on the independent/spiritual churches, while his wife was billed for the principal churches. The NPP on the other hand concentrated more on the mainline churches. According to Alabi (2007), in deciding on leaders for the political parties, one of the considerations is the religious card and, each of the parties tries to balance between Christian and Islam religions in several presentations at the party leadership, flag bearer, or vice-presidential slots (p. 46).

Composition, adaption, and rendition of songs for national campaigns

Political parties sometimes commission secular and religious musicians to create music for their campaigns or to use their songs at rallies and manifesto readings. Aside from those adopted or written for national campaigns, one of the major distinctions in the usage of religious music on campaign platforms in the 2008 and 2016 elections was the development of songs with a Christian ethos for party primaries. This was most prevalent in the campaigns running up to the NPP presidential primary in 2008 and 2016. For example, Kwabena Kwabena, a highlife musician, created a rendition of the popular Akan Carol song Soro abofo to twum dede bi. In the chorus of the song was ‘Nana Addo wo Soro, Na NPP wo Soro’ which means Nana Addo is the highest, NPP in the highest. In Christianity, such titles are given to God, who is declared to be the one God and the only one who exists.

Literature Review

The above discussions have deliberated in depth the importance Ghanaians hold ethnicity and religion, even imparting political changes in Ghanaian society. Despite the burgeoning literature on political behavior and vote choice in Africa, relatively few studies have empirically, investigated the conditions under which ethnic and religious identities prove problematic in Ghanaian politics, and if any other variables influence elections in Ghana. If so, compared to these elements of the traditional nature of Ghanaian society, (ethnicity and religion) how strong these variables are? To this end, the literature review discussions will therefore involve research on other's perspectives on the importance and influence of these elements in Ghanaian society and its electoral dealings and the counterevidence relating to non-ethnic and non-religious proceedings.

Ethnic and religious factors

McCauley (2016) stated that 'Ethnicity and religion both constitute critical identities in African politics' (p. 18). He explained that consistent with constructivist accounts of identity, there is the notion that ethnic and religious divisiveness is a function of the political environment (p. 19). Many people think, and this belief has been extensively spread, that identity, particularly religion, and ethnicity, are key factors in the outcome of all previous elections held under Ghana's Fourth Republic since 1992. In Ghana, however, people's party loyalties and election choices are largely influenced by identification characteristics like ethno-regional and religious connections. However, identity politics in Ghana predates the Fourth Republic and even Independence. (Aidoo & Botchway, 2021: 421)

Ethnicity is a reality that can be used to influence elections (Frempong, 2001.) It has also been verified that ethnicity is still at the heart of Ghana's political process, notably as a mechanism for mobilizing grassroots support. Simultaneously, playing the ethnic card is one of the simplest ways to incite passion and elicit emotional responses (Frempong, 2006). Boafo-Arthur (2008), therefore, claims that Ethnicity is a scourge in African politics, and Ghana is no exception. Even while many would prefer to brush this under the rug, the issue of ethnic voting is genuine and should be addressed by all stakeholders. According to Fridy (2007) however, even though several scholars

have advised against presuming that ethnicities in Ghana are fixed societal realities, voting patterns show at least some cleavage along perceived ethnic lines.

Moreover, some literature also explained the gap and rivalry between the Ashantis and Ewes as prevalent in Ghanaian politics. The Ashanti-Ewe rivalry has remained in Ghana's Fourth Republic, with Ashanti-Ewe voting patterns being unique. While other areas distribute their votes, the Volta and Ashanti regions concentrate their votes on their home-based parties in all 4th Republic elections (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004: 32). On his part, Boafo-Arthur (2008) agrees with this assertion when he made claims to the fact that the imprint of ethnicity and ethnic impact in voting, particularly in Ghana's Volta and Ashanti Regions, has refused to die, as seen by the general elections of 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. (p. 63). This began according to Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2004) when assertions of alleged tribalism surfaced during the Rawlings-PNDC regime and were firmly brought to light in 1988 in a public speech given by a famous professor of history and occasional politician, Albert Adu Boahen.

Furthermore, Fridy (2007), to understand the demographic characteristics of the dominant parties in the presidential vote in 2004, found that the presence of members of an ethnolinguistic group, namely Akans, is driving NPP vote totals upwards and not the existence of the socioeconomic variables (p. 291). He explained that election maps show strong support for the NPP in traditional Asante communities and strong support for the NDC in traditional Ewe areas. Even when the socioeconomic features of a district are structured, the study reveals that a district's 'Akan-ness' or 'Ewe-ness' counts a lot for predictive purposes. Additionally, despite politicians' ideological appeals to the masses in widely covered public speeches and glossy manifestos, it is ethnic identities that better predict the popularity of one party over another. He specified that in Ghana, ethnicity is extremely important during election season although not a deciding factor in Ghanaian elections. Fridy (2007) concluded that unless extraordinary political events force a full realignment, it is difficult to imagine the NPP capturing most votes in Ewe-dominant constituencies in the southern Volta area or the NDC capturing the majority of votes in Asante-dominant constituencies in the Ashanti region (p. 293-302).

Still, other works described ethnicity in politics through the mobilization process. Frempong (2001) notes that during elections, ethnicity raises the public's awareness of the importance of protecting the interests of their ethnic homeland. He explains that ethnic groups and their organizations emphasize the importance of voting for parties and candidates who will protect the interests of their community (p.2). In his other work, Frempong (2006) again highlights that notwithstanding their emphasis on individual choice and the option of cross-party voting, Ghanaian election processes remain susceptible to elite manipulation along ethnic lines, particularly when elites exploit members' unconscious fears about their group's stability and economic well-being. Others such as Alabi (2011) suggest ethnicity has a significant impact on the acceptability of political marketing methods in that it is a feature that has quite prominently prevailed over the years in the ethnic-based and communal voting pattern in Ghana because of increasing urbanization. His findings show that political parties with particularly substantial ethnic support bases have withstood the test of time and ethnicity can be described as the 'prerequisite for the sustainability of a political party in Ghana' (p. 49). Aidoo and Botchway (2021) further explain it all by asserting that problems of identity continue to play an important role in Ghana's fourth democratic quest, particularly during election periods: from campaign strategy to election outcome, the impact of identity variables such as religion, region, and ethnicity cannot be overstated. According to them in contemporary Ghana, ethnic connections and inter-ethnic engagements play a vital role in shaping Ghana's social and political landscape (p. 427).

Ultimately, Chazan (1982) on the implications of ethnicity in Ghanaian politics demonstrates that ethnicity, which is in some ways a reaction to state authority, becomes a challenge to this hegemony when it serves as a substitute framework for political action and so assumes a life independent of the state sector. She points out that this situation is undoubtedly an exaggerated attempt to understand the flow of ethnic politics in Ghana because state actions and the varying relevance of state power offer a few possibilities for Ghana's future. Conversely, because ethnic politics is not constant, ethnicity is a helpful descriptive concept that can indicate changes in state policies and power. To Chazan (1982), when better equipped, it may be important to return to a closer analysis of power constructions and the links between the state and power in the Ghanaian context, and possibly in other parts of Africa as well (p. 484-485).

On the religious front, scholars argue that Religion has grown more prominent and influential in contemporary Ghana than ever before. Religion and public life are inextricably linked in Ghana; religion legitimizes both human behavior and political authority. (Dovlo,2006; Max-Wirth, 2018). In their analysis of the importance of Religion and participation in democracy, McCauley & Gyimah-Boadi (2009) found that individuals who value religion are slightly more likely to support democracy, be interested in public policy, and discuss politics, that individual religious faith continues to be positively associated with support for democracy, interest in political concerns, and political discussion. Some of these outcomes can be ascribed simply to community involvement, and that faith is positively connected with interest in politics (p. 8-9).

According to Dovlo (2006), since the fourth republic, evidence has demonstrated that election campaigns clearly revealed the powerful influence religion has on people's political lives and choices. He emphasized that it also showed how politicians utilized and manipulated religion to achieve political objectives. This is not a new phenomenon in Ghana. It has been a major aspect of civil religion and has had a role in Ghana's post-independence politics (p. 3). On his part, Max-Wirth (2018), maintains that an African is religious regardless of his or her rank or pretensions. He said there is no Ghanaian head of state who does not profess the Christian faith. Thus, Jerry John Rawlings (1993–2001) and John Agyekum Kufuor (2001–2009) claim the Roman Catholic faith, John Fiifi Atta Mills (2009–2012) (p. 161). Similarly, according to Dovlo (2006), one of the religious elements that influenced the 1992 elections was the diverse messages that the orthodox Christian leadership had for the country (p. 4).

Max-Wirth (2018) stressed that Christians are ultimately political. This is because they participate in national elections more than before and evidently, Dovlo (2006) claims the Christian Council of Ghana and the National Catholic Secretariat represent these Churches in conjunction with other religious bodies such as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission. He also mentioned they actively encouraged the country's effort to return to a democratic constitutional civilian rule (p. 4).

Additionally, Presidential candidates to mobilize the church felt compelled to declare themselves 'God-fearing' to exploit the church as a portal to the Castle, the Presidential seat. They did this by repackaging their Christian personas for public consumption.

Ghana is formally a secular state, yet religion influences the country's politics as it does practically every other part of life and affects people's choice of political leaders. This connection between

religion and Ghana's public sphere is apparent in electoral politics (Max-Wirth, 2018: 75). Dovlo (2006) claims that the electorate's psychology is most likely based on diverse religious traditions. He explains that apart from Christianity and Islam, African Traditional Religion (ATR), is a resilient foundation of religious life in Ghana that deeply influences all aspects of life, and politics is no exception. The Chief, a sacred emblem of political life, rules in the place of the ancestors and is accountable to them. Some of his duties are devout and priestly. Dovlo (2006) contends that the first foreign faith to come to Ghana, Islam, historically allied with traditional authority (p. 5).

In addition, there have been scholars on the challenges of religion in politics in Ghana who propose arguments that Christianity in Ghana has long struggled with the issue of active Christian participation in party politics. Most Christians, particularly Pentecostals, and members of Independent African Churches have an apolitical outlook (Dovlo, 2006 p. 5). Likewise, Max-Wirth (2018) agrees that there are indeed contradictions in modern Ghana with respect to the separation of religion and politics (p. 75). Using the church as an example, Quayesi-Amakye (2018) stated that the church has been actively involved in the nation's socio-political development, although it is unclear how politically involved it can be. He agreed there is ambiguity regarding the church's political activity and that church leaders who support the church's political involvement must evaluate their political aspirations and the repercussions before taking any action (p. 165- 169). Still, they normally endorsed the government of the day on a scriptural basis that all governments exist by celestial authority (Dovlo, 2006: 5). For instance, it is worth noting that, in the absence of multi-party democracy, religious entities played the role of proxy opposition, able to call the tune for the type of leadership Ghana required during the 1992 transition to democratic governance. (Dovlo, 2006:18). In general, politicians appear to utilize religion in an exploitative manner because of the supposed impact it has on the electorate, to attract an entire group without reaching out to them personally, and where religious leadership is influential to use their influence on members (Dovlo, 2006:19). Quayesi-Amakye (2018) added that usually, affected 'corrupt' politicians have frequently opposed the church's leadership engagement in politics and the use of the pulpits for specific political agendas. He agrees with the argument that the church has a stake in Ghanaian politics, and this is evident during campaign periods when politicians pay visits to some churches in the country to solicit votes to win national elections (p.165- 178).

Ghana according to Max-Wirth (2018) is again a religiously diverse society, with Pentecostalism influencing Ghanaian public culture. Ghana's 2021 National Population Census shows that Pentecostals represent the single largest Christian religious grouping in Ghana with 31.6 percent of the population. This rise in the Pentecostal populace has made them major political powerbrokers, to the point where Pentecostal discourse and practice affect current Ghanaian politics and public life. He highlighted four main ways in which the nation's politicians utilize Pentecostal symbols for political gains. These are Political Utilization of Pentecostal Symbols; Use of Popular Pentecostal Discourse/Imager; Adoption of Pentecostal Tunes and Lyrics for Campaigns; and Physical Association with Pentecostals. This showed that Religion is not a private phenomenon; it is visible, alive, and powerful in the public domain (Max-Wirth 2018:75-76).

Apparently, the church has two-fold educational functions according to Quayesi-Amakye (2018). The first role of the church is to prepare Christians for national elections, educate them on their civil rights, and explain to them government policies and programs. Secondly, the church must not become numb to the nation's ills but must instead hold politicians liable to both the people and God, the final judge of both the living and the dead (p. 169). He highlighted that the church's role in society's social, cultural, political, and economic development is unavoidable. As a result, Christians cannot remain apolitical but must participate in the search for a more responsive political life in the world and thus, the church's responsibilities extend beyond spirituality to include the everyday concerns of the community in which it finds itself (p. 170-171).

There is importance attached to Islam (the second-largest religion in Ghana) in Ghanaian politics with 19.9 percent of the population according to the Ghana Population and Housing Census. Islam in politics cannot be underestimated, although compared to Christianity, it plays a rather marginal role and brings forth the North-South divide in Ghana. This is what Dovlo (2006) explained stating that it 'exposed the problems of religious candidature in a religiously plural society' (p. 15).

