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CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY ON VOTER CHOICE IN GHANA

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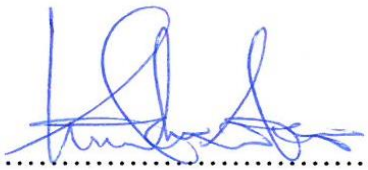
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DECLARATION

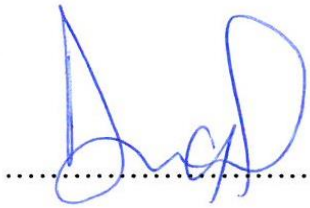
I hereby declare that this dissertation is based on my own research work and that neither a part nor the whole has ever been presented in any university for an award of an academic certificate. All references made to other people's work have duly been acknowledged.



16/07/2021

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ABSTRACT

Ghana is one country that is noted for its ethnic heterogeneity and remarkable democratic credentials. The country has since 1992 been practicing multi-party democracy and many factors have been identified as influencing the choice of candidates during elections. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the influence ethnicity has on voter choice in Ghana's current democratic dispensation. A descriptive research design was used along with a mixed method approach. The quantitative section of the study used the data set of a national survey of a sample size of 2000 conducted in 2019 across the then ten regions in Ghana. Thereafter, qualitative data, collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions involving 50 purposively selected respondents, were used to shed light on the quantitative outcomes. It came out of the study that ethnicity is the main factor that influences voting decisions in Ghana. A suggestion was therefore made to the National Commission for Civic Education to intensify public education on the need to vote on issues that affect economic development rather than ethnicity.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God for His divine protection since childhood.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I wish to express my utmost gratitude to God for seeing me through this far. Indeed, if I speak with joy of this work, I do so not with my ability but just by grace, He bestowed on me. Whatever the merits of this study might be, they are largely attributed to all those who took time to advise and assist me. I owe my greatest gratitude to Dr. George Domfe for not only his willingness to undertake the supervisory role of this work but the compassionate and humane manner with which he supervised this study and particularly for his suggestions, criticisms and assistance.

I am also grateful to my family especially my mum and wife whom I dedicated this work to for their support throughout my education. I would therefore want to use this opportunity to say a big thank you for all you have suffered and achieved for my sake.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

EIs	Expect Interviews
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MPs	Members of Parliament
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Even though Ghana is noted for its ethnic heterogeneity, it is also internationally recognized for mutual co-existence of the various tribal groups. As late as 1920s, ethnic composition in Gold Coast (as Ghana was then called) was a theme for scholarly discussions in Europe and many parts of the world. Linguistically, there are forty-four (44) major languages and dialects in Ghana (Dakubu, 2015), including five major ethnic groups, namely: Akan, Ga-Dangme, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, and Guan.

These languages are traced to particular tribes in the country. A tribe is aggregate people united by ties of descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and tradition. In other words, it is a group of persons who constitute a community and contribute to the society. Armesto and Alejandra (2010) defined tribe as a single language group who claim descent from a common ancestor. All the tribes in Ghana ensure that its integrity however, is not jeopardized in anyway. For instance, Abenase and the traditional political organization of the Akim Oda traditional area, Ashanti and Ga-Dangme respectively are quintessential examples to the fact that each of these communities perceives itself as distinct both linguistically or culturally (Armesto &Alejandra, 2010).

Tribe as an element gives a sense of identity and aids to give one's social location. There is a feeling of mutual help among people of the same tribe especially when they find themselves at a place different from their place of origin. This is very common among the Ewes and the Dagombas

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(Banful & Branoah, 2008). They are so united such that, one might think they are from the same family. This gives them a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. In that, it serves as a reminder that no matter where one finds himself or herself, he or she is never alone (Banful & Branoah, 2008).

According to the study by Harloe, Szelényi, and Andrusz, (1996), the evolvement of towns and regional capitals has given birth to ethnicity in the socio-political system. That is to say, urbanization has brought about some sort of ethnicity. As far as their study is concerned, ethnicity exists within a political society of diverse ethnic groups. Ethnicity provides a yardstick for the analysis of data and has a great capacity for creating a path through which research analysis may move freely. Also data indicated by ethnicity are more agreeable to falsification and verification comparatively to tribalism (Carlson, 2012).

Certain regions and areas of Ghana have been described as strongholds of some political parties. The common languages normally spoken by the people of these areas tend to bind them to act mostly in the same direction. This study seeks to examine the influence ethnicity has on voting decisions in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

People who belong to one ethnic group normally consider themselves as a family who should help one another in whatever way possible. Therefore, if a member of an ethnic group happens to contest for a political position, it becomes almost the responsibility of the entire ethnic group to ensure victory for one of their own kind. This appears to be consistent with the school of thought of identity voting that suggests that people vote in blocks in line with a common cultural interest

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that binds them together as a group. According to Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007), ethnicity has greater influence on the voting choices of linguistic groups.

In contrast to the position of identity voting is the issue based account of voting – which relies on an assumption that citizens appraise the performance of government and use the opportunity of periodic elections to punish or reward incumbents **(**Kuenzi &Lambright, 2007). The latter voting decision appears more productive. In other words, politicians who win elections tend to work hard to merit the votes of the citizens in the next political contest.

Unfortunately, in many African democracies, the identity voting school of thought is mostly prevalent. In other words, ethnicity appears to play a major role in the political decisions of electorates. As for that matter, issue-based politics are normally relegated to the background. When this happens, it tends to heighten violence and conflict. In the last couple of years, there have been series of election related violence in Ghana resulting from insults and counter-attacks from political opponents. If campaigns were to be focused mostly on issues, insults and violence would go down. In the absence of campaign issues, the attentions then turns on who is from where and has what.

The essence of democracy is to ensure development of the people in all spheres of life. Unfortunately, if political office holders are elected or appointment because of their ethnic group rather than their competent, it tend s to affect quality of services rendered. For example, work at the Parliament is technical and often requires people of certain academic pedigree to execute particular functions. Therefore, if the MPs were mostly elected based on ethnic lines and do not have the needed competence, the quality of discussions on the floor of the house will be affected.

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This will then go a long way to affect development of the nation since the MPs are the lawmakers and also make critical decisions on international transactions.

By and large, if elections are won mostly on ethnic lines, the politicians tend to be complacent in the next contest (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). In other words, there will be no seriousness in their service delivery since they know that the electorates do not care about their delivery but rather their ethnic relationship is what matters. This can surely affect development at the grassroot levels and in the process, the benefits of democratic dispensation tends to concentrate around only the few political office holders – who are worshipped by the poor electorates for being one of their own kind.

Elections should therefore be based on who at where is competent enough to deliver on a set mandate **(**Kuenzi &Lambright, 2007). Therefore, campaign messages (the bread and butter issues) and the messengers of the messages (politicians) should be the main factors to be considered in the choice of a candidate or a political party. While quite a lot has been done on the subject, considerable number of such studies made use of qualitative approach. Few that used quantitative approach appear to be a bit old (Hoffman & Long, 2013). However, the indications in the literature show that the influence of ethnicity on voter choice tends to minimize with time. It is therefore important that studies are conducted timely to provide the current state of affairs on the subject.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to examine the influence of ethnicity on voter choice in Ghana. Specifically, the study seeks to:

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- Identify the main factors Ghanaians consider before voting for a candidate/political party.

- Identify the reasons why Ghanaians vote on ethnic lines.
- Assess effects of the voting on ethnic lines.

1.4 Research Questions

- What influences Ghanaians to vote?
- What benefits do individual get when they vote for their tribesmen?
- How does voting along tribal lines instead of competence affect democratic development of Ghana?
- Who are the beneficiaries of ethnic inspired voting in Ghana?

1.5 Justification

Ghana fourth republic has been largely successful and the country is now described as a beacon of democracy. Ghanaian economy has since 1992 been growing remarkably. As a result of this and many other factors inspired by the current democratic dispensation, poverty has declined from 51.7 per cent in 1992 to 23.8 per cent in 2017 (GSS, 2017). This tends to suggest that democracy is very important tool for socio-economic advancement.

In spite of the various successes chalked, there has been many reported political violence – sometimes leading to death of some Ghanaians. The cause of the violence significantly includes insults from political opponents. Indeed, insults have become part of the political practices in Ghana because the politicians do not find it mostly worthy to dwell on issues during their campaigns. Issues are normally relegated to the background and instead, ethnic affiliation tends to

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ride higher to lead a politician to electoral success. This study brings to the fore the main motivation for voting choices in Ghana. Ethnicity as a major factor for voting is mostly not documented and therefore, this piece could be relied on to advocate for a nationwide education to help Ghanaian voters to appreciate the need to vote competence over tribal affiliation.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

A number of limitations were identified during the conduct of this study. One of such limitations is that this study focused on only on Ghanaian voters in the country only.

Finally, time was also another constraint, as the researcher would have explored more into other factors and involved other municipalities. In addition, appointments for the researcher to interview respondents especially some celebrities like the footballers suffered some delays and were sometimes brief due to their busy schedules.

1.7 Synopsis of the Chapters

The thesis is arranged in five (5) different chapters, which correspond to the steps taken in the study. Chapter One (1): Introduction; chapter one provides a shorts introduction into the research area. In order to present a clear picture, the research problem is discussed which leads to the research purpose, research objectives, research questions, research significance and limitation of research. Chapter Two (2): Literature Review; chapter two presents literature relevant to the study. Theories and models and issues of ethnicity and how they connect to African politics and voter choice continue to be of great importance to the continent hence the need to explore the extent to which Ghanaian voting is tied to ethnicity and for that matter. This chapter again explores the research framework used for the study, which guided the research design, data collection methods,

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instrument, and served as a yardstick for the data analysis and discussions. Chapter Three (3): Methodology; the research methodological approach which highlights the research strategy and paradigm and the discussion of sampling techniques and size are utilized. The instrument for data collection and the method used as well as data processing and analysis are expounded in this chapter. Chapter four (4): Research findings and Discussion of results; this chapter deals with the data presentation and analysis. The chapter presents a brief of each voter used in the research. In the concluding parts of the chapter, the findings are presented in line with research questions posed in the chapter one (section 1.5) using the thematic analysis. This chapter also deals with the discussion. The chapter addresses the research questions then discusses and analyses alongside the findings of the study. Chapter Five (5): Conclusion; the conclusion of the research, implications (and recommendations) to research, practice and policy and the future research directions are discussed. Finally, references and appendices are presented after conclusion.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that is relevant to study in order to provide basis for the methods to be used to address the set objectives. This chapter begins with explanations of the key concepts of the study. This is followed by discussions on the empirical literature that provides evidence on studies which have been conducted in Ghana and other part of the world on: ethnicity, politics and electoral systems. The next section concentrates on the theoretical perspectives of the study.

2.2 Concepts of the Study

2.2.1 Overview of Voting

Voting is a method for a group, such as a meeting or an electorate, in order to make a collective decision or express an opinion usually following discussions, debates or election campaigns (Hopkins, 2010). Democracies elect holders of high office by voting. Residents of a place represented by an elected official are called "constituents", and those constituents who cast a ballot for their chosen candidate are called "voters". There are different systems for collecting votes (Gelman, Andrew, & Hill. 2007).

Voting in politics

In a democracy, a government is chosen by voting in an election: a way for an electorate to elect, i.e. choose, among several candidates for rule. In a representative democracy voting is the method by which the electorate appoints its representatives to government. In a direct democracy, voting

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is the method by which the electorate directly makes decisions, turn bills into laws, etc (Ferree, Karen, Gibson, Clark, Hoffman, Barak & Long, James, 2009).

A vote is a formal expression of an individual's choice for or against some motion (for example, a proposed resolution); for or against some ballot question; or for a certain candidate, selection of candidates, or political party (Harding, 2011). Many countries use a secret ballot, a practice to prevent voters from being intimidated and to protect their political privacy. Voting often takes place at a polling station; it is voluntary in some countries, compulsory in others, such as Australia (Harding, 2011).

Electoral Systems

Different voting systems use different types of votes. Plurality voting does not require the winner to achieve a vote majority, or more than fifty percent of the total votes cast. In a voting system that uses a single vote per race, when more than two candidates run, the winner may commonly have less than fifty percent of the vote. A side effect of a single vote per race is vote splitting, which tends to elect candidates that do not support centrism, and tends to produce a two-party system (Ichino, Nahomi, and Schündeln, 2012).

An alternative to a single-vote system is approval voting. To understand why a single vote per race tends to favor less centric candidates, consider a simple lab experiment where students in a class vote for their favorite marble. If five marbles are assigned names and are placed "up for election", and if three of them are green, one is red, and one is blue, then a green marble will rarely win the election (Kimuli. 2012). .The reason is that the three green marbles will split the votes of those who prefer green. In fact, in this analogy, the only way that a green marble is likely to win is if more than sixty percent of the voters prefer green. If the same percentage of people prefer green as those who prefer red and blue, that is to say if 33 percent of the voters prefer green, 33 percent

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prefer blue, and 33 percent preferred, then each green marble will only get eleven percent of the vote, while the red and blue marbles will each get 33 percent, putting the green marbles at a serious disadvantage (Kimuli. 2012).

If the experiment is repeated with other colors, the color that is in the majority will still rarely win. In other words, from a purely mathematical perspective, a single-vote system tends to favor a winner that is different from the majority. If the experiment is repeated using approval voting, where voters are encouraged to vote for as many candidates as they approve of, then the winner is much more likely to be any one of the five marbles, because people who prefer green will be able to vote for every one of the green marbles (Lindberg, 2003).

A development on the 'single vote' system is to have two-round elections, or repeat first-past-the-post. This system is most common around the world. In most cases, the winner must receive a majority, which is more than half and if no candidate obtains a majority at the first round, then the two candidates with the largest plurality are selected for the second round. Variants exist on these two points: the requirement for being elected at the first round is sometimes less than 50%, and the rules for participation in the runoff may vary (Magaloni, Beatriz, Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto, and Estévez, 2007).

An alternative to the Two-round voting system is the single round instant-runoff voting system (Also referred to as alternative vote or Preferential voting) as used in some elections in Australia, Ireland and the USA. Voters rank each candidate in order of preference (1, 2, 3 etc.). Votes are distributed to each candidate according to the preferences allocated. If no single candidate has 50% of the vote, then the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded and their votes redistributed according to the voters nominated order of preference. The process repeating itself until a candidate has 50% or more votes (Posner, 2005).

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The system is designed to produce the same result as an exhaustive ballot but using only a single round of voting. In a voting system that uses a multiple vote, the voter can vote for any subset of the alternatives. So, a voter might vote for Alice, Bob, and Charlie, rejecting Daniel and Emily. Approval voting uses such multiple votes. In a voting system that uses a ranked vote, the voter has to rank the alternatives in order of preference (Beber, Bernd, & Scacco, 2012) For example, they might vote for Bob in first place, then Emily, then Alice, then Daniel, and finally Charlie. Ranked voting systems, such as those famously used in Australia, use a ranked vote. In a voting system that uses a scored vote (or range vote), the voter gives each alternative a number between one and ten (the upper and lower bounds may vary). Some "multiple-winner" systems may have a single vote or one vote per elector per available position. In such a case the elector could vote for Bob and Charlie on a ballot with two votes. These types of systems can use ranked or unranked voting, and are often used for at-large positions (Carlson, 2012).

2.2.2 Overview of ethnicity

According to Rupesinghe and Tichkow (2013), ethnicity is described as a group possessing some degree of coherence and solidarity composed of people who are aware perhaps only latently of having common origin and interest. Akinola (2006) viewed the phenomenon of ethnicity and the nature of ethnic competition and conflict exist in some divided society. In other words, ethnicity operates at a level of ideology. According to him, the view that ideology destroy ethnicity is a political fallacy, just that ethnicity has a greater energy to prevail comparatively to ideology. To support the above assertion, by ways of example, the Soviet Union is considered the father to socialism but in recent years and events, it has been shown that the Soviet Union had not been able to overcome the problem of ethnicity. This is to show that ethnicity is a reality which cannot be washed away (Tichkow, 2013).