McCauley & Gyimah-Boadi (2009) asserted that for example, it is sometimes said that Islam and democracy are incompatible. They noted further that some scholars have argued that the inadequacy of Islam to discern between religious and political power hinders Muslim countries' democratic potential. Also, some religions expect more of their followers than others, and Islam has an impact on society and politics that conventional Christian groups do not (p. 9-10).

According to McCauley & Gyimah-Boadi (2009), there is a yes or no answer to the question of whether there are variations across religions. They observed that Muslims and evangelical Christians in Africa are more likely than other religions to incorporate their religious beliefs into other aspects of their lives. Hence, members of these groups place more excellent value on religion and are more interested in civic associations. Also, African Muslims, like African Catholics, Protestants, traditionalists, and others, favor democracy (p. 11). They noted that the extremely high level of expressed religiosity in Africa is essential to the continent's sociopolitical landscape. Two results of their research revealed that religious faith improves political trust and participation.; there is tremendous social variance between religions and to this Muslims and Christians place greater importance on their religions and pay greater attention to public affairs (p. 15-16).

To end, Christianity remains the dominant religion in Ghana, and it will continue to be the favoured reference of most Ghanaian politicians during elections (Acheampong,2013)

Non-ethnic and non-religious factors

Indeed, in past reviews of research on ethnoreligious and political activities in Ghana, and by convention, one would have expected that the so-called strongholds of the NPP and NDC would assuredly bring stable electoral votes in regions in Ghana and that especially ethnicity holds a strong influence in political activities in Ghana. Subsequently, in recent years, emerging literature has debunked some of these perspectives. Scholars have used hypotheses, voting models, and psychological and economic factors to explain Ghana's ethnicity, religion, and political activities.

In their research on *Parties, Ethnicity, and Voting in African Elections*, Hoffman and Long (2013) inquired whether ethnicity or party attributes and perceptions could better explain voting patterns in Ghana's 2008 election. Their results support the view and join a growing literature that focuses on the non-ethnic factors that drive political outcomes in Africa. They developed three hypotheses in voting behaviors in Ghana. Their first hypothesis asserts that the Ashantis vote for the NPP, and the Ewe support the NDC. Secondly, voting in Ghana concerns demographic predictors of voting other than ethnicity. Thirdly, swing voters (vote switches between the NDC and the NPP) are defined by voter characteristics and not ethnicity.

There have been instances where voters have shown preferences based on issues, leadership qualities, or economic factors rather than identity-based affiliations. Few analysts have examined to what extent ethnicity versus attributes and evaluations of the parties determined for whom Ghanaians cast their vote. This is surprising given the intense campaigns the NDC and NPP ran, and the number of declared undecided voters in pre-election polls. (Hoffman & Long p. 127-132)

On their part about Ethnicity, Gyimah-Boadi & Asante (2004) highlight that although regional voting patterns may have hidden ethnic components, and while ethnicity is important, it is not the only variable that influences the outcome of elections in Ghana (p. 35). They explained with an example stressing that Election results from 2000 to the present disprove any argument that ethnicity is the sole or most important factor of electoral outcomes in Ghana's Fourth Republic. Some of the key factors that contributed to the NPP's victory in the 2000 elections were its ability to repackage and promote itself as a national party, as well as a widespread national desire for change. (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004: 62). On religion, Dovlo (2007) claims that voting choices do not necessarily depend on religious allegiance, or even if they do, denominational preferences may at times detract from a common religious goal (p. 18).

Consequently, this here explores why ethnicity and religion became relatively unimportant to political activities according to these scholars.

First, arguments from scholars on how voters are increasingly valuing the qualities and capabilities of political leaders over their ethnic or religious background have been on the rise. There have been instances where charismatic and competent leaders have garnered support across diverse demographic groups (Hoffman& Long, 2013; Ayee, 2009; Toklo, 2019).

One significant factor is voters' perceptions of a leader's ability to address critical concerns such as economic development, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Ghanaians, like citizens elsewhere, judge political leaders based on their perceived ability to enact policies that benefit the country. A leader's track record, experience, and future vision might convince people who prioritize improving their living conditions and the nation's general well-being.

For example, Hoffman and Long (2013) highlight that voters employ information about the performance of the incumbent party and party characteristics and Ghanaian voters employ these assessments when deciding for whom to vote, and some have firm party affiliations, separate from

their ethnicity (p. 134). This confirms what Ayee (2009) offered as an explanation for the Ashanti and Volta regions' vote since 1992 contending that 'voting patterns are also influenced by factors such as personality, the quality of governance and poverty levels, and a party's ideology, program, organization, and access to resources' (p. 24). Evidence is the charisma and personality of the late J.J Rawlings which cannot be underestimated. Although he hailed from the Volta region, the Northern, Upper West, and Upper East regions, have voted for the NDC since 1992 because of voters' perceptions that the NDC improved their lot while he was in power (Ayee,2009).

Also, there has been an emphasis on the role of economic factors in voter choice. Here, voters may prioritize issues such as job creation, economic development, and poverty alleviation over ethnic or religious considerations. As Toklo (2019) revealed, several studies suggest that voters in many modern democracies use economic factors to influence their choice of a candidate. Ninsin (2016) observed that factors mediate the interaction between the citizens and the political representatives in Ghana. The primary factor is the capitalist state's and economy's dominance over a predominantly peasant economy and society and at the political level, the two glaring instances shape the latter's (citizens) norms and attitudes. He stated, 'Poverty is a major feature of Ghana's social structure and remains a powerful determinant of the attitudes of the mass of the electorate toward the political class' (p. 117). Scholars on ethnicity, such as Arthur (2009) demonstrate that the characterization of ethnicity as the basis of electoral behavior in Ghana appears simplistic since other factors, such as perceived improvements in their socioeconomic lot, and issues relating to increased corruption, may appear in the guise of ethnicity, seem to have a greater influence on the choices that Ghanaian voters have been making since 1992 (p. 68). To this Linberg & Morrison (2005) note that structural and institutional factors for voter alignments not only locate individual voters on various socioeconomic but also reflect how these phenomena may be intertwined with other measures associated with voting rationale in Ghana (p. 577).

Additionally, available literature has also showcased instances where politicians or political parties have successfully formed alliances that cut across ethnic and religious lines. Ethnicity, however, does not always provide sufficient or clarifying information to determine an individual's vote. In Ghana's 2008 presidential election, for example, the ethnic groups of the two major candidates each represented only approximately 16 percent of the total population. Consequently, most Ghanaians could not use shared ethnicity as the motivating factor determining whom they would

support. (Hoffman & Long, 2013) p. 143. They are therefore compelled to seek alliances with other ethnic groups and political forces. (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004). According to them, such alliances can serve as a model for a more inclusive and issue-driven political landscape, broaden their appeal, and build a more diverse and wide-ranging voter base. It's worth noting that Ghana is known for its reasonably stable democracy, and political alliances have frequently been established across ethnic and religious lines with the objective of promoting national unity and inclusivity. However, the viability and sustainability of such coalitions can vary from one election cycle to another, and they are influenced by a variety of factors, including political strategies, individual leadership, and the current socio-political atmosphere. Ayee (2009) describes this with examples and notes that when it came to power, the NPP represented an inclusive government. It appointed the opposition Peoples' National Convention (PNC) national chairman, Mallam Issa, as minister of sport and the former flag bearer of the Convention People's Party (CPP) George Hagan, as chairman of the National Commission for Culture. The incumbent NPP also works with other parties in the inter-party advisory committee, designed as a common platform to deal with electoral issues and problems and to advise the electoral commission. Again, The National Democratic Congress formed an alliance with the PNC, which was predominantly linked with the North, in the 2008 elections. This aided the NDC in gaining support and representation in previously underserved regions (Gyimah-Boadi, 2010).

Effects on the Political System and socio-economic development

This section of the study looks at the effects of identity politics on ethnic cleavage and inequality in Ghana. It briefly focuses on the north-south divide, rural-urban disparities, the Akans' perceived homogeneity, and the political and economic dominance of the southern sections.

Ethnic rivalries during the colonial era, the impact of colonialism on different groups and regions of the country, as well as the unequal distribution of social and economic amenities in both colonial and post-independence Ghana, have all contributed to inequalities and, to some degree, some of the current ethnic tensions within and among the various ethnic groups and the country in general. (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004 p. 1). Similarly, Fridy (2007) claims that there is a perceived and actual divide between the country's North and South that dates to the colonial period, when the British deliberately kept the northern population uneducated to keep them as a cheap supply of

labor in the South (p.289). Gyimah & Asante (2004) describes the north–south flow of migration as symbolic of the ethno-regional inequalities that have developed in Ghana since colonial times when infrastructure and productive initiatives had been centered in the south, leaving the north underdeveloped (p. 2). Lindberg and Morrison (2005) show evidence in the study of core and swing voters that Ghanaian parties are divided by socioeconomic measures such as the rural/urban divide, level of education, occupation status, and income levels. Socioeconomic cleavages noted as ‘sectional cleavages’ according to Fridy (2007) often theorized ethnically in the Ghanaian case, are the driving force behind electoral alignments.

Additionally, an important factor is that the Akan group is far from homogeneous. Indeed, the Akans are greatly fragmented, and the Ashantis have been unable to mobilize the other Akan sub-groups. In other words, while the Akan group is a linguistic and cultural entity, it does not function as a cohesive political one. (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004: 34). They further explained that during elections, distinct groups of the Akan tribe, such as Fantes and Ashantis, tend to vote differently. This has contributed to the establishment of cross-ethnic alliances in which Akans vote for non-Akan candidates and parties, while non-Akans support and vote for individual Akan candidates and Akan-dominated parties. As a result, while being the country's largest ethnic group, the Akan are too fragmented to win competitive national elections without appealing to Ghana's other major ethnic groups (p. 126)

To this end, Boafo-Arthur (2008), asserts that politicians and political parties employ ethnicity for narrow political ends in the context of democratic contestation for political power to endanger the stability of the nation (p. 65). Even so, as a general concept, this means that winning elections in Africa requires more than just ethnic support and while ethnicity is frequently prominent in African political strife, it serves as a tool for challenging or restructuring political authority rather than as a source of social disintegration (Ayee, 2009: 3).

Summary of discussions

Overall, this chapter proves that ethnicity and religion are objects of intense interest and desire among Ghanaians. Considering this, what I have been able to garner from these is that, ethnic, and religious favouritism among Ghanaians and politicians alike, may be due to the lack of fundamental trust in the political system of Ghana. As noted by Owusu and Agyeman-Duah (2017), "trust in political institutions is low in Ghana, and as such, individuals tend to rely on ethnic and religious affiliations to make voting decisions" (p. 240). This lack of trust may be due to various factors, including corruption, nepotism, ineffective governance, and the failure of political institutions to deliver on their promises. This chapter also draws attention to the perception that economic factors are central to voter choice in Ghana, as they shape the daily lives and aspirations of the citizens. The government's performance in managing the economy and addressing issues related to poverty, job creation, and income inequality can profoundly impact how voters cast their ballots in Ghana's elections.

In addition, albeit with religious involvement in political matters, there is interfaith cooperation among the religious bodies. An institution in Ghana exists in ensuring cooperation among religious bodies, notably, the Ghana Interfaith Coordinating Council (GICC). The GICC was established in 2003 to promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation in Ghana and one of its key initiatives is the Peaceful Elections Campaign, which aims to promote peaceful elections by encouraging citizens to refrain from engaging in political violence and to respect the rights of others. The campaign involves representatives from different religious communities working together to promote peace and understanding among different groups. Regarding elections in Ghana, there is a strong indication of increased cooperation among religious organizations.

Lastly, political polarization I will hasten to confess has played a significant role in the distrust of the political system. With a country like Ghana established as a two-party system, it embodies standard assumptions of the tension of binary political ideologies and partisan identities. The north-south gap, rural-urban inequities, the Ashanti-Ewe divide, and the Akan group's overwhelming supremacy in economic and social life and the public sector are the key aspects of ethnic and regional polarization in Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2004). Thus, the NPP is for the Ashantis and the NDC for the Ewes brouhaha. It is noted in this chapter that 'political tribalism'

has become a major factor in Ghanaian politics, with people aligning themselves with political parties based on ethnicity or regional identity rather than on policy positions.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

Theories that directly relate to the question of ethnicity and religion and are adopted as the basis of this paper are the social identity and resource mobilization theory. This section would, however also include evaluations of the voting behavior of Ghanaians using retrospective and prospective voting models.