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According to Stone, Whelan and Murrin (2014), many political behaviour studies convincingly show how ethnic identities are still important in the political arena. Furthermore, O. Nnoli (year), defined ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. According to him, ethnic groups are distinguished by their character and their boundaries such as language and culture. However, in Africa, language has been the most crucial variable. Also, a Goering's research in the United States of America showed that 70 percent of the first generation and 50 percent of the second generation thought of themselves in ethnic terms. All these are to show how ethnicity is an inherent aspect of social change and its disappearance is impossible (Goering, 2009).

Many people have tried to integrate social structure and social process but however, they mistakenly assume ethnicity as given and argue that ethnic differences in them brought about development of the socio-economic stratification which brought about ethnic antagonism.

Magubane, (2008) has argued that putting the lame light on ethnicity hinders earnest effort to comprehend and understand African societies because it ignores the ownership of primary production forces, the material basis of society and the nature of the social system. Apter (2017), however says he expected Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the charismatic leader, to be an integrative mechanism for bringing together ethnic groups in Ghana, however Apter could not explain how Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was able to persist in an ethnic plural society. That is to say other argument that suggested that the emergence of powerful political leaders, political movement and parties and the likes, will act as a yardstick for ethnic integration have proven inadequate.

Hence the focal theme of this analysis will be to assess whether ethnicity has influence on a voter's choice in Ghana's fourth republic, as it has become clear that ethnicity has not only persisted in African and Non-African politics but it has been intensified. Ethnicity has been identified in

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Ghana's politics dated back to the late 1960's. It is argued that the military takeover also known as coup d'état in 1966 was motivated by a particular ethnic group (Ewes) to attain both political and economic hegemony. Furthermore, it is argued that the 1969 coup d'état was also ethically motivated. It is imperative to note that K. A. Busia's government was looked at as one dominated by the Akans. Also the 1972 coup d'état attributed to I. K. Acheampong was argued as an attempt of inter-ethnic reconciliation. Those notwithstanding, the coup d'etat lead by J. J. Rawlling in 1981 as well as other administration were perceived to be Ewe dominated. Also information prevails 9-11 publication written by Kofi Awonor to buttress what is termed as the Ewe hegemony attributed to Rawlings' government. All this goes to buttress the existence of ethnicity within the corridors of politics and the voter to be precise.

When independence was achieved, the distribution of benefits of independence became a problem. It was then that the problem of ethnicity rose to its pedestal. Also, the 1951, 1954 and 1956 general elections, if asserted will have shown some of the political parties were formed based on ethnicity. Among these political parties include, Northern People's Party, National Liberation Movement (Ashanti based), the Anlo Youth Association and the likes. According to Stephen Hope, ethnicity in politics can foster social development and nation building.

2.3 Empirical Literature

This section of the study discusses the explanations and suggestions based on studies done by authors in and outside Ghana on issues relevant to the study.

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2.3.1 Ethnicity and politics in Africa

Ethnicity infuses every society and is therefore essential or fundamental to every political marketing approach even though to a lesser extent in more mixed environments. Ethnicity is equally not a simple concept to theoretically define (Cohen, 2017). Operationally however, ethnicity or an ethnic group can be defined as a collective of people who share some patterns of normative behavior and form a part of a larger population that are interacting with people from other collectives. In this way, ethnicity refers to the degree of conformity by members of the collective that share norms (Cohen, 2017). Ethnicity has also been described as individuals identifying themselves with a collective of people with whom they share patterns of normative behavior and feel solidarity with (Hauer, 2004).

As a social identity, the effects of ethnicity result in both gain and loss interactions affecting marketing outcomes. In this way, it has both positive and negative effects on organizational strategies and marketing approaches of political parties. Political parties use various tools and techniques to learn much about people's identities and culture as much as possible, in order to tailor their pitches for candidates to win the acceptability of such people. Likewise, the performance and acceptability of political parties among particular ethnic groups is tied to the perception, appreciation and how the ethnic group identifies with the party (Bratton, Ravi & Tse-Hsin, 2011). Ethnicity is by implication considered and identified as one of the important issues affecting democratization and nation-building on the continent of Africa. It is believed to have had great impact, in fact more impact than other factors, on how politics and nation-building processes are pursued in Africa. The issues of religion and ethnic identity are said to have dominated the politics of democratization and nation-building in Africa. "The complexity of ethnicity in African

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grass root politics is due to the fact that African ethnic groups bond not only by kinship, but also by principles" (Yoh, 2004).

2.3.2 Information and ethnic politics in Africa

Political scientists' explanations for ethnic voting differ. Some have argued that the utility of ethnicity lies partly in the information that demographic cues provide about candidates, particularly in information-poor societies. However, extant research has not tested this proposition directly. A study proposes that, if part of ethnicity's utility is informational, we should expect that voters' reliance on ethnic cues will decline when certain types of higher-quality information are available (Carlson, 2012). To test this, a survey experiment was conducted in Uganda, with subjects evaluating candidates under varying informational environments. While support for co-ethnics was high when ethnicity was the only distinguishing fact about candidates, it declined when information was presented that portrayed co-ethnics negatively vis-à-vis non co-ethnics. These results suggest that informational environments can impact ethnic voting (Carlson, 2012).

Numerous authors have debated the role of ethnicity in determining election fortunes of a political party in electoral and democratic politics in Africa and often the case of Ghana has been cited (Krutz 2005, Chazan 1982, Rothchild 1978, Ayee 2005, Electoral Commission Ghana 2005).

Ironically, it has been argued that, though ethnicity has played an important role in the political history of Ghana, its role in this respect may not be as salient as perceived in the current political landscape of Ghana. Cohen from a theoretical perspective has been reported to note that "the most important principle underlying most African election studies has been a census that African voters tend to make their electoral choice as communities rather than individuals" (Cohen 1993: 80, Krutz 2005: 13). Krutz in his paper, "Determinants of Party Support in Ghana's Fourth. Republic" noted

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that, “an approach to Ghanaian electoral politics that focused solely or perhaps even primarily, on ethnicity and access to particularistic benefits seems limited”. Krutz indicated that Ghana differs from Nicolas Van de Walle’s characterization of the modal African political party system, in which a dominant party is surrounded by tiny, evanescent opposition groupings (Van de Walle 2003). According to Krutz, analyses of data from the Afro barometer survey conducted in Ghana in 1999 and empirical testing of four different hypothesis, showed that “it is clear from the most cursory examination of vote data and anecdotal evidence that ethnicity and particularistic benefits certainly do have a central role in Ghana’s electoral politics even though other individual-level variables, such as ideology, retrospective evaluations of incumbent performance, sex, economic well-being, religiosity, and age, might be relevant”. Krutz however, concluded that there is marked variation in Ghana with regard to major ethnic groups‟ tendencies toward communal voting and major parties‟ bases of support. Additionally, the other variables, such as age, economic well-being, education, retrospective evaluations of incumbent performance, and measures of support for particular economic policies, were also significantly correlated with party support.

2.3.3 Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana

Theories of instrumental ethnic voting in new democracies propose that voters support co-ethnic politicians because they expect politicians to favor their co-ethnics once in office. But many goods that politicians deliver to voters are locally non-excludable in rural areas, so the local presence of an ethnic group associated with a politician should affect a rural voter's assessment of how likely she is to benefit from that politician's election (Madrid, 2005). Using geocoded polling-station–level election results alongside survey data from Ghana, we show that otherwise similar voters are less likely to vote for the party of their own ethnic group, and more likely to support a party

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associated with another group, when the local ethnic geography favors the other group. This result helps account for the imperfect correlation between ethnicity and vote choice in African democracies. More generally, this demonstrates how local community and geographic contexts can modify the information conveyed by ethnicity and influence voter behavior (Long & Gibson, 2012).

2.3.4 Ethnicity and the Voting Pattern in Ghana

No part of Ghana is ethnically homogeneous and the urban areas are the most ethnically mixed, because of migration of those in search for employment. Huaer, stated that with the exception of cocoa-producing areas that have attracted migrant labor, rural areas tend to reflect more traditional population or indigenous distributions (Huaer,2004:p,26). Analysis of the voting pattern indicated that aside the Ashanti, Volta, and Western Regions no particular party can consider any of the urban districts or constituencies as a stronghold because of the ethnically diverse nature of these constituencies (Schildkrout, 2010). This presupposes that effects of ethnicity would be more pronounce in rural areas. Subsequently, it follows that using the swing regions to analyze the effects of ethnicity may be quite misleading. As a result, this analysis focuses more on voting pattern in the non-Swing regions and where necessary, considers trends in the swing regions. The five swing regions which have always gone with the winning party in the Fourth Republic are Brong Ahafo, Eastern, Western and the Central Regions respectively, whereas the non-Swing Regions are; The Ashanti, Volta, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions respectively (Schildkrout, 2010). The Ghana Statistical Services Department reported that the Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Western Regions have tended to be net receivers of migrants while the Central, Volta, Upper East and Upper West are areas of net out-migration. Ironically, following this analysis, it looks specious that the Ashanti Region which is classified a net receiver of migrant and the second

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most urbanized region in Ghana and the Central Region which is also considered a net out migration area tends to be non – swing and swing regions respectively. However, these trends can be explained on the basis that the Central Region is considered the cradle of education in Ghana with the highest number of secondary and tertiary institutions having a considerable number of boarding students who tend to register and vote in this region. This is believed to explain the urban and ethnically diverse tendencies revealed in the voting trends of the Central Region. Again, even though the Ashanti Region is quite urban, by virtue of its location, its population may not be as ethnically diverse rendering it an ethnic based region (Schildkrout, 2010).

2.4 Theoretical Perspective

This section of the chapter seeks to probe further into the theoretical framework adopted for the study, in order to effectively delve into the issue of how ethnicity influences a voter's choice in Ghana's fourth republic.

2.4.1 Ethnic voting Theory

In Africa, ethnic identity – refers to , "a group of individuals to define themselves in terms of cultural origins and descent-based traits – is widely perceived to be the predominant organizing principle of society and politics (Olorunsola, 1972; Horowitz, 1991; Berman *et al*., 2014)". Most analysts agree, however, that, far from being prehistoric, "ethnic identity is constructed, fluid, and one among multiple identities that actors can adopt depending on the situations in which they find themselves". Importantly, 'identities are frequently politicized and mobilized by the competitive pursuit of wealth, status or power … (but) they constitute distinct social roles and are not simply surrogates of nascent social classes; cultural pluralism is more than simply "false consciousness"'

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(Young,2012). In short, from the subjective view point of the individual from Africa, feelings of ethnic identity are sufficiently concrete to constitute a basis for forming political opinion and stimulating political action.

The singularity of ethnic voting, a central in the present investigation, occurs whenever members of a cultural group show a disproportionate affinity at the polls for a particular political party (Wolfinger, 2016). In brief, they tend to vote as a bloc. The logic of ethnic voting is as follows: by expressing solidarity, sub-national groups seek to elevate leaders from their own cultural background into positions of power, especially the top executive spot, thereby gaining collective representation (Posner, 2005). In extreme manifestations, identity voting can lead to results that are simple head counts of ethnic groups. In a situation where voter turnout is high, and if all voters choose parties associated with their own ethnic group, then an election can resemble an ethnic 'census' (Lever,2004; Horowitz, 2005; Ferree, 2016; McLaughlin, 2018). Under these circumstances, cultural demography is the principal determinant of the distribution of votes. In the Ghanaian context, the ewe ethnic group are seen to practice this theory as voting patterns show they usually vote for the NDC. The Akan ethnic group (Ashanti especially) is also usually seen to vote the NPP as voting patterns may show. These are instances of ethnic voting in Ghana.

This theory although used by a number of scholars, have also been critiqued. Robert Dahl in his book 'who governs' puts forth the view that voting behaviors on the part of ethnic groups, that is, the propensity for such groups to 'vote for one of their own' is by far and large a function of the group's socio-economic homogeneity. That is to say, the theory is limited to ethnic groups of low economic and development standing. Thus, their economic plights tends to bind them together as they believe one of their own may be the way to change their economic situation. According to Dahl, as members of the group move up the status scale, ethic group voting tend to break down as

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the group membership becomes socio-economically heterogeneous. In the final stage of ethnic group maturation, political loyalties become primarily a function of new status positions and ethnic sentiments become virtually meaningless as determinants of voting behavior. This, Dahl terms as assimilation (Dahl, 2005)

2.4.2 Economic voting theory

The voluminous literature on economic voting posits a powerful alternative view. A simple proposition is: citizens vote for the incumbent government if economic times are good; otherwise, they vote against it (Key, 200; Tufte, 2008; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2017). In a nutshell stated, elections are won or lost on the economy: economic recession boosts voter turnout; voters punish governments for poor economic performance but do not necessarily reward success; and 'economic conditions may be far more important determinants of the vote in developing countries than in the West, at least when times are bad' (Pacek & Radcliff, 1995: 756–757; see also Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2008).

In recent years, analyses of aggregate patterns in economic voting have taken a political and institutional turn. In particular, scholars emphasis the institutional arrangements that clarify (or obscure) the ruling party's responsibility for economic conditions. While the effects of such formal political institutions are evident across Western democracies, it remains to be seen whether these are also manifest in new multiparty political systems in Africa. Other generalizations have emerged from survey research at the individual level of analysis: when estimating economic interests, voters more commonly refer 'sociotropically' to the condition of the economy as a whole rather than 'egotistically' to their own living standards (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981; Lewis-Beck, 1988); and prospective expectations of personal wellbeing are more determinative than

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retrospective evaluations of government popularity, at least in Britain and Russia (Price & Sanders, 1995; Hesli & Bashkirova, 2001). But we have yet to learn whether voters in Africa make the same sorts of economic calculations at election time.

Problematically, however, models of economic voting may suffer from circularity. We know that vote choice and partisan identification are closely related, not least because some studies use the latter as a proxy for the former. But partisan identification may color economic perceptions: supporters of the incumbent party are often too generous in their evaluations of the government's economic performance, while opponents are overly critical. The issue, therefore, is whether economic perceptions are sufficiently independent of vote preference to serve as the foundation of a theory of economic voting (Evans & Andersen, 2006; Lewis-Beck *et al*., 2008a). At minimum, 'party ID' must be included in any multivariate explanation, preferably in a strict operation that distinguishes partisanship from considerations of economic performance.

2.5 Conclusion

On the basis of the purpose of the research, which is to ascertain whether ethnicity has influence on a voter's choice in Ghana's fourth republic we would utilize the Ethnic voting Theory. The study proposes the use of a mixed method in finding answers to the research questions and utilize the ethnic voting theory.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the various methods used in addressing the objectives of the study. It begins with discussions on the research design employed with justification for its choice. This is followed by discussions on the approach of the study, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection instruments and the techniques for data analysis employed for the study.

3.2 Research Design and Methods

Research design is normally used to explain plans and the procedures a researcher employs to address research objectives (Creswell, 2009). It provides idea on the processes for data collection and description on data analysis. This study employs a descriptive research. This design is used primarily to investigate what is necessary to study about a phenomenon, the kind of knowledge likely to be developed, the best way to gain the knowledge and who is likely to derive benefits from the knowledge developed (Harnesk, 2004). It answers questions about how, when and why a particular phenomenon occurs.

There are types of descriptive research designs and this study employs survey descriptive research design. The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of ethnicity on voting decisions in Ghana. This requires a national survey to appreciate the dynamics of voting decisions across the length and breadth of the country. Therefore, a nationwide survey was used to gather information on the multiple perceptions of research participants and subsequently employed descriptive tables and charts to indicate correlation between ethnicity and voter choice.

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3.2.1 Research approach

In in line with the study design employed, a mixed methods approach became very suitable for the study. This approach uses both quantitative and qualitative data to explain how and why a phenomenon occurs (Healy & Perry, 2000). While quantitative approach provides objective general view on a phenomenon, qualitative component tends to provide detailed information on the why the phenomenon occurs. In this study, a quantitative component used a secondary data already collected through a national survey for a similar purpose by the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana. Subsequently, a qualitative data collected by the researcher in some communities in Accra were used to shed light on the quantitative outcomes. The use of this approach encouraged respondents to put forth their needs, ideas, experiences and attitudes vital to the phenomenon being studied (Wright, 2006).