Social Identity Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory

Several theories can be applied to ethnoreligious and political activities in Ghana. One such theory is the social identity theory, which has gained prominence and has grown tremendously worldwide in the last few decades. Social Identity Theory (SIT) or identification termed by Eriksen (2017) suggests that individuals derive their sense of self and social identity from their group memberships. Social Identity may have started during colonial times and has been applied in various cultural contexts; Ghana included. According to Chabal (2009), during colonialism, issues of identity under the elusive title of tribalism “had a profound impact on how Africans instrumentalized their identity in the colonial and post-colonial context”. However, he went on to assert that sociological ‘factors’ in this case; Ethnicity and Religion may be “too limiting in that they presume that such are always the key markers of identity” (p. 31). Even so, these factors, to echo Eriksen (2017), “have become major preoccupations in almost every country in the world; politically, personally and naturally” and are a result of globalization (p. 154). McCauley (2014) also expanding on the conformity effects of social identity theory, contends that because people have a social predisposition to seek affiliation, preferences can really alter as identity cleavages vary. Social Identity theory can help to explain how people in Ghana identify with their ethnic and religious groups and how this affects their political attitudes and behaviors. Thus, individuals derive a significant portion of their self-concept and self-esteem from their membership in social categories that they perceive as important and meaningful.

According to O’Brien, 1986 p. 898, numerous anthropologists, including Barth, and his associates (1969), have contributed to our understanding of the ‘immutability’ of ethnic identity or more simply how flexible identities are. Eriksen (2017) highlighted that before that, it was usual to take people's group identities for granted. One was an X or a Y because one had a specific culture and

belonged to a particular social group, and that was the basis for anthropologists to begin their research. Barth and his colleagues developed a more dynamic model of ethnicity, demonstrating that the boundaries between groups were more variable and difficult to discern than previously supposed. (Eriksen, 2017) p.154. As a result of such changes in anthropological thought about ethnicity, the model has been stripped of its implications of 'immutability and the permanence of primordial loyalties' (O'Brien, 1986: 898). Eriksen (2017) nonetheless highlights that it doesn't matter what the accurate cultural distinctions are between or within groups; what counts are the relationships—competition, complementarity, collaboration, or conflict—that exist between the groups. However, this relationship's impression of difference is a crucial component (p. 155).

Resource mobilization theory, developed by John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald in the 1970s, seeks to understand social movements by focusing on the resources they use to achieve their goals. Social movements have typically been viewed as extensions of more basic types of collective behavior, embracing both movements for personal change for example ethnic groups, religious sects, and cults, and those for institutional change for example constitutional reforms and changes in political power (Jenkins, 1983). Resource mobilization theorists, on the other hand, consider social movements as extensions of institutionalized acts and limit their focus to institutional change movements that try to change "elements of social structure and/or the reward distribution of Society." (McCarthy & Zald 1977:1218). Applying resource mobilization theory to ethno-religious politics in Ghana involves examining how different ethnic and religious groups mobilize resources to advance their political agendas. These resources include human, organizational, and material. For instance, in mobilizing human resources, various ethno-religious groups may mobilize individuals who share common ethnic or religious identities to participate in political activities. Leaders within these groups may emerge to coordinate efforts. In organizational resources, ethnic and religious organizations, such as churches or ethnic associations, can serve as platforms for mobilizing people and coordinating actions. Regarding material resources, financial contributions from group members, as well as support from external sources, may play a role in funding political activities. Mobilization Strategies used by these social organizations are networking and alliances. Ethnic and religious groups may build networks within their communities or across regions to strengthen their influence. These networks can serve as channels for resource exchange and coordination. Groups may form alliances with other like-minded organizations or political entities to amplify their influence and pool resources. For instance, in Ghana, where ethnic and religious

diversity is significant, different groups may mobilize resources to advocate for policies that align with their interests. A Christian or Muslim group might mobilize its members to support a candidate or a political party that promises to address issues important to their community.

Resource mobilization theory however acknowledges challenges, such as competition for resources among different movements and the need for sustained mobilization efforts. According to Jenkins (1983), the mobilization model's fundamental issue is the link between community interests and resource pooling. Instead of being socially constructed and created by the mobilization process, collective interests are thought to be largely unproblematic and to exist prior to mobilization.

Despite this, McCauley's (2014) *The Political Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Africa* will be used to further explain these two theories by linking ethnicity and religion for a better understanding of the research. McCauley (2014) portrays this by asserting that a group is merely a group in the mobilization of political support, and the number of followers that leaders can assemble influences the techniques they utilize. This point of view helps to explain the generally recognized practice in political science of classifying competition among religious, ethno-linguistic, race, caste, and other social identity groups as ethnic politics (McCauley 2014). He further demonstrated this by questioning if social identity types generate different political preferences at the individual level. He indicated, focusing on ethnic versus religious identities in Africa, that identity types differ significantly in terms of their spatial or geographical boundaries. For example, the Ashanti-Ewe divide in terms of geographical location.

Interestingly, in the explanation on political mobilization between ethnicity and religion, he further highlighted that in the framework of ethnic identity, which in Africa tends to be geographically confined, group members prioritize local club products, access to which is determined by where they live. When each identity type is mobilized, these boundaries modify the political goods that supporters, even the very same supporters, may prioritize. He claims that African ethnicity is closely connected to geographic area and that ethnic identity in Africa can be thought of as geographically constrained. This means membership entails a 'special, lineage-based entitlement' to local territory and resources in the ethnic group's region. However, this might be different from religion, in that religion, which is much less geographically bound, club goods are distributed

according to other, supplementary procedures. For instance, this may describe Religion in Ghana which is not geographically characterized as ethnicities in Ghana and may have some basic differences when it comes to political affiliations and mobilization.

In religion, therefore, group members tend to prioritize commodities that are themselves less bound, and that can be shared or withheld for reasons distinct from geographic location. As a result, religion increases interest in social and behavioral policies, as well as lifestyle suggestions based on sacred scriptures: the Bible for Christians and the Quran for Muslims (p. 1-5). Different political priorities are inspired by religion as a social identity. Religious identities, such as Islam and Christianity, are ascriptive, yet they are not only defined by birth or genealogy. That is, members have at least the notion that their membership in any religious body is a personal choice (McCauley, 2014; McCauley & Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Presented with these distinctions, religious group members may place less emphasis on club goods such as development, preferring to be unrestricted rather than engage in political conflict over such issues. Instead, when linkages to exclusive ideology or behavior-based policies are invoked, their motivations to engage politically become stronger. This point of view adds social and psychological elements to the study of identity group politics while leaving the identity types themselves content-free, meaning, political preferences are determined by the composition of coalitional structures that share a group identification rather than the sort of identity shared.

Eventually, in ethnic versus religious discussions, individuals should have consistently different priorities when placed in distinct identification settings, even when we account for the specific groups to which they belong, the political conditions in which they live, or the mobilization efforts that political leaders undertake. These are what McCauley (2014) referred to as mobilizational disparities between ethnicity and religion. He revealed that ethnicity seems to generate effects on local material goods, but religion appears to draw greater concern about moral and social behavior policies (p. 5).

Lastly, McCauley (2014) highlights that ethnicity and religion are two of the most visible social indicators in many regions of the world, but distinguishing which of the two motivates individual actors at any time is difficult. He contends that religious and ethnic identities are independent social identities that can be recognized and described as such, and ethnic politics must consider

the ramifications of organizing supporters based on identity types rather than stopping at a forthright assessment of group sizes (p.13)

Perspectives on Voting Behaviors

Retrospective and prospective voting are two critical concepts in the study of voting behaviors, and they can be applied to the context of voting in Ghana as well. According to Lindberg and Morrison (2008), defining vote rationale along two dimensions has been the biggest advancement in voting analysis, moving towards a cautious method, which is, the evaluation's emphasis towards retrospective as opposed to prospective voting. This is because they make it easier to operationalize Ghanaian voting rationales than just historical speculation. They highlighted their interest in the rationale behind African voters' choices of political parties in a newly established democracy. Questions surrounding voters' choices included whether they adopt more evaluative thinking regarding programs and performance or embrace "primordial" shortcuts like having family or ethnic links to candidates or exploiting patron-client interactions to trade their support for personal favours. (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008: 99-100).

Retrospective Voting

Retrospective voting is a concept that involves voters making decisions based on the evaluation of the incumbent government's past performance (Toklo, 2019; Hoffman & Long, 2013; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). Hoffman and Long (2013) assert that re-election occurs when incumbents fulfill their duties effectively. On the other hand, opposition candidates fare better when parties perform poorly. According to them, economic voting is usually used in these retrospective models, with voters selecting the party that most closely aligns with their economic interests. Crucially, these studies also show that in favorable economic times, voters are inclined to support incumbents. Lindberg and Morrison (2008), also added to this by explaining that voters can also apply the retrospective view to individual performance, which, like party performance, solely affects the incumbent. Sometimes it's difficult to tell this assessment apart from clientelist techniques (p.100). For instance, in Ghana, as in many other democracies, voters may assess the government's track record on issues such as economic management, corruption, social services, and infrastructure development before casting their ballots. This can be seen in the 2016 general elections. The

incumbent National Democratic Congress (NDC) government faced significant criticism for handling the economy, rising inflation, and corruption-related issues. Many voters held the government accountable for these problems, contributing to the opposition New Patriotic Party's (NPP) victory in the election.

Prospective Voting

Prospective voting involves voters making decisions based on their expectations of how a particular party or candidate will perform in the future (Hoffman & Long, 2013; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). According to Hoffman and Long (2013), voter choice is not solely a reflection of past party behavior. In addition, if prospective opponents are elected, voters must select between their proposed ideas. As a result, some voters might be looking ahead or forward. They stressed that according to spatial voting models, for instance, voters choose candidates who share their views on key topics in the hopes that those parties will be more inclined to implement those policies if elected. Furthermore, voters may use other candidate attributes, such as experience or age, to judge competitors without records (p. 130). Lindberg and Morrison (2008), on their part, demonstrated that based on what a political party might offer in the future, voters form an opinion about it. Their findings showed that some voters indicated that they supported a particular party's ideas, program, or principles because of what they want to achieve in the future (p. 100). For instance, in Ghana, this can manifest as voters considering the policies and promises to put forward by political parties during election campaigns. If voters believe that a particular party's agenda aligns with their preferences and is likely to address the country's challenges effectively, they may vote for that party, regardless of the incumbent government's past performance. Prospective voting was evident in Ghana's 2020 general elections. The NPP, which was the incumbent party, emphasized its achievements in economic stability and infrastructure development, while the NDC put forward its policy proposals and vision for addressing issues such as job creation and healthcare. Voters assessed these platforms and made their decisions based on their expectations of which party would better serve the country's future needs.

In conclusion, prospective voting in Ghana entails making judgements based on the expected future performance of political parties, whereas retrospective voting assesses the previous performance of the current government. Both voting patterns are essential for comprehending the dynamics of Ghana's democratic process and have an impact on election results.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes in depth the research methodology, focusing on the research design, sampling methods, population, data gathering methods, and data analysis methods used in the research. This chapter also gives information on the research fields, which will help appropriately situate the research in the proper framework for presenting findings and analysis in the following chapter. The research aims to investigate the voting behavior and demographics of voters in Ghana using a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses. Bryman (1992) proposes eleven methods for combining quantitative and qualitative research. Three methods explain that the concept of triangulation entails comparing instances of qualitative and quantitative results, qualitative research can supplement quantitative research, and vice versa and both can be integrated to create a more comprehensive picture of the problem under consideration. Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) stated that ‘Research in quantitative methods essentially refers to the application of the systematic steps of the scientific method while using quantitative properties (i.e., numerical systems) to research the relationships or effects of specific variables’ (p. 30). Conversely, ‘qualitative research represents a form of data collection and analysis, with a focus on understanding and emphasis on meaning’ (p. 141). The study seeks to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between vote counts, percentages, and demographic information, shedding light on the factors that influence electoral outcomes and voter choices in Ghana.

Research Design

Establishing a link between voting trends and factors like religion and ethnicity is challenging. Preferably, information on the disparities between political parties and votes in a region should be gathered according to factors such as economic policy, the ethnic makeup of the region, the incumbent, governance, and the candidate's ethnicity. Thus, using a method like this can assess

whether ethnicity and religion are essential, and if so, how important they are. However, because such data is lacking, the study is based on election results obtained since 1992 by various parties and candidates in the ten, and from 2020, sixteen administrative regions of Ghana— Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, and Western—to arrive at conclusions.

It also adopts an anecdotal approach, subject to some assumptions. When it comes to the study design, an anecdotal approach is a way of collecting and presenting data that relies less on systematic, empirical, or statistical evidence and more on individual stories or personal anecdotes. In this study, the researcher used individual experiences, examples, or case studies to support their arguments and conclusions. Anecdotes are typically brief, specific, and often vivid stories that highlight a particular event, observation, or personal perspective. Hence, on a broad scale, the societal foundations of the NDC and NPP are shown. Therefore, in so many ways this research is just another point for triangulating the subjective and numerical evidence that has already been reported both in the popular Ghanaian press and in scholarly journals. For the purposes of this study, however, data collection would rely heavily on secondary documents and analysis of documents.

This research primarily focuses on answering the "what" and "how" aspects of research questions rather than the "why." It aims to quantify and measure phenomena and identify trends and correlations. This allows you to describe and explain the "what" and "how" of a particular phenomenon or research question. For example, you can use quantitative research to determine how variables (ethnicity and religion) are related, whether there are significant differences between these groups, or how changes in one variable affect another.

This research design outlines a comprehensive approach to investigating what significance is attached to social identities, voting behavior, and demographics in Ghana using quantitative data. The analysis aims to provide insights into electoral dynamics and the factors that influence voter choices, contributing to a deeper understanding of the democratic process in Ghana.