3.3 Population of the Study

The main population for the study is all Ghanaians living in Ghana and qualified to vote. The target population was anybody who has voted before in any national elections before the day of the interviews and was ready to respond to series of questions on how ethnicity influences voting decisions in Ghana.

3.3.1 Sample size determination (Quantitative component)

According to Castillo (2009), samples are drawn from a population if it is almost impractical to include everybody in a study (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the quantitative data were collected through a survey because it would not have been financially feasible to interview every Ghanaian voter at the time.

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Using a voter population of 10,444,241, a confidence interval (margin of error) of 3 and confidence level of 99%, a sample calculator suggested a sample size of 1849 (see Table 3.1). This sample size was later rounded up to 2000 and so eventually, 2000 voters were interviewed across all the then 10 regions in Ghana. Even though at the time of the interviews, there was 15,712,499 in the national voter register, 10,444,241 voter population who actually voted in 2016 general elections in Ghana was used because of the perceived bloated national voter register.

Table 3.1: Determination of Sample Size using Sample Calculator

Confidence Level:	○ 95% ◉ 99%
Confidence Interval:	3
Population:	10.444.241
Sample size needed:	1,849

3.3.2 Sampling techniques (Quantitative)

As already stated, the study employed quantitative data already collected by the Department of Political Science in December 2018 on the likely political decisions Ghanaian voters would have taken if elections were held during the day of the interviews. A multi-stage probability sampling techniques – including cluster sampling, simple random sampling, proportionate sampling technique and systematic random sampling technique were used to select respondents. Firstly, all assemblies were clustered into two clusters – metropolitan/municipal and district assemblies in each of the then ten regions in Ghana. Names of all assemblies in the district cluster in a region were written on equal sheets of papers, folded and put into baskets after which three of the folded papers were randomly selected. The same process was used to select two metropolitan/municipal in each region. At the end, there were 5 assemblies randomly selected to represent each region.

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Having selected five assemblies in each region, the population of the five assemblies in the regions were put together and compared to the national voting population of 10,444,241 to proportionately select sample sizes for all the regions as indicated by Table 3.2. On entering into each selected assembly, four interviewers were assigned to cover all the major communities and subsequently interviewed anybody who has taken part in previous national elections. The process continued until the number assigned to be interviewed was exhausted in the assemblies.

Table 3.2: sample sizes for the regions in the quantitative survey (2018)

Party	Total Votes	Percentage	Sample Size
Greater Accra	2,010,941	19.25	385
Eastern Region	1,078,964	10.33	207
Volta Region	768,080	7.35	147
Central Region	905,271	8.67	173
Western Region	974,431	9.33	187
Ashanti Region	2,147,653	20.56	411
Brong Ahafo Region	935,221	8.95	179
Northern Region	928,413	8.89	178
Upper East Region	440,288	4.22	84
Upper West Region	254,979	2.44	49
Total	10,444,241	100.00	2,000

Source: Political Science Department, 2018 Survey

3.3.3 Sampling techniques (Qualitative)

The qualitative interviews took place in July 2020 in Accra. This became possible for two reasons: firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic made it convenient to cover only Accra instead of travelling across the entire country. Secondly, Accra is a microcosm of Ghana with all major ethnic groups adequately represented in the population.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select 50 respondents from the major ethnic groups in Ghana in Accra. Respondents were selected based on previous experience in elections. Five focus

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groups discussions (FGDs) of six members were conducted. Each focus group discussion involved respondents from one major ethnic group. Five major ethnic groups were considered for this purpose: Ga-Dangme, Akan, Ewe, Guan and Mole- Dagbani. The interviews took place in North Kaneshie (Akans) and Ashaiman (Ewes), Osu (Ga-Dangme), Madina (Mole- Dagbani & Guans).

After the focus group discussions, 15 experienced voters from the major ethnic groups were engaged in key informant interviews (KIIs). Including these were traditional chiefs, tribe heads and executives of tribal associations. Thereafter, 5 more experts including: 2 lecturers, 2 politicians (one from NPP and one from NDC) and also a media practitioner were consulted for their expert views on the influence of ethnicity on voting decision in Ghana.

3.4 Instrument for data Collection

The quantitative data were collected through the use of questionnaire consisting of both closed and open ended questions. The questions were compiled in sequential order and fed into a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) technique used in the data collection. The CAPI is an interviewing technique in which the interviewer uses a computer to electronically record responses to questions provided by the respondents. On the other hand, the qualitative interviews were conducted using different interview guides for the FGDs and the KIIs.

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3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data were procured from the Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana. The data were cleaned and adjusted for the purpose of the study. Subsequently charts and tables were mainly used to provide pictorial illustrations on the link between ethnicity and voting decision.

3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to categorize data and present it in the form of patterns that relate to the data (Alhojailan, 2012). In thematic analysis, the researcher makes notes and sorts the data it into various categories (Hinson et al., 2009). In using thematic analysis, the researcher is able to provide an analysis of the data from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes. The output of the interviews was transcribed and read over very well in order to identify key views from the interviews and then relate to the key themes (objectives) of the study.

3.6 Ethical Clearance

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana before embarking on the qualitative interviews. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and nobody was forced to take part of the interviews. Covid-19 protocols were strictly adhered.

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3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the various methods used in addressing the objectives of the study. The mixed method approach used provides opportunity for the results to be generalized while at the same time appreciating the detailed perspectives of what influence voting decisions in Ghana. Processes for data collection and data analyses were all discussed in the chapter to shed light on the robustness of the eventual results of the study.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study analyses the data collected from the field in response to the three objectives. It begins with discussions on the demographic characteristics of the respondents of both quantitative and qualitative data sets. This is followed by the discussions on the how the data sets are used to address the three objectives. The chapter then concludes with a summary on the key findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

This section presents demographic characteristics of the respondents engaged for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection. The analysis begins with information on the respondents for the qualitative interviews (see Table 4.1). In all, 50 respondents were aged for the various categories of interviews. The mean age of the respondents for the FDGs is 44 years and 16 of them were females with 22 of them being married. Those who were not married were either single or widowed.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

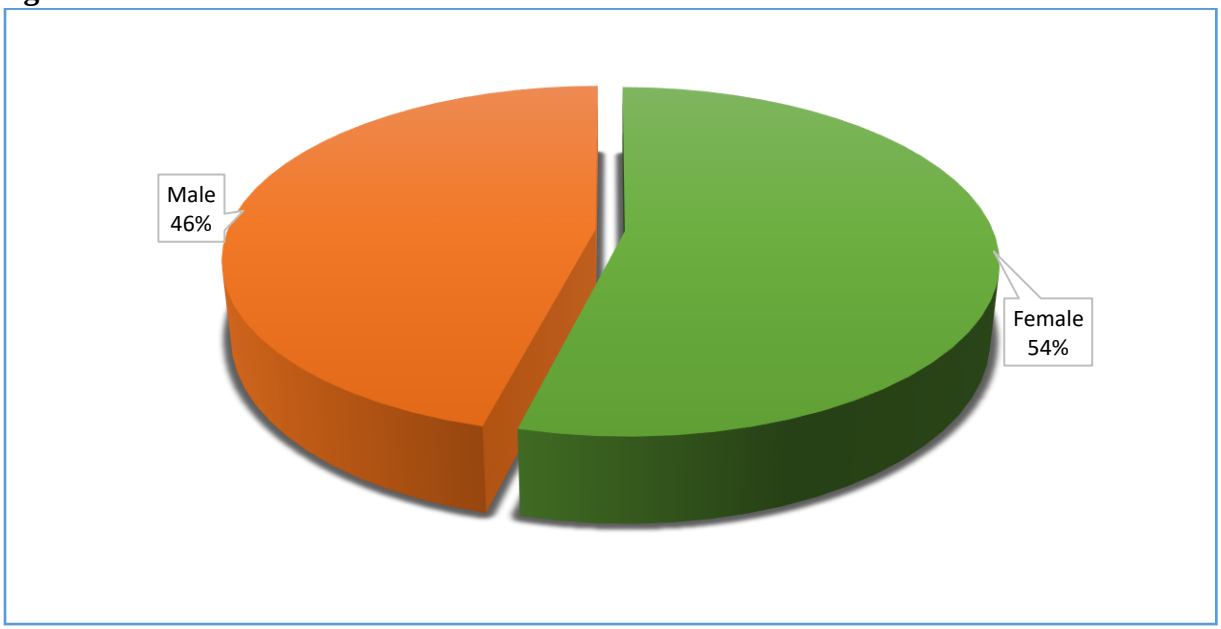
Category of respondents	Gender		Mean Age (years)	Marital status	
	Male	Female		Married	Not married
(1) FGDs	14	16	44	22	8
(2) KIIs	10	5	30	11	4
(3) Experts Interviews	3	2	40	4	1