Study Population

The research is a case study of Ghana, making the country the study population of the research. The research focuses on the different ethnicities and religions in both countries, to uncover and understand their relationships with political activities, voting patterns in a specific region, the impact of demographics on voting behavior, and the trends in electoral outcomes over time.

Sampling

Sampling techniques are an essential component of the logic of design. Identifying the individuals from whom you intend to collect data is critical when developing quantitative studies. For this research, probability sampling was used, the process of discovering and selecting individuals considered to be representative of the population (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). Of these probability techniques, two – random and stratified sampling techniques – are employed in the conduct of the research. Random Sampling is selecting a subset of relevant case studies from a larger pool when collecting case studies from the literature. This can help reduce bias and ensure a representative selection. Stratified sampling, on the other hand, is used to ensure that you have a representative sample from various subgroups or categories. For instance, the researcher stratified the electoral data by region, party, and other relevant categories before collecting data. Thus, a random stratified sampling method was employed to ensure representation across different regions and constituencies in Ghana. All data used was obtained from public sources and official electoral commission sites with proper authorization.

Approach

Since the central thesis examines the significance and influence ethnicity and religion play in electoral performance in Ghana, it is essential that electoral results in Ghana in the Fourth Republic are analyzed. There have been eight general elections, consisting of both presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana since 1992, when the Fourth Republic was ushered in. It must be acknowledged that eight elections, which include a presidential runoff in 2000, spanning three decades, are sufficient to draw conclusions based on whatever data can be derived from them. The

electoral results are analyzed on a regional basis to know how each region has voted since 1992. The election results are further broken down into constituencies. Constituencies are micro units compared to regions. Next, figures from the Ghana Statistical Service are analyzed. Since census data come with demographic data like ethnicity, religion, income level, and educational background among others, it is vital to analyze these. The 16 regions in Ghana are now classified based on the dominant ethnic groups. Since there are two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, which are seen as Ashanti and Ewe parties, it becomes necessary to examine how regions are not dominated by these tribe's votes. So, for the purpose of this research, five regions will be examined. The Ashanti Region and the Volta Regions are seen as strongholds and bastions of both the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, respectively. They will be joined by three swing regions. Swing regions, per the purpose of this research, will be defined as regions that do not fit the criteria of being classified as a stronghold but rather are seen as key battleground regions that can tilt victory in a party's favor. These regions will be Greater Accra, Central, and Northern Regions. Next, five constituencies from each of these regions will be examined to investigate their ethnic makeup, religious composition, and their voting results since 1992. Furthermore, in these five regions, the religious composition of these regions is investigated. This will help us identify if there is a relationship between the dominant religion in the regions, the stated religion of the candidates, and electoral performances over the years. In my opinion, a thorough investigation of these variables will shed light on the extent to which ethnicity and religion influence electoral performance in Ghana and if there are other factors that play into voters' psyche in their voting preferences.

Sources of data

The main data sources for the study include secondary data sources, such as government documents (official electoral results), research papers, studies, books, and journal articles.

I will present documented figures from the Electoral Commission and the Population and Housing Census in table sets below.

Electoral and Census data

Table 2.1 1992 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total votes	NPP (Adu-Boahen)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Rawlings)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	712,584	431,380	60.54	234,237	32.87	46,967	6.59
Central	334,031	86,683	25.95	222,097	66.49	25,251	7.56
Greater Accra	506,844	188,000	37.09	270,825	53.43	48,019	9.48
Northern	322,392	52,539	16.30	203,004	62.97	66,849	20.73
Volta	478,730	17,295	3.61	446,365	93.24	15,070	3.15

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

The 1992 were the first contested elections held in Ghana since 1979. It was very keenly contested as a result. Jerry John Rawlings, after a 19-year rule as a military head of state had agreed to hold multiparty elections. These elections pitted the two political parties who will grow to dominate Ghanaian politics against each other for the first time, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The NDC had Jerry John Rawlings, an Ewe, the incumbent as flagbearer and Kow Nkensen Arkaah, a Fante as running mate while the NPP had Albert Adu-Boahen, an Akan and a Dagomba lawyer, Roland Issifu Alhassan as running mate on their respective tickets. The NDC won the Volta Region, the region dominated by Ewes by 93.24% while the NPP won the Akan-dominated Ashanti Region by 60.54%. The NDC won all three swing states used in this study, which can be partly attributed to incumbency and in the case of the Central Region, the fact that the NDC's running mate was a native son.

Table 2.2 1996 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total votes	NPP (Kufuor)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Rawlings)		Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	1,258,014	827,804	65.80	412,474	32.79	17,736	1.41
Central	599,111	259,555	43.32	380,841	55.22	8,715	1.46
Greater Accra	1,219,833	528,484	43.32	658,626	53.99	32,723	2.69
Northern	605,303	199,801	33.01	370,030	61.13	35,472	5.86
Volta	730,251	34,538	4.73	690,421	94.55	5,292	0.72

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

In the 1996 elections, the NDC brought back Rawlings and John Evans Atta-Mills, a Fante as his running mate. Kow Arkaah had defected to the opposition due to his self-professed difficulty in working with Rawlings. The NDC won the Volta and Ashanti regions, the birth regions of their aspirants by 94.55% and 55.22% respectively, while almost maintaining their percentage share in the Ashanti region. After having left the NDC, Kow Arkaah was chosen by the new face, John Agyekum Kuffuor whom the NPP had chosen to represent them. The pair won the Ashanti Region with 65.80% of all total valid votes cast. Even though the NDC still swept the swing regions involved in this study, the NPP made very appreciable gains. They improved their percentage shares from 25.95% in 1992 to 43.23% in 1996 in the Central Region, 37.04 in 1992 to 43.32 in 1996 in the Greater Accra Region, and from 16.30% in 1992 to 33.01% in 1996 in the Northern Region. These improvements can be attributed to voter apathy towards Rawlings, he had spent more than two decades in power up to that point and many felt there was a need for a fresh new voice. Also, frustration over the supposed Rawlings administration preference for Ewes was beginning to manifest in voting coupled with a deteriorating economy and high inflation.

Table 2.3 2000 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total votes	NPP (Kuffuor)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Mills)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	1,270,844	950,597	74.80	286,012	22.51	34,235	2.69
Central	522,200	259,367	49.67	227,234	43.51	35,599	6.82
Greater Accra	1,092,651	580,163	53.10	459,884	42.09	52,604	4.81
Northern	564,093	166,827	29.57	286,348	50.76	110,918	19.67
Volta	586,345	46,272	7.89	505,614	86.23	34,519	5.88

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

In 2000, having after served out his constitutionally mandated two terms, Jerry John Rawlings was ineligible to contest. The NDC subsequently made John Atta-Mills their flagbearer and Martin Amidu as their running mates. The NPP had John Agyekum Kuffuor as their flagbearer and Aliu Mahama, a Muslim as their running mates. In the first elections without the divisive but utterly dominant Rawlings, the opposition parties intensified their efforts to wrest power. In an ultimately deadlocked contest, which needed a runoff, the Volta Region displayed the same devotion to the NDC, 86.22% of the total valid votes were won by the NDC. However, that was a decline in their share from 1996. The NPP won their usual Ashanti Region with 74.80% of total valid votes, a very vast improvement of almost 20% more than their 1996 performance. The NPP managed to wrest control of two out of the three states, Central and Greater Accra Regions, polling 53.12% and 49.67% of all valid votes cast. This showed the party had made steady inroads in these regions, having been defeated rather soundly in 1992 and 1996 to win these regions. The Central Region, where the NDC's flagbearer hailed from was not fully warmed up to him and was suspicious about his motives and agenda and ultimately voted for the opposition.

Table 2.4 2004 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total votes	NPP (Kuffuor)		NDC (Mills)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	1,824,631	1,404,336	76.97	398,572	21.84	21,723	1.19
Central	707,203	415,813	58.80	275,415	38.94	15,975	2.26
Greater Accra	1,740,687	900,159	51.71	811,863	46.64	28,665	1.65
Northern	669,748	232,572	34.73	387,273	57.82	49,903	7.45
Volta	736,406	100,707	13.68	619,043	84.06	16,656	2.26

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

As the incumbent government, the NPP maintained their Kuffuor-Aliu Mahama combination. As expected, the NPP won the Ashanti Region, winning 76.97% of the total valid votes. This bettered their 2000 mark of 74.80%. The NDC also won their traditional Volta Region with 84.10%, a slight decline on their 2000 mark of 86.22%. As the incumbent, the NPP further strengthened their hold in the Central Region, winning the region with a bigger percentage share than it did in 2000, 58.80% compared to 49.67%. They also maintained their advantage in the Greater Accra Region, but at a lower percentage share, 51.71% to 53.12% in 2000. The NDC, with Atta-Mills as their flagbearer and John Dramani Mahama as his running mate, won their usual Volta Region with 84.10% of total votes while increasing their advantage in the Northern Region by winning by 57.83% of total votes cast compared to 50.76% of the 2000 elections.

Table 2.5 2008 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total votes	NPP (Akuffo-Addo)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Mills)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	1,669,413	1,219,530	73.05	437,243	26.19	12,640	0.76
Central	682,398	313,665	45.97	345,126	50.58	23,607	3.45
Greater Accra	1,648,881	768,465	46.03	870,011	52.11	10,345	0.62
Northern	802,568	303,326	37.80	460,445	57.37	38,797	4.83
Volta	552,251	102,368	18.54	437,243	79.17	12,640	2.29

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

The 2008 Presidential Elections followed recent trends with the major parties, the NPP and the NDC having a Christian flagbearer and a Muslim or Northern running mate, mirroring the religious configuration in the country, which is Christian majority and Muslims as the most visible and widespread minority. After having served his two terms, Kuffuor retired. The NPP brought Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo, an Akyem, and Mahamudu Bawumia, a Muslim. The NDC brought the tandem of Atta-Mills and Mahama. They successfully wrested power back from the NPP. The NDC brought back all three swing regions into its control. They won the Central, Greater Accra, and Northern Regions by polling 50.58%, 52.77%, and 57.37% of total valid votes respectively while maintaining their stranglehold in the Volta Region by posting 79.17% of votes. As usual, the Ashanti Region remained with the NPP where they got 73.05% of the total valid votes.

Table 2.6 2012 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total	NPP (Akuffo-Addo)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Mahama)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	2,156,408	1,531,152	71.00	612,616	28.41	12,640	0.59
Central	930,826	430,135	46.21	492,374	52.90	8,317	0.89
Greater Accra	2,140,402	1,009,787	47.18	1,125,757	52.60	4,864	0.22
Northern	652,904	255,454	39.13	385,906	59.11	11,544	1.76
Volta	633,863	46,942	7.41	579,298	91.39	7,623	1.20

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

Unfortunately, President John Evans Atta-Mills did not complete his first term. He died on 24th July 2012. His vice, John Dramani Mahama assumed power at the end of the term. He won the NDC's presidential primaries and chose Amissah Arthur as his flagbearer. For the first time, a Northerner was a flagbearer with a Southerner as his running mate. The NPP was unchanged, with Akuffo-Addo as flagbearer and Bawumia as running mate. The NDC retained power. They maintained their majority share in all three swing regions included in this research. In the Central, they beat the NPP by posting 52.89% compared to 46.21%. In Greater Accra, the NDC posted 52.51% compared to the NPP's 47.10%. The most comprehensive victory among swing states for the NDC came in the Northern region where the NDC scored almost twenty percentage points more than the NPP, 59.11% to 39.13%. The usual stronghold remained unchanged, even though the NDC improved in the Ashanti, the NPP scored 71.00%. The dominance of the NDC in the Volta Region was almost absolute, they scored 91.39% compared to 7.41% by the opposition NPP.

Table 2.7 2016 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total	NPP (Akuffo-Addo)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Mahama)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes in (%)
Ashanti	2,159,411	1,646,949	76.27	497,242	23.03	15,220	0.70
Central	907,470	496,668	54.73	405,262	44.66	5,540	0.61
Greater Accra	2,013,281	1,062,157	52.78	946,048	46.99	5,076	0.23
Northern	693,913	286,868	41.34	389,132	56.08	17,913	2.58
Volta	558,646	60,802	10.88	493,143	88.27	4,701	0.85

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

Both tickets for the two major parties in the 2016 Presidential Elections remain unchanged. The NDC had Mahama and Amissah-Arthur, and the NPP Akuffo-Addo had Bawumia. These elections were historic. The ruling party lost by a record margin. The NDC lost very convincingly. There was almost a million votes difference, 984,570 between the two parties. This was epochial. Ruling parties had lost elections before but with the advantage of state machinery behind a ruling party, it was almost inconceivable to imagine a ruling party losing by such a large margin. The NPP swang two of the three swing regions in this research in their favor. They posted 54.73% of votes in the Central Region, handily beating the 44.66% the NDC gathered. Again, they beat the NDC in the Greater Accra Region, posting 52.76% of the total votes cast compared to the 46.99% got by the NDC. The Northern Region however remained in the NDC's fold, they posted 56.08% of valid votes. To no one's surprise, both the Ashanti Region and Volta Regions stayed true to their identities and were not subject to any change. The NPP scored 76.27% and the NDC posted 88.27% of all total votes cast in the Ashanti and Volta Regions respectively.

Table 2.8 2020 Presidential Election Results

Region	Total	NPP (Akuffo-Addo)	Votes in (%)	NDC (Mahama)	Votes in (%)	Others	Votes (%)
Ashanti	2,467,351	1,795,824	72.78	653,149	26.47	18,378	7.44
Central	1,173,439	613,804	52.31	538,829	45.92	20,806	1.77
Greater Accra	2,602,508	1,253,179	48.15	1,326,489	50.70	22,840	1.15
Northern	897,731	409,963	45.67	476,550	53.08	11,218	1.25
Volta	714,330	100,481	14.07	606,508	84.91	7,341	1.02

Source: Ghana Electoral Commission

The NDC rose from the proverbial grave in the 2020 elections. No pollster gave the NDC a fighting chance but not only did the NDC vastly exceed expectations, they almost took the elections to a runoff. The fact that the NDC has managed to secure as an opposition party the same number of seats in Parliament as the ruling party was unheard of. For the first time in Ghanaian history, there was a hung parliament. Both parties had 137 seats each out of 275 and the only reason the NPP got to move ahead with their agenda was that they got the one independent candidate in parliament to commit to vote with them on the floor. Again, the Ashanti and Volta Regions went as expected. The NPP beat the NDC by 72.78% to 26.47% while the NDC won by posting 84.91% to 14.06% in the Volta Region. The NPP maintained its control of the Central Region, garnering 52.31% of total valid votes. However, the NDC wrested back the Greater Accra Region to add to the Northern Region that they maintained. They won the capital region by 50.97 to the NPP's 48.15. In the Northern Region, they scored 53.08% compared to the 45.67% posted by the ruling NPP.

Table 3.1 Ghana's Population in Census Years

YEAR	COUNT
1960	6,726,815
1970	8,589,313
1984	12,296,581
2000	18,912,079
2010	24,658,823
2021	30,832,019

Source: Ghana Statistical Service

Ghana's population, as shown, has been rising since the first census in 1960. In 1960, the year after Ghana became a Republic, there was a need to determine the population. The official figure put Ghana's population at 6,736,815. In four decades, Ghana's population had almost tripled, from 6,736,815 to 18,912,079. The most recent population census in Ghana was conducted in 2021. The official estimates pegged the population of Ghana at 30,832,019. This figure represents a 4.58% increase in Ghana's population from the table in the first census in 1960.

Table 3.2 2021 Population by Ethnicity and Region

		REGIONS									
Major Ethnic Groups		ASHANTI		CENTRAL		GREATER ACCRA		NORTHERN		VOLTA	
	POPULATION	5,412,025		2,833,042		5,354,374		2,291,718		1,614,919	
Akan		3,883,274	71.75	2,224,574	78.52	2,207,688	41.23	39,650	1.73	39,765	2.46
Ga-Adangbe		59,358	1.10	81,590	2.88	1,316,003	24.58	4,796	0.21	21,537	1.33
Ewe		187,067	3.46	198,921	7.02	1,083,251	20.23	23,309	1.01	1,457,474	90.25
Guan		53,045	0.98	144,342	5.09	83,183	1.55	38,978	1.70	30,574	1.89
Gurma		204,895	3.7	31,738	1.12	98,350	1.84	681,418	29.73	15,927	0.99
Mole-Dagbani		670,009	12.38	71,565	2.53	307,960	5.75	1,431,628	62.47	6,898	0.43
Grusi		129,073	2.38	18,369	0.65	65,202	1.22	15,096	0.66	1,840	0.11
Mande		143,073	2.64	18,168	0.61	55,464	1.04	41,507	1.81	9,382	0.58
Others		82,826	1.53	43,775	1.55	143,273	2.68	15,336	0.67	3,582	1.96

Source: Ghana Statistical Service

The above shows the distribution and visibility of ethnic groups in the five regions included in this research. There are also eight ethnic groups included in this study. These ethnic groups represent almost the entire population, and a further group has been created for the very rare and obscure ethnic minorities present in Ghana. These major ethnic groups are the Akan (which include the Ashanti and Akan-speaking people), the Ga-Adangme (which include the Ga and Ga-speaking people), the Guan, the Ewe, the Gurma, the Mole-Dagbani, the Grusi, and the Mande.

This table highlights the fact that Ghana is dominated by Akan and Akan-speaking people. It also shows that while the Akan are the major ethnic group, other ethnic groups are the dominant ethnicity in a region. To illustrate this, 62.47% of people in the Northern Region identify as Mole-Dagbani while 90.25% of people in the Volta Region are Ewes. This means certain regions, despite the nationwide Akan dominance are home to other major ethnic groups but not the Akan. Understanding the complexities of ethnicity in Ghana is complicated by the different subdivisions

within the main ethnic groupings and the geographic distribution of these populations (Gyimah-Boadi & Asante, 2004). The Akan, for instance, consists of the Ashanti, Akyem Fanti, Brono, Akwapim, Kwahu, Sefwi, Denkyira, Wassa, and Nzima etc.

Ghana's major ethnic groupings are geographically clustered across the country. The Akan are spread over the Western, Central, Eastern, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo regions and even the Volta region. The Ewes predominate in the east, near Ghana's border with the Republic of Togo. The Ga-Adangbe comprises a small group in the southeastern parts of Ghana, the Eastern, and the Greater Accra Regions. To the north is the Grusi, Mande located in Ghana's Savannah zone, are two other significant ethnic arrangements, the Gurma in the Northeast, and the Mole-Dagbani to the West. The Guan people can be found in 12 regions in Ghana, among which are the Central, Volta, and Eastern regions.

The progression of Ghana's census data demonstrates that the country's ethnic groups are not restricted to geographical regions. Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2004) highlighted that internal and external migration made the various regions less and less homogenous from the perspective of tribal distinction. Arthur (2009) agrees with this by asserting that the administrative regions do show a predominance of certain ethnic groups and are typically taken as proxies for ethnicity, but they are not similar.

Table 3.3 2021 Population by Religion and Region

MAJOR RELIGIONS	POPULATION	REGIONS									
		ASHANTI		CENTRAL		GREATER ACCRA		NORTHERN		VOLTA	
		5,428,181		2,853,335		5,437,084		2,306,308		1,654,650	
CHRISTIANITY		4,238,927	78.09	2,399,764	84.10	4,587,515	84.37	419,216	18.18	1,301,612	78.66
ISLAM		866,117	15.96	259,902	9.11	631,591	11.62	1,532,977	66.47	77,136	4.66
TRADITIONAL		22,270	0.41	8,570	0.30	14,767	0.27	265,766	11.52	160,439	9.70
OTHER RELIGIONS		251,678	4.64	147,009	5.15	152,571	2.80	80,636	3.5	99,502	6.01
NO RELIGION		49,189	0.91	38,090	1.33	50,700	0.93	8,213	0.36	15,961	0.97

Source: Ghana Statistical Service

Religion implies the religious affiliation of a person (Ghana Statistical Service 2021), and for the purpose of this study, religion in Ghana has been categorized into five groups. Christianity which includes the Catholic church, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and other types of Christians. Islam includes Al-Sunna/Tijaniya (orthodox), Shia, Ahmadis, and other Islamic denominations. Traditional Religion embraces the worship of deities and ancestors. Other religions consist of religions other than those captured above which include Eckankar, Baha'i, Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. No Religion is those with no religious affiliation (GSS,2021).

The Ghanaian constitution depicts Ghana as a secular but not atheistic state. Almost 98% of Ghanaians believe in the existence of a higher power. Among the major religions, Christianity is the most widespread and is the major religion in four out of the five regions included in this study, the exception is the Northern Region, which is Islam-dominated.

Interestingly, Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2004), stated that 'Ghana's ethnic map is almost coterminous with its religious map' (p. 16), meaning these maps are nearly identical. Christians who constitute about 71.3% of the population and are predominantly Akan are found largely in the southern part of Ghana while Muslims who constitute about 19.9% live mainly in the Northern section. (GSS,2021). Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2004) used economic disparities to geographically distinguish religion in Ghana highlighting that, 'the spatial distribution of the two major foreign religions, Islam and Christianity, almost coincides with the division of the country into the northern half which is poor and disadvantaged, and the southern half which is wealthy and more developed' (p. 16).

VOTING PATTERNS FOR SELECTED CONSTITUENCIES IN GHANA

In Ghana, voting is done on a constituency basis, with numerous polling stations present in a constituency. Constituencies may vary in geographical size, population, or religious and ethnic makeup among others. There were 275 constituencies in Ghana during the 2020 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. Since constituencies are the building blocks of the regional election data highlighted earlier, it is imperative to analyze some constituencies in these regions to prove the regional voting patterns do translate to the constituencies and not that one dominant constituency in a region is able to skew data in such a way that that particular constituency voting patterns

influence greatly the regional voting patterns and distort the reality where other constituencies might have differing voting patterns.

Table 4.1 Selected Constituencies in the Ashanti Region

YEAR	CONSTITUENCY	ASHANTI REGION						
		TOTAL	PARTY					
			NPP		NDC		OTHERS	
	BANTAMA	49,400	35,995	71.27	8,487	16.80	4,918	11.93
1992	MANHYIA SOUTH	38,894	30,803	79.20	5,118	13.16	2,973	7.64
	SUBIN	32,234	22,415	69.54	6,298	19.54	3,521	10.92
	BANTAMA	101,267	81,735	80.69	18,456	18.25	1,076	1.06
1996	MANHYIA SOUTH	72,622	58,049	79.93	13,561	18.67	1,012	1.39
	SUBIN	53,279	39,074	73.34	13,575	25.48	630	1.18
	BANTAMA	109,456	95,794	87.52	11,929	10.90	1,733	1.59
2000	MANHYIA SOUTH	74,558	63,866	85.66	8,935	11.98	1,757	2.36
	SUBIN	56,937	45,505	79.92	10,203	17.92	1,229	2.16
	BANTAMA	49,122	41,986	85.47	6,658	13.55	478	0.97
2004	MANHYIA SOUTH	88,726	70,051	78.95	17,736	19.99	939	1.06
	SUBIN	61,002	45,251	74.18	15,033	24.64	718	1.18
	BANTAMA	48,693	40,493	83.16	7,649	15.71	548	1.13
2008	MANHYIA SOUTH	85,896	66,116	76.97	18,835	21.93	945	1.10
	SUBIN	61,505	43,952	71.46	16,099	26.18	1,454	2.36
	BANTAMA	59,136	49,493	83.72	9,321	15.77	322	0.51
2012	MANHYIA SOUTH	43,824	35,417	80.82	8,216	18.75	191	0.43
	SUBIN	66,009	47,285	71.63	18,328	27.77	396	0.60
	BANTAMA	58,492	51,696	88.38	6,562	11.22	234	0.40
2016	MANHYIA SOUTH	41,904	36,130	86.22	5,628	13.48	146	0.30
	SUBIN	62,166	48,660	78.27	13,090	21.06	416	0.67
	BANTAMA	66,556	57,360	86.18	8,954	13.45	242	0.37
2020	MANHYIA SOUTH	33,343	27,932	83.77	5,292	15.87	118	0.36
	SUBIN	57,945	43,051	74.81	14,598	25.23	296	0.36

Source: peacefmonline.com

The three constituencies chosen from the Ashanti Region are Bantama, Manhyia South, and Subin. Like the rest of the region, these constituencies are Akan-dominated, and this is reflected in the voting patterns. Their patterns are in line with the regional data. These constituencies have voted NPP in every election since 1992. The lowest percentage point got by the NPP in Bantama was in 1992 when they posted 71.27% but still won those constituencies. The closest the NDC got to winning any of these seats was in 2012 when the NPP got 27.77% of total valid votes in Subin.