Source: Field data, July 2020

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The following section focuses on the demographic characteristics of respondents for the quantitative interviews across the then 10 regions in Ghana. Like many democracies, socio-demographic characteristics have mostly influenced elections in Ghana. Principally among these are: ethnicity, area of residence, religious affiliation and educational status. Figure 4.1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. It appears the sampling was a bit skewed towards females.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

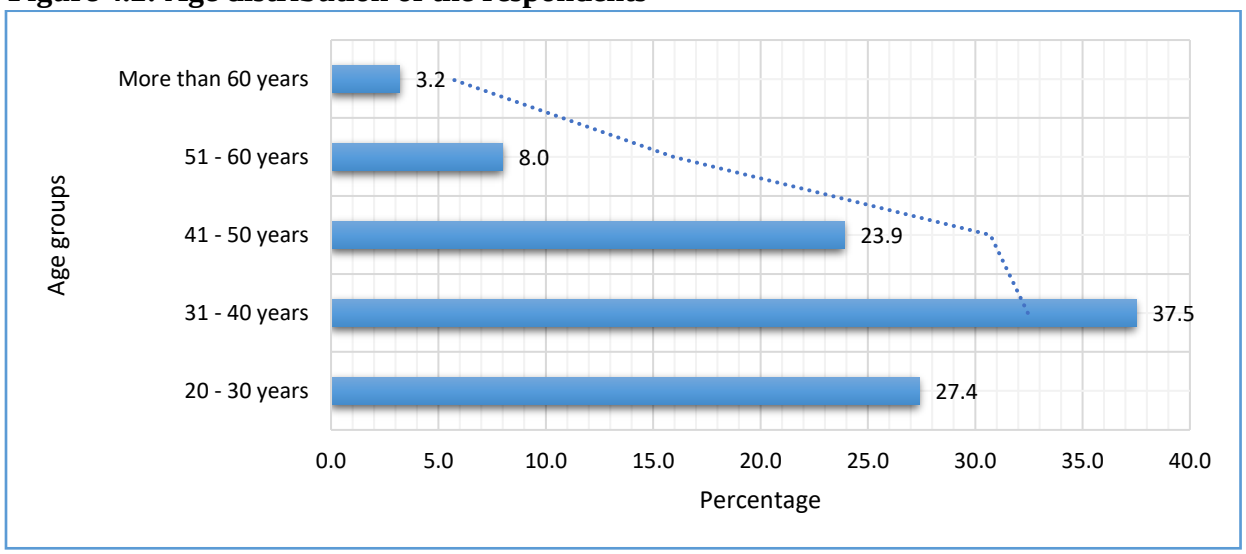


Source: Field work, December, 2019

Figure 4.2 indicates the age distribution of the respondents for the quantitative survey. The age group 31-40 years constituted the highest proportion of 37.5 per cent of the respondents. The age distribution is normally distributed and consistent with the age distribution of the voter population of Ghana (EC, 2019).

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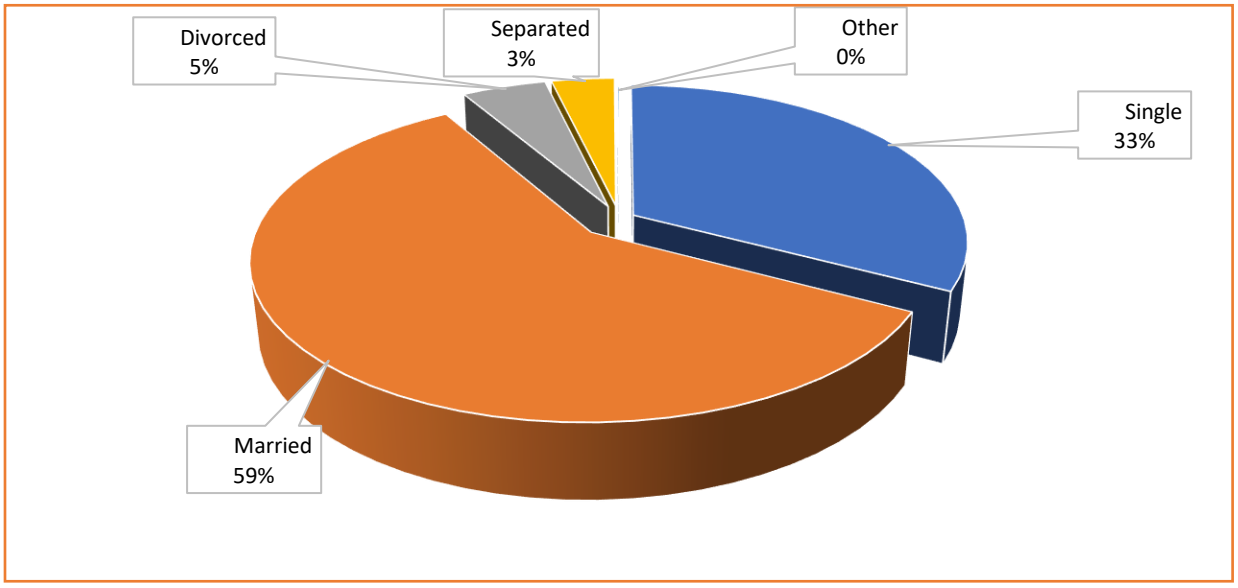
Figure 4.2: Age distribution of the respondents



Source: Field work, December, 2019

The data (see Figure 4.3) indicate that about 6 out of every 10 interviewed were married. This is consistent with the information on the marital status of the Ghanaian adult population (GSS, 2014).