Table 4.2 Selected Constituencies in the Greater Accra Region

YEAR	CONSTITUENCY	GREATER ACCRA REGION						
		TOTAL	PARTY			NDC	OTHERS	
			NPP					
1992	Ashaiman	15,718	4,101	26.09	9,898	62.97	1,719	10.94
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	13,753	6,495	47.23	5,656	41.13	1,602	11.64
	Ledzokuku	14,660	5,031	34.32	8,716	59.45	913	6.23
1996	Ashaiman	64,320	24,179	37.59	38,370	59.65	1,771	2.75
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	33,616	16,264	48.38	16,350	48.64	1,002	2.98
	Ledzokuku	49,903	18,911	37.90	29,954	60.02	1,039	2.08
2000	Ashaiman	48,786	28,393	58.20	17,603	36.08	2,790	5.71
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	31,183	18,089	58.01	11,732	31.62	1,362	10.37
	Ledzokuku	43,246	22,329	51.63	18,747	43.35	2,170	5.02
2004	Ashaiman	93,830	37,902	40.39	54,549	58.14	1,379	1.47
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	54,950	30,120	54.81	23,860	43.42	970	1.77
	Ledzokuku	76,473	38,100	49.82	37,386	48.89	987	1.29
2008	Ashaiman	86,898	30,923	35.59	54,913	63.19	1,062	1.22
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	51,988	25,312	48.69	25,261	49.86	1,415	2.72
	Ledzokuku	74,163	31,603	42.61	41,359	55.77	1,201	1.62
2012	Ashaiman	94,420	33,725	35.72	60,178	63.73	517	0.55
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	63,251	31,023	49.05	31,537	49.86	691	1.09
	Ledzokuku	94,931	40,662	42.83	53,710	56.58	559	0.59
2016	Ashaiman	88,986	36,630	41.16	51,756	58.16	600	0.68
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	57,563	32,493	56.45	24,208	42.05	511	1.50
	Ledzokuku	89,184	43,956	49.29	44,406	49.79	822	0.92
2020	Ashaiman	118,954	41,506	34.89	76,327	64.17	1,121	0.94
	Ayawaso West Wagoun	80,182	39,962	49.84	39,709	49.52	511	0.64
	Ledzokuku	110,628	50,530	45.67	59,096	53.41	1,002	0.92

Source: peacefmonline.com

In the Greater Accra Region, the first of our three swing states, voting patterns again reflect the regional data that portray this region as a keenly fought battleground region. The chosen constituencies were the Ashaiman, Ayawaso West Wagoun, and Ledzokuku.

This is best seen in the Ayawaso West Waguon constituency. This constituency, located in one of the more affluent areas in Ghana's capital, Accra is keenly contested. The NPP has won the seat six times out of eight elections in the Fourth Republic but that does not quite depict how close

these races are. For example, in 2008, the NPP won the seat by gaining just 0.1% more votes than the NDC, and again in the 2020 elections, when the NDC again lost to the NPP by 0.3%.

Similarly, in the Ledzokuku constituency, the NDC has won six times out of eight elections. They lost the 2004 elections however by 0.93% and bested the NPP by just 0.5% in the 2016 elections.

Table 4.3 Selected Constituencies in the Northern Region

YEAR	CONSTITUENCY	NORTHERN REGION						
		TOTAL	PARTY					
			NPP		NDC		OTHERS	
1992	CHEREPONI	7,199	639	8.88	4,395	61.05	2,165	30.07
	SABOBA	9,458	602	6.36	7,748	81.92	1,108	11.72
	TOLON	10,617	2,728	25.69	6,748	63.56	1,141	10.75
1996	CHEREPONI	16,509	3,233	19.58	38,370	59.65	2,250	13.63
	SABOBA	15,513	2,629	16.95	16,350	48.64	210	1.35
	TOLON	25,318	10,206	40.39	29,954	60.02	422	1.67
2000	CHEREPONI	13,731	2,207	16.07	6,674	48.61	4,850	35.32
	SABOBA	14,964	3,187	21.27	8,130	54.26	3,647	24.47
	TOLON	21,767	8,625	32.28	12,031	50.60	1,111	13.12
2004	CHEREPONI	15,806	7,609	48.14	6,469	40.93	1,728	10.93
	SABOBA	19,232	10,148	52.77	8,202	42.65	882	4.58
	TOLON							
2008	CHEREPONI	17,251	8,688	50.36	7,582	43.95	981	5.69
	SABOBA	20,546	8,923	43.43	10,361	50.43	1,262	6.14
	TOLON	35,694	15,824	46.80	17,142	50.69	2,728	2.51
2012	CHEREPONI	22,374	11,353	50.74	10,529	47.06	492	2.20
	SABOBA	26,058	12,374	47.49	13,350	51.23	334	2.38
	TOLON	37,016	18,176	49.10	17,878	48.30	962	2.60
2016	CHEREPONI	24,922	11,722	47.02	12,903	51.76	304	1.22
	SABOBA	28,598	15,607	54.57	12,311	43.05	680	2.38
	TOLON	42,866	21,401	49.93	21,037	49.08	428	0.99
2020	CHEREPONI	32,261	17,388	53.90	14,179	43.95	694	2.15
	SABOBA	31,729	15,011	47.31	16,382	51.63	366	1.06
	TOLON	53,127	29,407	55.35	23,138	43.55	592	1.10

Source: peacefmonline.com

The Northern Region has been lost and won by both two political parties and it is reflected in these constituencies, Chereponi, Saboba, and Tolon.

Apart from the 1992 and 1996 elections, which were historic outliers in the sense they were contested and won by an incumbent who had served almost two decades as a military head of state and so won these constituencies in landslides, neither party has enjoyed overwhelming dominance over multiple elections and the seat change hands and party colors very often. In the six elections since 1996, the NPP has won four times and the NDC, two in Chereponi. This is reversed in Saboba where the NDC has won four times to the NPP's two.

Table 4.4 Selected Constituencies in the Central Region

		CENTRAL REGION						
YEAR	CONSTITUENCY	TOTAL	PARTY					
			NPP		NDC		OTHERS	
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	19,295	4,738	24.56	13,512	70.03	1,045	5.41
1992	ASSIN NORTH	26,082	5,888	22.62	18,749	72.02	1,395	5.36
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	29,800	13,203	44.31	13,666	45.86	2,931	9.83
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	33,367	13,641	40.88	19,419	58.20	307	0.92
1996	ASSIN NORTH	36,906	13,951	37.80	22,507	60.98	448	1.21
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	56,332	29,959	53.18	25,711	45.64	662	1.18
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	33,580	15,972	51.70	16,300	46.25	1,308	3.71
2000	ASSIN NORTH	32,555	17,634	50.04	13,487	43.66	1,434	4.64
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	40,538	26,413	65.16	12,841	31.68	1,284	3.16
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	36,954	23,631	63.95	12,748	34.50	575	1.56
2004	ASSIN NORTH	45,600	26,854	58.81	17,911	39.23	895	1.97
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	69,864	39,803	56.97	29,224	41.83	837	1.20

	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	36,243	17 950	49.53	17,302	47.74	991	2.73
2008	ASSIN NORTH	42,928	21,735	50.63	20,213	47.09	980	2.28
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	71,600	32,018	44.72	37,994	53.06	1,588	2.22
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	45,642	22,162	48.56	22,718	49.77	762	1.67
2012	ASSIN NORTH	27,277	11,884	43.57	14,830	53.37	563	2.06
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	42,101	18,834	44.74	22,683	53.88	584	1.38
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	47,523	25,798	54.86	20,617	43.84	608	1.30
2016	ASSIN NORTH	27,189	14,143	52.02	12,266	45.11	780	2.87
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	37,695	20,360	52.21	16,998	43.59	1,639	4.20
	ASIKUMA- ODOBEN-BRAKWA	53,326	29,878	86.18	22,429	42.06	1,019	1.91
2020	ASSIN NORTH	31,621	16,067	50.81	15,014	47.48	540	1.71
	CAPE COAST SOUTH	40,621	20,593	50.69	19,694	48.48	337	0.83

Source: peacefmonline.com

Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa, Assin North, and Cape Coast South are the constituencies selected for study in the third swing region.

Even though the NPP tends to win the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa constituency, it is always keenly contested. The average margin of victory is 10% which highlights how tight of a race it is considering this constituency is 97% made up of Akan speakers who tend to vote for the NPP in masses, added to the fact that the NDC won this constituency in 2012. This plays out in the other constituency, which brings to the fore that even though these constituencies are dominated by Akan speakers, who tend to vote NPP, the NPP does not quite enjoy the same dominance here as it does in the Ashanti Region and the NDC is very strong here and wins the occasional elections while maintaining a rather sizeable percentage share even in defeat.

Table 4.5 Selected Constituencies in the Volta Region

YEAR	CONSTITUENCY	VOLTA REGION						
		TOTAL	PARTY					
			NPP		NDC		OTHERS	
	ANLO	24,747	136	0.55	24,265	98.05	346	1.40
1992	HO CENTRAL	35,922	1,312	3.65	33,817	94.14	793	2.21
	KETU SOUTH	31,908	798	2.50	30,384	95.22	726	2.28
	ANLO	37,646	221	0.59	37,368	99.26	57	0.15
1996	HO CENTRAL	56,756	3,577	6.30	52,970	93.33	209	0.37
	KETU SOUTH	59,330	1,507	2.54	57,467	96.86	356	0.60
	ANLO	28,490	541	1.90	26,960	94.63	989	3.47
2000	HO CENTRAL	45,446	3,727	8.20	40,165	88.38	1,554	3.42
	KETU SOUTH	45,229	2,418	5.35	41,381	91.49	1,430	3.16
	ANLO	29,383	1,083	3.69	27,939	95.05	371	1.27
2004	HO CENTRAL	58,043	5,719	9.85	52,047	89.67	277	0.47
	KETU SOUTH	70,447	4,717	6.70	65,082	92.38	648	0.92
	ANLO	32,462	863	2.66	31,153	95.97	446	1.37
2008	HO CENTRAL	54,318	3,968	7.31	49,826	91.73	524	0.96
	KETU SOUTH	50,239	2,816	4.67	56,484	93.77	939	1.56
	ANLO	40,088	1,599	3.99	37,698	94.04	791	1.97
2012	HO CENTRAL	67,910	5,148	7.58	62,363	91.83	399	0.59
	KETU SOUTH	87,904	5,165	5.88	81,880	93.15	859	0.97
	ANLO	34,601	2,393	6.92	31,574	91.25	634	1.83
2016	HO CENTRAL	59,611	5,998	10.07	53,117	89.20	436	0.73
	KETU SOUTH	73,998	7,590	10.26	65,279	88.22	1,129	1.52
	ANLO	44,084	4,990	11.32	38,744	87.89	350	0.79
2020	HO CENTRAL	79,221	8,715	11.00	70,023	88.39	483	0.61
	KETU SOUTH	98,986	10,949	11.06	86,582	87.47	1,455	1.47

Source: peacefmonline.com

In the Volta Region, the constituencies used are Anlo, Ho Central, and Ketu South. Like the Ashanti Region, the Volta Region portrays one-party dominance, and, in this case, it is the NDC. The NDC as seen above can boast as high as 98.05% of all votes. The highest tally the NPP gets in any of the three constituencies is 11.32%.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Findings and analysis

Chairman Jerry John Rawlings had been in power for 19 years. He was the Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which had assumed political power after a coup. Amidst mounting pressure, he reluctantly agreed to hold presidential and parliamentary elections to transition Ghana into a democracy. The 1992 elections then ushered Ghana into the Fourth Republic. On March 6, 1992, Jerry John Rawlings announced plans to steer the country back to civilian rule. He stated 7th January 1993 as the target date. A Consultative Assembly was formed to draft a new constitution, and a referendum on 28th April 1992 approved this new constitution. A presidential election was slated for 3rd November, and the parliamentary elections for 8th December. The ban on all political activities was also lifted on 18 May 1992 to allow political parties to engage in the electoral process. The timing of this election was very opportune for the incumbent, Jerry John Rawlings. After years of being in a downward spiral, Ghana's economy was growing considerably. Major structural reforms implemented by the government were proving to be a success. Rawlings was now being recognized and celebrated internationally, and external lenders were enamoured with the country's growth and pumped cash into the economy. This allowed the PNDC government to undertake significant projects like renovating and constructing new roads and, more crucially, extending the water and electricity networks in the country to the hinterlands and countryside. Overall, the country was perceived to be in a better place.

The PNDC had Jerry John Rawlings, an Ewe, as their flagbearer and Kow Nkensen Arkaah, a Fante as their running mate, while the NPP had Albert Adu-Boahen, an Akan, and Roland Issifu Alhassan, a Dagomba as their running mate. Voter turnout was 50.2% (peace online.com). This shows people were apathetic and viewed these elections as a show with the winner already chosen. The PNDC transitioning into the National Democratic Congress received 58% of total votes in the Presidential elections. (peacefmonline.com). The NPP, as roots of the old UG and descendants of the Danquah-Busia lineage, appealed to the Akan speakers. This perception still holds to this day. The NPP is seen as elitist and an image of the dominant Akan ethnic group, while the NDC appeals

to the other ethnic tribes and is seen as the counter to Akan hegemony that will have existed. The NPP won the Ashanti Region by 60.54%. This was expected as the NPP was founded by Akan speakers and built on historically Ashanti traditions. Albert Adu-Boahen was a product of that lineage, and as such, Ashantis voted for both the individual and what his party represented. In the Volta Region, where Rawlings hails from, his party won 93.24% of votes in the Volta Region. The NDC also won all three swing regions winning by 66.49%, 53.34%, and 62.97% in the Central, Greater Accra, and Northern Regions, respectively. These victories aligned with the national performance and can be attributed to Rawlings' incumbency. The margin of victory is low in Greater Accra because Accra is the leading migration destination in Ghana, and as such, even though Greater Accra is traditionally the home of the Ga-Adangme, it has become a melting pot of almost every ethnic group in Ghana.