Figure 4.3: Marital status of the respondents

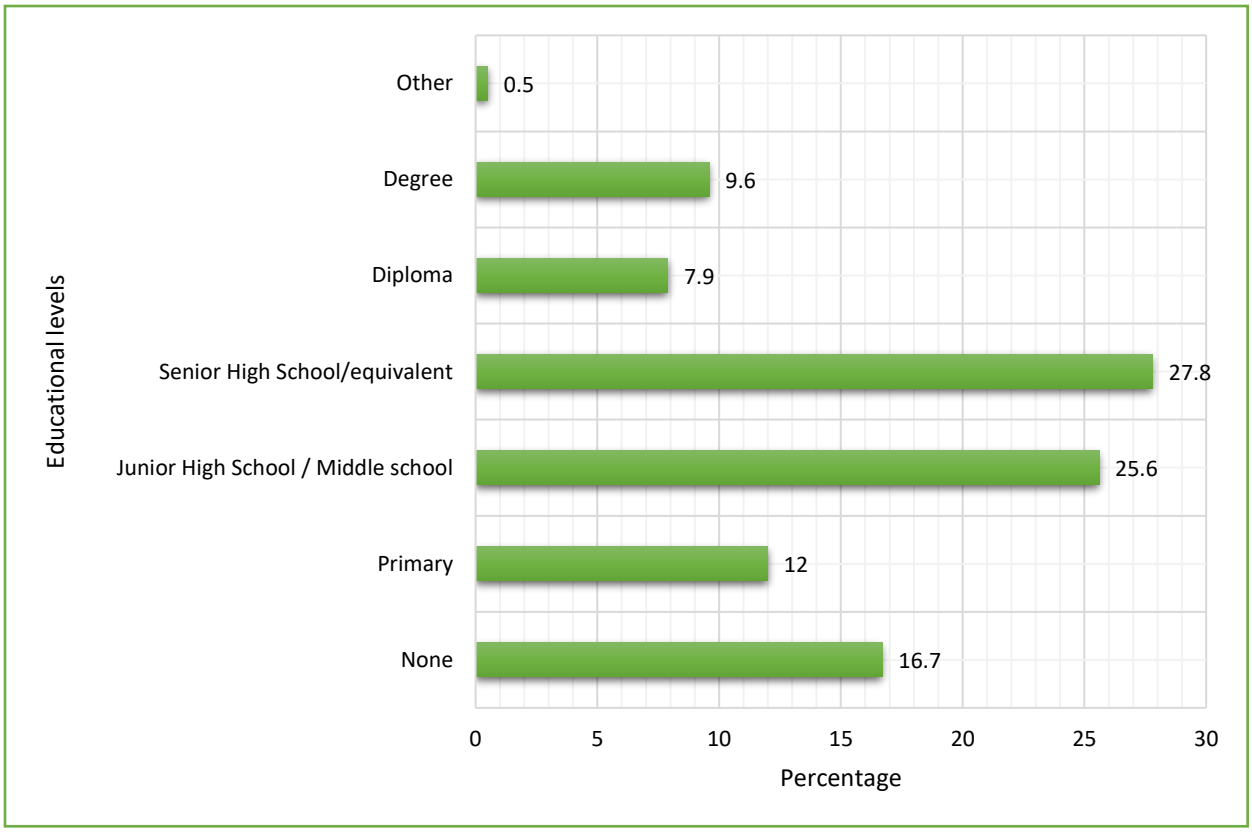


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Source: Field work, December, 2019

Figure 4.4 illustrates the level of educational acquisition of the respondents. The data appear to suggest that the educational levels of the respondents are consistent with that of the adult population of Ghana indicated by Ghana Statistical Service in 2014.

Figure 4.4: Educational levels of the respondents

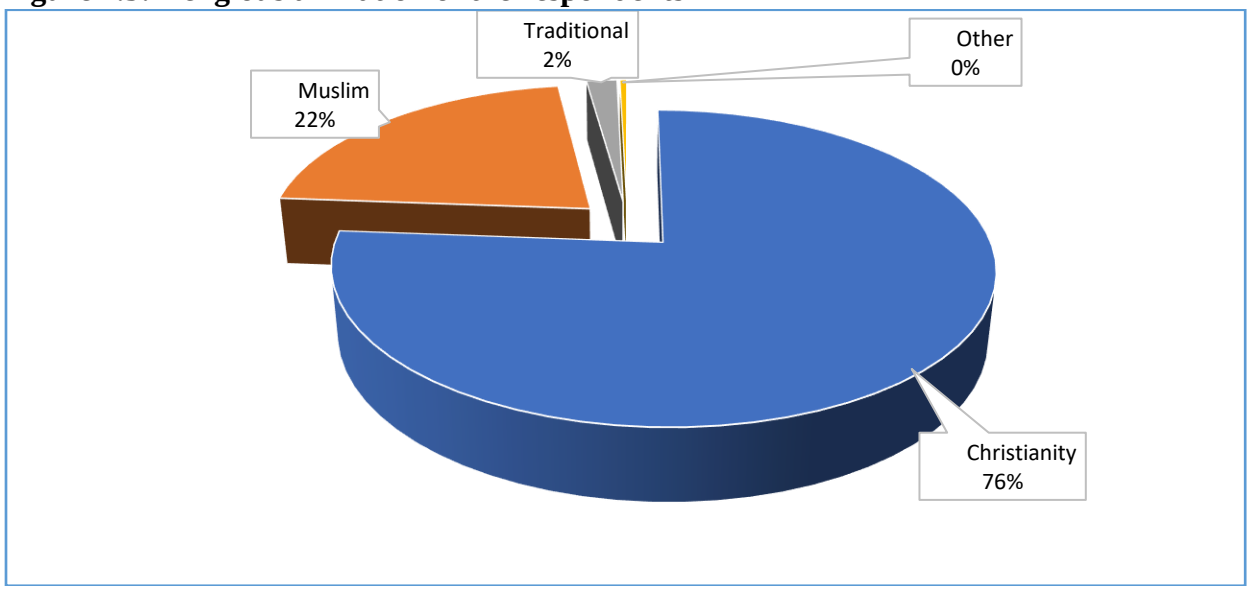


Source: Field work, December, 2019

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Figure 4.5 shows religious affiliation of the respondents and Christianity (76%) came out a predominant religion of the respondents. This finding is fairly consistent with that of Ghana statistical Service (2014) on the religious affiliation of the Ghanaian adult population.

Figure 4.5: Religious affiliation of the respondents

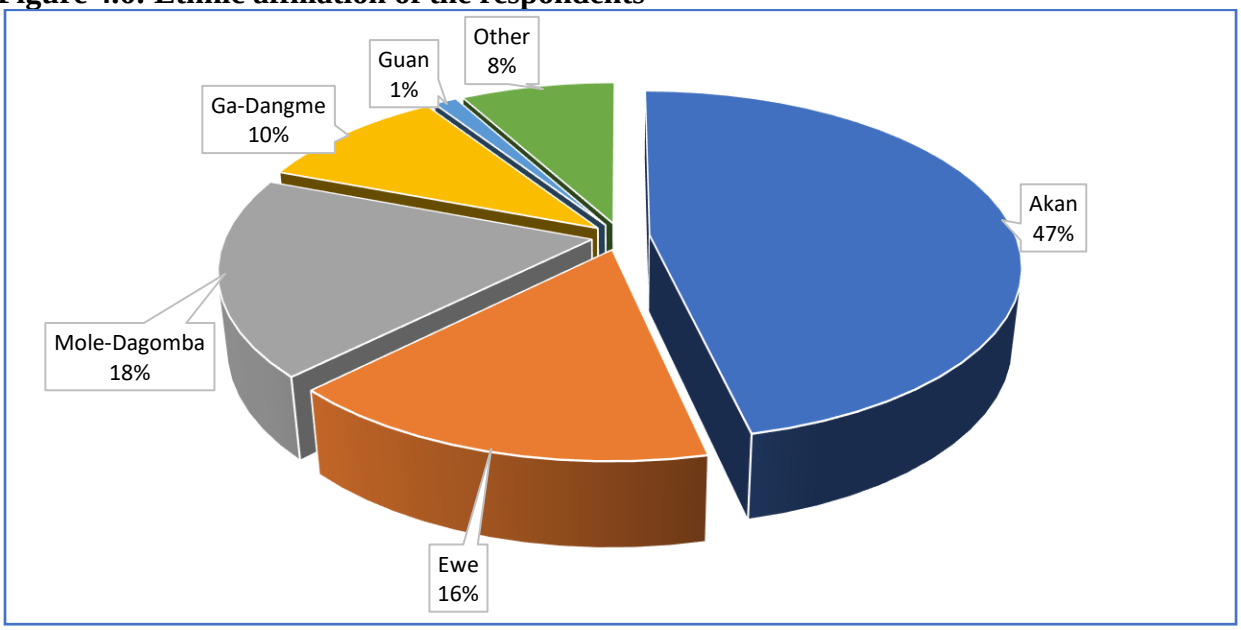


Source: Field work, December, 2019

Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of the respondents among the major ethnic groups in Ghana. The data is fairly consistent with the ethnic distribution indicated by the Ghana Statistical Service (2014).