In the 2000 presidential elections won by the NPP, Ghanaians rejected the NDC's campaign message of "Continuity in Change". Throughout the campaign trail, the NDC's candidate, Vice President John Atta-Mills, campaigned alongside the outgoing President Rawlings, a man whose charisma and reach greatly overshadowed his. The NPP, led by John Kuffour, campaigned under the slogan "The New Team" stressing that after almost two decades of Rawlings rule, a vote for the NDC would be essentially a continuation of Rawlings rule as Mills was just a proxy of the huge charismatic and dominant Rawlings. They stressed the country needed a fresh change. Their campaign message worked. Both parties won their traditional regions of Ashanti and Volta regions. The NPP swung the Central and Greater Accra in their favor. They won the Central Region, which is dominated by Akan speakers, partly because between John Kuffour, an Akan, and John Atta-Mills, a Fante, John Kuffour was seen as the more experienced candidate and the Ghanaian electorate tends to reward candidates who keep coming back even after losses overtime which will be further evident in subsequent elections. In the case of Greater Accra, as highlighted, Greater Accra remains the ultimate migration destination in Ghana and, as such, is a melting pot of almost every ethnic group in Ghana, even though it is traditionally the home of the Gas. Because Ga's are not dominant in numbers, Greater Accra has essentially become a swing state that can be lost or won and not necessarily in the domain of one party.

There has been evidence of religious involvement before the 2004 elections, which may or may not have influenced the outcome of the 2004 elections. This was subjected to religious leaders aiding in the country's decision-making process. For instance, in 2003, President Kufour of the NPP and a section of his Cabinet met with a cross-section of religious leaders to solicit support for the new fuel prices. Their objective was to inform them about the impending increase in fuel prices and impress upon them to explain the issues to their congregations. Among the renowned religious leaders were Archbishop Duncan Williams of the Christian Action Faith Ministries and Archbishop Agyin Asare of the Word Miracle Church, now Perez Chapel International, Dr. Sam Prempeh of the Presbyterian Church, Maulvi Wahab Adam of the AMMGA and representatives of the Muslim Council. The religious leaders are said to have exhibited a high level of intelligence and frankness in their reactions toward the political leaders by posing questions, and this event was one of the rare occasions of meetings between political leaders and religious bodies.

In 2004, the incumbent NPP retained power. The NPP ran a campaign that was based on promises to consolidate the numerous fiscal policy reforms they had initiated, most notably among them, the decision to join the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program that had resulted in many of the country's external debts written off and further funds made available by external donors for development projects. The NDC ran a campaign that was based on the premise that the NPP government's reliance on foreign aid was not sustainable in the long run and advocated for a focus on self-reliance and boosting the country's production. The running mates remain unchanged. Against this backdrop and with foreign money helping grow the economy, Ghanaians voted to keep the NPP in power. John Kuffuor won the Ashanti, Central, and Greater Accra Regions, while Atta Mills won the Northern and Volta Regions.

The NDC won the 2008 elections with their ticket of John Atta-Mills as flag bearer and John Dramani Mahama as running mate. Since President Kuffuor was no longer constitutionally eligible to contest, the NPP had Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo as flagbearer and Mahamudu Bawumia as running mate. The NPP, as incumbents, ran on the campaign message “y3reko y3n anim”, which literally “we are moving forward”, while the NDC ran on the campaign message “y3resesa mu” meaning “we are changing for the better”. The NDC won their usual Volta Region and maintained their control of the Northern Region but flipped both the Central and Greater Accra Regions in

their favor. With Kuffuor having left, the Central Region was up for grabs, and the NDC ran a campaign there based on “adzi wo fie a, wo y3”, which means “it’s good having a good thing in your house”. This was a call for Fantes to vote for their native son and finally win him the presidency. There was also evidence of religious influence in the lead-up to the 2008 general elections. This was an issue regarding Hajj. The Hajj is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and a religious obligation for Muslims, yet many prospective pilgrims have encountered obstacles. The ruling NPP's choice to back the Interim Hajj Committee was criticized, with the NDC making political gain out of it by accusing the government of choosing sides rather than ensuring the Pilgrimage ran smoothly. Because 2008 was an election year, the two major political parties took turns visiting prospective pilgrims at the Kotoka International Airport, before beginning the pilgrimage. They presented food and other goods to the pilgrims during these encounters. When it became clear that the election date fell within the Hajj time, the NDC was the first to advocate allowing such pilgrims to vote by proxy (Acheampong, 2013). Also, both presidential candidates, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), battled hard for the electoral support of Ghanaian Muslims in general, especially the public support of the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Nuhu Sharabutu. A courtesy call by messengers from both Presidential candidates on the Chief Imam nearly resulted in chaos as the supporters of the political parties engaged in a heated confrontation (Okoampa-Ahoofe,2009).

Unfortunately, John Atta-Mills did not live to finish his first term in office. His untimely demise months before the presidential elections in 2012 thrust his Vice John Dramani Mahama into becoming flagbearer. The NDC ran under the campaign message “Better Ghana Agenda”. The NPP, led again by Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo, ran under the “Transforming Lives, Transforming Ghana” campaign message. The election results showed the NDC won quite comfortably, keeping the three swing states in control, and building on their lead in each of them. However, after the 2012 national elections in Ghana, evidence was brought to light about the mobilization of religious identities by the NDC from Ghanaian churches in the UK. Evidence of this was made available to the NPP-USA, which indicated that John Mahama, the flagbearer, and Presidential candidate of the NDC, and Tsatsu Tsikata, a minister of the NDC, made a trip to the United Kingdom under the guise of attending a foundation launch. According to sources, this trip

was to secure ghost names and addresses from various Ghanaian churches in the United Kingdom. According to the NPP, these names were put out by the Electoral Commission of Ghana as legible Ghanaians abroad who voted in the 2012 elections (Public Relations Committee, NPP-USA, 2012).

In 2016 and 2020, campaign trials ranged with different strategies to mobilize votes for these two parties. The use of different local languages to suit regions and ethnicities was evident during these rallies. One example of a politician effectively using local languages in his campaigns is former President John Dramani Mahama. During his campaign for the 2016 presidential elections, Mahama also used Twi in his campaign speeches and rallies. He used Twi phrases and proverbs to connect with the people and convey his message in a way that resonated with them. For example, he used the phrase "sɛ me yɛ yen", which means "if I were one of you", to show empathy and understanding of the people's issues. In another of his rallies, he delivered a speech in Fante, a local language spoken in Ghana's Central and Western regions. Similarly, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the current President of Ghana, also used local languages during his 2020 re-election campaign. He used Akan, a widely spoken language in Ghana, to connect with the people and convey his message in a way that was relatable to them. For instance, he used the phrase "eyɛ yen", which means "it is us", to emphasize the importance of unity and collaboration in achieving development goals. However, the NPP, led by Akuffo-Addo and Bawumia, won the 2016 and 2020 elections. In 2016, they ran a campaign under the slogan "Change", which beat the NDC's campaign soundly, led by Mahama and Amissah-Arthur under the slogan "Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana". The NPP wrested back control of both the Central and Greater Accra Regions. They retained power in 2020, running under the "leadership of service" slogan beating the Mahama-Opoku Agyemang-led NDC running under the "people's manifesto".

What is important to highlight is that despite the various campaign promises, the differences in candidates, and the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the country, elections in Ghana have a pattern. In all eight elections, the NPP has won the Ashanti Region emphatically. This aligns with the perception that the NPP belongs to and is essentially the political arm of the dominant Akan ethnic group, and since the Ashanti Region is their historical region and Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region, is the capital of the old Ashanti Kingdom, victory for the NPP here is guaranteed. In fact, there is a widespread joke that even an animal dressed in NPP paraphernalia

and contesting an election for the NPP in the Ashanti Region will win over a human contesting for another party. Such is the deep-rooted Akan ethnic attachment and loyalty to the NPP. For example, during the 2016 Ghanaian presidential election, the then-opposition candidate Nana Akufo-Addo visited the Asantehene, the king of the Ashanti people, to seek his support. This visit was seen as a vital move, as the Ashanti region is known for its large voting population and is a stronghold of Akufo-Addo's party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) (Daily Graphic, 2016). Also, in a recent video making waves on social media, a trader in Kumasi was bemoaning the current economic hardships in Ghana, lamenting, and criticizing the NPP government but made no secret of the fact that he cannot contemplate voting for another party and that he will continue to vote for the NPP until he dies.

The NDC has also won every election in the Volta Region. As the home region of its founder, Jerry John Rawlings, and his Ewe tribe, victory is assured for the NDC here. In fact, the average victory for the NDC in the Volta Region is more pronounced and emphatic than that of the NPP in the Ashanti Region. The NPP has never gotten as much as 15% in the Volta Region and often scored single digits, while the NDC has almost hit the 30% mark in the Ashanti Region (see Table 4d and 4). The NDC is so dominant here, so much so that in most cases, they dedicate the fewest resources and time canvassing for votes in this region because they know it is a foregone conclusion, even with the death of their patron, Jerry John Rawlings.

Jerry John Rawlings was probably the most charismatic Ghanaian leader since Kwame Nkrumah. As a son of relative peasants, much like Nkrumah, Rawlings rose to prominence by parlaying his handsome looks, otherworldly oratory skills, and charisma into political credit. He cast himself as the everyday Ghanaian and the ordinary Ghanaian baker, driver, electrician, farmer, fisherman, and virtually all walks of life, related more to him. He then moulded his party into his image. The NPPs, however, are universally seen in Ghana as the sons of aristocrats. The ideological roots of the NPP are found in the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), and the leaders of the UGCC were seen as the most visible local beneficiaries of colonialism. They attended the best colonial-era schools, had business with their colonial rulers, and went to further their education in schools in the home country of the colonists. That set them apart from Nkrumah, who was the champion of the ordinary, less privileged Ghanaian.

It is important to note that while the party formed by Kwame Nkrumah, the Convention People's Party (CPP), has significantly declined and is no longer a force, Nkrumah himself still looms large over Ghanaian politics. The NDC deftly positioned itself as the nearest great party to Nkrumah's ideology. As such, the NDC is seen by Ghanaians as the counter to the hegemony that would have existed if only the NPP existed and was dominant. As a result, most of the smaller ethnic groups give credence to the NDC because the NDC comes across as for the whole country and not only for a particular group.

Moreover, the trend in Ghana elections is to elect a Southern Christian flagbearer and a Northern Muslim flagbearer. Out of the four presidents in the Fourth Republic, Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kuffuor, and Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo are all Southerners who profess Christianity as their personal faith. The only exception is John Dramani Mahama, a Northerner but Christian too. So, it is easy to highlight the fact that in an overwhelmingly Christian country, the two political parties always tend to present a Christian as their flagbearer to appeal to the Christian majority and choose a Muslim running mate to appeal to the Muslim-dominated minority.

Furthermore, campaign songs were said to elevate or gain a candidate's popularity which can influence the electorates. Perhaps the most famous song of the NPP was the 2008 campaign song 'Nana y3 Winner', which means Nana is a winner, referring to the flagbearer of the NPP, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo Addo. This was one of the timeless songs in Ghana's political history, recorded ahead of the 2012 elections. Diana Asamoah, a gospel artiste in 2016, also composed songs like 'Wona Mayi Wo' and 'Meba Dofu', which simply means chosen one and favored one, respectively. This song was intended to promote Akuffo Addo above all other NPP presidential candidates in terms of popularity. He was declared the candidate to whom no other contender could be compared or matched. Also, Nacee, a famous gospel artist, composed the 2016 campaign song 'Onaapo' meaning unique or untouchable for the NDC. Although it failed to propel Mahama to a second term, it received massive nationwide recognition.

In the period before and during the countdown of the 2020 elections, a lot was said to have transpired between the NDC and NPP, and these were crucial times for both parties and amidst this, ethnic and religious affiliations were involved. For instance, during the 2020 Ghanaian presidential election, National Democratic Party (NDC) candidate John Mahama was accused of

manipulating the chieftaincy institution to incite tribal sentiments. Mahama was accused of attempting to agitate the Volta region's population, which is primarily made up of the Ewe ethnic group, against the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) by alleging that the NPP government was targeting Ewes (Myjoyonline, 2020). In another instance, incumbent President Nana Akuffo-Addo of the NPP in 2020 charged religious leaders to talk and comment on issues that are malicious. During a meeting with the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Ghana, he bemoaned why people were tagging his tribesmen, the people of Akyem of the Akan tribe, as mafias and 'Sakawa boys' (Fraudsters). According to President Akuffo-Addo, this comment, made by his opponent, was serious, and no public figure in the country had yet to comment on it.

In the case of the Greater Accra, as stated, the Greater Accra remains the ultimate migration destination in Ghana and as such is a melting pot of almost every ethnic group in Ghana, even though it is traditionally the home of the Gas. Initially noted, Ga's are not dominant in numbers, however, Greater Accra has essentially become a swing state that can be lost or won and not necessarily in the domain of one party. Also, the standard of living here is greater than the national average, and the literacy rate here is higher than the national average, it is the home of foreign missions, embassies, and consular services, and it is also the home of various multinational companies and media operating in the country. All these factors have heavily diluted the impact of ethnicity in the Greater Accra Region. People here are more inclined to vote for which party offers them the most utility, ethnic affiliations are largely ignored.

Limitations

Despite the analysis and findings, flaws may inhibit the data's effectiveness, which contains voters from only five regions out of 10 regions from 1992 and 16 regions after 2018. There may have been incomplete or biased data.

Although anecdotes have their uses, scientific and academic research does not accept them as a solid or trustworthy type of proof. Because anecdotal information is usually based on one or a small number of isolated events, it may not indicate larger trends or patterns, which have limits. It is prone to subjectivity, bias, and the impact of one's own feelings and beliefs.

The Presidential and constituency results may not capture the full range of perspectives and experiences. They might be written by specific groups or individuals, leading to a biased representation of events, especially if political or social agendas are involved. For instance, there have been Presidential run-offs in the years 2000, and 2008 which were not considered in the data. There was another in 2020 but was dismissed and deemed inconclusive by the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

This may or may not have affected the outcome of the results but might have contained variables to some effect. For example, certain groups or marginalized voices may be underrepresented or entirely absent from official documents, leading to an incomplete understanding of the dynamics at play. This was evident in the 2008 run-off election regarding the Tain constituency in the Bono region of Ghana. It was a swing constituency since it voted for NPP in 2004 and NDC in 2008. The people of Tain did not vote in the run-off because of a disagreement between the two parties about missing 1800 ballots in the constituency (SAIIA Occasional Paper no.19). Though the Bono region was not represented in my data, it may have affected changes in other results.

Also, in 2008 according to SAIIA, the NDC, and NPP, both complained about results in their strongholds in the Volta and Ashanti regions, respectively, and the Electoral Commission required them to present proof to back up their assertions, which were then factored into the results before the winner was declared. These happenings might not have captured the full range of perspectives in the data collected.

Furthermore, these documents are static snapshots of a moment in time. They might not reflect changes in attitudes, beliefs, or political landscapes over time. This brings attention to data and analysis on swing regions and voters. For instance, according to an analysis by Lindberg and Morrisson (2005), Ghana's stable two-party alignment is built on a core voting population (who consistently vote for the same party) of approximately four-fifths but only about 18% are swing voters whose support fluctuates between elections. They further conclude that the two-party alignment of core voters can be explained in great part by structural characteristics, most notably education level, rural-urban disparity, income, and occupation. Also, the choice of the party by swing voters transcends classification and appears to be more dependent on the candidates' performance and on issues, indicating an evaluative and relatively 'mature' voting behavior (p. 566). This is an example of why selected Presidential election results may not reflect voters' choices over time.

Moreover, the data may also lack the context needed to fully understand the nuances of ethnic, religious, or political dynamics. Contextual information, such as cultural practices, local traditions, or historical background, may not be adequately represented in the documents. An instance is the limited context when it comes to discussing religion and politics in Ghana. Compared to countries like Nigeria and Kenya, the ethnic variable in voters' choice in Ghana takes precedence over religion and politics in Ghana. Religion influencing politics in Ghana may have few historical representations, but it is still an emerging angle.

Reflections

Internally, the research has made known the current understanding of Ethnicity and religion which often play significant roles in shaping the political landscape in Ghana. The diverse ethnic composition has sometimes influenced political dynamics, as individuals may identify strongly with their ethnic background, and political affiliations can be formed along ethnic lines. There have been instances where political parties were associated with specific ethnic groups, leading to perceptions of favoritism or exclusion. Also, Religion, particularly Christianity and Islam, also holds significance in Ghanaian politics. While the country is known for religious tolerance, political leaders' religious identity and regions' religious composition can impact political dynamics. There have been instances where religious leaders and institutions play roles in endorsing or critiquing political candidates or policies. Also, it has been highlighted that Ethnicity in Ghana is not merely a demographic characteristic; it serves as a vital aspect of identity, shaping social interactions, cultural practices, and even political dynamics. Ghanaians have been portrayed as often taking pride in their ethnic heritage and traditional ceremonies, festivals, and rites of passage, which continue to be important expressions of cultural identity, as do Religion, which holds profound importance in the lives of Ghanaians. As in this research, religious practices influence daily life, moral values, and even political discourse. Ultimately, understanding the importance of ethnicity and religion to Ghanaians requires recognizing them not as divisive elements but as integral components of a diverse and multifaceted national identity. The intersection of ethnoreligious and political activities in the context of socio-economic development in Ghana is a multifaceted and complex undertaking. This research has delved into the intricate dynamics that shape the country's socio-economic landscape, highlighting the interplay between ethnicity, religion, and political engagement.

It should be clarified that Ethnicity and religion influencing political activities in Ghana, may not necessarily be inherently flawed for several reasons. To truly understand the current state of ethnoreligious and political activities in Ghana, it is essential to examine the historical context and cultural diversity. We can perceive Ghana's past, marked by colonization and subsequent independence, has significantly influenced its socio-economic and political structures. The legacies of colonialism, coupled with historical ethnic and religious divisions, continue to impact the nation's development. Hence, it has been observed here that, Ghana is recognized for its

cultural diversity, with various ethnic groups cooperating within its borders. However, this diversity has the potential to either foster unity or contribute to division. Exploring how different ethnic and religious groups collaborate or compete on the socio-economic front provides valuable insights into the country's development curve.

One key aspect of this exploration is examining how ethno-religious affiliations can impact political and economic progress. In many instances, ethno-religious groups may have distinct social structures, (Ashanti-Ewe divide), economic practices (North-South divide), and educational significances. This can contribute to resource access, opportunities, and development outcomes discrepancies. On the other hand, the rich cultural and religious heritage explored here can also serve as a source of social integration and assets, advancing community-based initiatives that contribute positively to economic development. Allowing these identities to play a role in politics has somehow ensured that different voices are heard and that various groups feel adequately represented in the political process. Employing ethnic and religious influences in politics has contributed to the social structure by accepting and respecting the different communities within the country, especially the dominant ethnic groups and religious bodies. This recognition has, in so many ways, helped build bridges between groups and foster a sense of national unity. In Ghana's practice of a democratic system, political participation is ideally open to all citizens. If ethnicity and religion are essential aspects of people's identities, allowing them to influence political activities can be seen as a democratic expression of individual and collective values. This can lead to a more lively and participatory democracy.

It must be added that Ghana's political history is characterized by transitions between military and civilian rule and peaceful democratic elections. Analyzing how political actors leverage ethnoreligious affiliations to gain support or sway public opinion is crucial. It is equally important to examine how these affiliations impact policymaking and the allocation of resources, ultimately influencing the nation's political advancement. Thus, the prominence of the Ashanti-Ewe divide. The Ashanti-Ewe divide in Ghana has roots in historical, cultural, and socio-political factors. As noted, there has been political tension and competition between these two ethnic groups. This has manifested in various forms, including electoral politics, where candidates often draw support along ethnic lines. The competition for political power and resources has sometimes heightened

ethnic consciousness and differences. Efforts made by political leaders to bridge the Ashanti-Ewe divide have included policies aimed at fostering national cohesion, inclusive governance, and equitable resource distribution. However, from the findings and analysis, challenges have persisted, since the fourth republic.

Ghana has experienced minimum to no ethnic and religious polarization compared to some other African nations. The country's political relations might have been characterized by a multi-party system where political affiliations are often more associated with ideology and policy issues rather than ethnic or religious backgrounds. However, Ghana has experienced some degree of political polarization, though it may have evolved since then. Political polarization in Ghana is seen to be characterized by divisions along party lines, primarily between the two major political parties, the New Patriotic Party, and the National Democratic Congress. Factors emphasized to contribute to political polarization in Ghana include ideological differences, regionalism, and historical considerations. Again, The NPP and NDC often have different policy views, and their supporters may hold strong political opinions. Additionally, historical events and regional affiliations can contribute to the polarization, with certain regions being perceived as strongholds for one party or the other.

Mention must be made of Swing voting analysis. In Ghana, long-standing connections between political parties and ethnic groups provide a workable answer. They are implying, in other words, that party loyalty can be strongly predicted by ethnic composition. In this situation, party assets in the ethnic population advantage held by either of the two major parties will decline if politicians prioritize swing areas. Applying the swing voter premise to ethnic politics suggests that more diversified regions such as the Greater Accra and Central regions benefit politically from greater political patronage than their more consistent strongholds when neither party has a population advantage. Swing voting allows for a more detailed understanding of the political landscape, as individuals may deviate from traditional voting patterns based on ethnic and religious identities, personal preferences, policy considerations, or candidate appeal. Political dynamics in Ghana are flexible and can evolve over time. Swing voters may respond to changing political climates, economic conditions, or emerging issues that go beyond ethnoreligious boundaries. Analyzing

swing voting helps capture the responsiveness of voters to shifting circumstances. Swing voters may often be driven by policy considerations rather than strict ethno-religious loyalties. Including swing voting in the analysis has allowed for a better understanding of the issues that connect with voters across diverse backgrounds and how these issues influence their electoral choices. Recognizing swing voting contributes to a more experienced and developed democratic process. It indicates that voters are not specially confined to identity-based voting but are willing to assess candidates and parties based on other factors.

Moreover, ethno-religious factors can be both sources of cooperation and conflict, as indicated in this research. It has been discussed that cooperation among diverse groups can lead to innovative solutions and economic growth. Even so, tensions rooted in identity politics may hinder progress. Understanding the delicate balance between these two dynamics is essential for comprehending Ghana's socio-economic development. Historically, Ghana has experienced periods of tension and violence related to these changing aspects. Investigating the root causes of such conflicts is crucial for forming preventive measures and conflict resolution policies. Equally, identifying instances where ethno-religious and political cooperation has led to positive outcomes has offered valuable insights.

It is also safe to argue that the role of other factors, such as leadership qualities, political ideology, economic policies, personal experiences, urbanization, education, and political campaigns, might overshadow the fact that Ethnicity and Religion work on their own in influencing political activities in Ghana. Noticeably, the state of the economy and voters' perceptions of economic well-being can strongly influence their voting decisions. Issues such as unemployment, inflation, and overall economic stability can sway voters one way or another. Also, it is indeed evident that while Ghana has a multi-party system, voters may align themselves with political ideologies that transcend ethnic or religious lines. Differences in economic philosophies, governance principles, and social policies can shape voters' choices. Similarly, Urban and rural distinctions can also influence voting patterns. This can be analyzed from the perspective of a swing voter region like the Greater Accra region, the central city of Ghana. Urban voters may prioritize different issues, such as infrastructure development and job opportunities, compared to their rural areas, which may

be more concerned with agricultural policies and rural development. Additionally, literature has made known that voters' personal experiences, such as interactions with government services, perceptions of corruption, and feelings of security, can shape their attitudes toward political candidates and parties. More importantly, voters often consider candidates' personal qualities, such as leadership skills, integrity, and the ability to foster confidence. These factors can exceed ethnic or religious affiliations. Evidence has also proven that the effectiveness of political campaigns, including the candidates' ability to connect with voters and communicate their messages, also has been emphasized to strongly influence voting behavior. It's important to note that these factors often interact, and voters' decisions are shaped by a combination of these influences rather than any single factor in isolation. Additionally, the political landscape is dynamic, and new factors may emerge or gain prominence over time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has examined the complex interactions between political and ethnoreligious factors and how they affect Ghana's socioeconomic growth. After thoroughly examining historical background, case studies, and statistical data, these variables significantly impact the country's development. While Ghana has made commendable strides in democracy, the study reveals constant challenges that require some attention. Government officials, chieftaincy institutions, religious organizations, and stakeholders must work together to adopt an atmosphere that promotes diversity, harmony, and equal opportunity for all citizens.

The study of ethnoreligious and political activities on socio-economic development in Ghana offers an understanding of the country's journey towards political advancement. This multifaceted approach has been vital for addressing the significance of ethnicity and religion to Ghanaians and the dysfunctions that arise at the intersection of culture, politics, and economic progress. Thus, the findings suggest that Ethnicity and religion are so important in the lives of Ghanaians that they influence, however minimal, political discourse. In addition, the involvement of social identities in Ghanaian politics showcases the Ghanaian community's cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Finally, ethnoreligious, and political activities prove dysfunctional in Ghanaian politics in terms of ethnic divisions, religious discrimination, and economic inequalities.

It is fundamental to note that while these influences can have positive aspects, they can also create challenges. Problems may arise if ethnic or religious concerns lead to discrimination, exclusion, or violence. When ethnoreligious and political activities intersect in ways that heighten societal conflicts, erode unity, and delay progress, they can become dysfunctional. Again, when social identities are used for political benefit, it can result in the polarization, discrimination, and marginalization of groups in society. We may even now be witnessing what might be the beginning of high levels of political polarization and social fragmentation based on economic and structural inequalities in the Ghanaian context.

Embracing a comprehensive approach to development can deliberate the socio-cultural fabric of the nation and help Ghana pave the way for sustainable and inclusive progress in the years to come. Also, Ghana can harness the rich tapestry of its ethnic and religious diversity as a source of strength rather than division, encouraging a socio-economic environment that values all its citizens.

As Ghanaians, we embrace different ethnic and religious backgrounds. We may have distinct cultures and customs, but it is the belief that it does not become a stumbling block in building a Ghanaian nation. Ghana is indeed a nation with many traditions, and the country can only function at its greatest when all Ghanaians' varied cultures, heritage, languages, and legacies are represented in the nation-building effort.

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