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Figure 4.6: Ethnic affiliation of the respondents



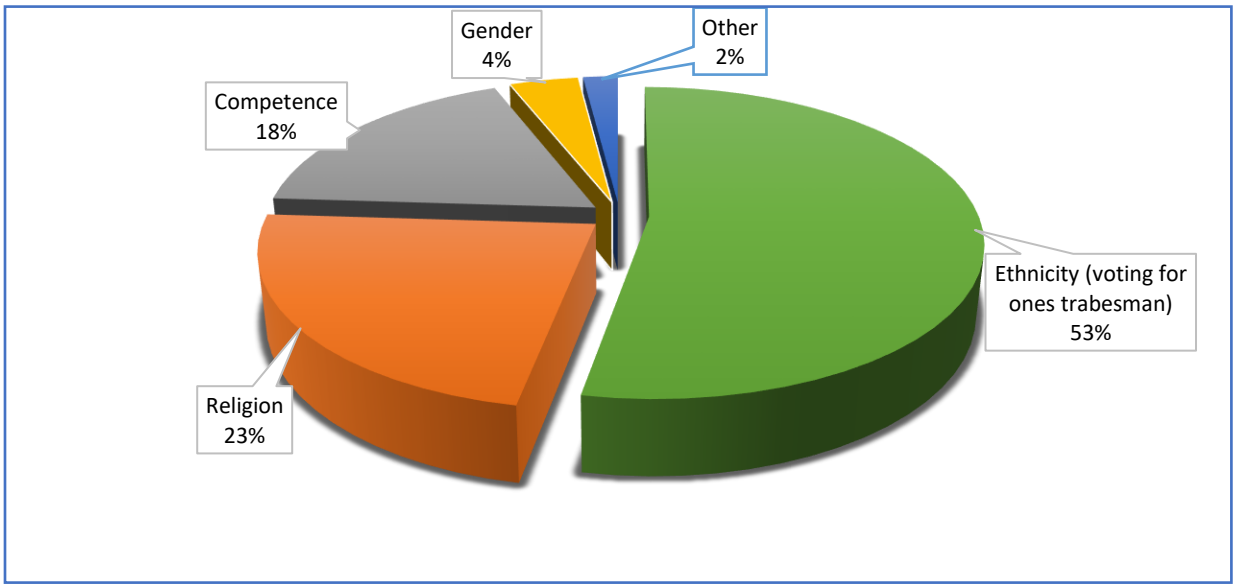
Source: Field work, December, 2019

4.3 Factors that influence voter decision in Ghana (Objective One)

This section uses both the quantitative and qualitative interviews to assess the opinion of the respondents on the issues that influence Ghanaians to vote. Figure 4.7 provides illustrations on the factors that in the opinion of the respondents of the quantitative survey motivate Ghanaian voters to vote for candidates. Expectedly, overwhelming 53 per cent of the respondents mentioned ethnicity as the main factor they consider during voting. This finding is consistent with the finding by(Carlson, 2012) who got same results in a similar study in Uganda.

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Figure 4.7: Factors that influence voting decision in Ghana



Source: Field work, December, 2019

With regards to the ethnicity, respondents of the various qualitative interviews shared their personal experiences. A middle aged man had this to say:

> My brother, it is good to see one's tribesman in top positions of the land. In that way, you can always receive help from them (FGDs, Madina, July 2020).

Many others also shared similar views during the qualitative interviews. Another man had this to say:

> For me is very simple, I don't want a person from another ethnic group to be head of me. Their people already do not have any regard for other tribes. My decision is point blank. I really have a big problem with such circumstances (FGDs, Madina, July 2020).

Another said:

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> Yes, ethnicity does influence my voting; He replied; I remember in 1969 standing for the nationalist party was Dr. H. S Bannerman. He vied for the Member of Parliament for the Accra Central. We all voted for him, which included Gas and my other who knew him. The majority that voted for him were Gas. I mean most Ga's voted for him (FGDs, Osu, July 2020).

Another retired civil servant had this to say:

> It was then Kwame Nkrumah's era 1966 if I should remember. We were asked as Ghanaian to exercise our voting rights. I remember I did not see the need to vote due to the fact that it was a one-party state (dictatorship) so I did not see the need to vote for the particular election. No one was competing with then Head of State. Why should I vote? But in 1969 I voted till current. I have taking part in district assembly, parliamentary and presidential election. Where I hail from actually affects my votes. Once you are my 'brother', I will definitely vote for you (KII, August, 2020)

Another respondent had this to say

> For me I always like it when my fellow tribe mate are in positions of power. I voted on ethnic lines in the last two elections because I felt other tribes would do the same thing(FGDs, Ashaiman, August 2020)

Few numbers also said they look at the competence of the candidate to vote. From the qualitative interviews, one woman had this to say:

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> Sir, it will be unfair for me or anyone to vote for someone simply because he/she is from my tribe. What if he cannot to the job? I want someone who can do the job (FGDs, North Kaneshie, August 2020).

Another said

> As a young man and going up, my parents voted for a particular party because of some events that took place in the past. I wanted to vote in the opposite but my grandmother and aunties talked me out of it. I voted on the bases of ethnical lines. Currently, I really want to avoid tribal and ethnic wars so I am voting for the right person or group persons to lead the country (KII, August 2020)

Another said:

> For me, competence is everything. I always ask myself what the person I am voting for will do for my country. In a few cases, I have realized some of our political office holders especially the MPs are senior high leavers. Not to look down on them but I always ask myself how competent these individuals are and how they can help the country. So for me I don't let ethnicity sway me to a candidate at all(KII, August 2020)

From the qualitative interviews, the data appeared to suggest that quite a number of the respondents do not joke with their religious affiliations and it appeared to influence their voting decisions. One woman had this to say:

> I am a Christian and I have been a Christian all my life. It is not as if I hate other religions but for me I will always vote my fellow Christian than vote for a Muslim. During the last election, the man who stood for my party was a Muslim and his opponent I learnt was an

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> Assemblies of God member. When I went to vote, I voted for my fellow Christian (FGDs, North Kaneshie, August 2020)

A middle age woman added:

> People we vote for are the ones who would make policies that will affect all of us including our children and their children to come. Therefore, when I am voting I do not take my faith likely at all. I make sure I vote for someone who understands my faith and is likely to make decisions and policies that will not go contrary to my faith. I take it as if the person is a representative of my faith in government (KII, August 2020)

Another woman said:

> We were once told at church that the Muslims are rapidly dominating the governing of our country and Christians had to do something about it. Since then I have made sure that I vote for Christian MPs only. Even in the last Assembly voting, I voted for a Christian
>
> (FGDs, North Kaneshie, August 2020)

Another respondent had this to say:

> For me is very straightforward why should allow a man from another religion to be head of me. Their people already do not respect my people and other religion. My decision is final. I will always vote for my Muslim brother or sister (FGDs Madina, July 2020)

Speaking on the part of Gender, some of the responded admitted that when it came to their voting, they are almost all the time gender bias, explaining that, to them there are not many women in the political landscape of Ghana. Hence, they feel being gender bias is their way of contributing to the representation of women within the corridors of power. One woman had this to say:

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> Forgive me sir but when it comes to voting and there are women involved, I must confess that I am gender bias. For me I feel Ghana has not been fair to our women and that is how I can also help. When we look around us, there are not many women you partake in politics so for me, when one surfaces, I use the opportunity to help in my own small way. Forgive me but that is me (KII, August, 2020)

Another woman had this to say:

> For me, I do not normally engage myself in the voting activity but the few times I have, I normally look out for the women. We women have to look out for ourselves sometimes when it comes to some of these things. Sometimes women are shy or sometimes bullied when it comes to politics and elections so I help the bold ones who are able to come out (KII, August, 2020)

A middle age woman was quick to add that:

> Look around you and you will realize that, there are few or no women participating in politics. I don't know if it is their family that prohibits them or they are just not interested. For me, it is only nice that when a woman is bold enough to come out, all women throw their weight behind her. I have started I hope all women come to this realization and vote for women who contest for political office (KII, August 2020)

The qualitative interviews brought to the fore one other factor that influenced the voting decisions in Ghana that the quantitative did not record and that is voting history. Very few of the respondent admitted that sometimes voting history influence their decisions when it comes to voting. To them, their families have voted for a particular party and they have been initiated into it, which to them is sometimes difficult to change. One man had this to say:

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> Ghana is blessed with a rich history of elections right from the Kwame Nkrumah's era to the His Excellency Nana Danquah Akuffo Addo era who is currently the President of the Republic of Ghana. I first voted in the 1992. It was a tension packed election. Generally, it was a free and fair election. I cannot do the rough calculation the precise number of times I have voted. At that time my family especially, my father influenced me to select a party to vote to power. He told me that was our family party. Since then it has been difficult for me to vote otherwise (KII, September 2020)

Another said:

> Growing up, when it came to voting, we didn't have much choice because my father told us that in our family, they have been voting for party A for many years. Even before we left the house to go and vote, he would warn us to vote for party A, now it has become part of me and I have not changed (KII, September 2020)

Another respondent added that:

> "I turn 18 years in 1996 which was an election year. I remember I had to travel from Sunyani to Accra to vote. I was a bit happy to take part in the national elections. I remember National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) where the two dominant parties I remember. It a very proud moment to be a Ghanaian because the elections where very successful election. I was staying with my big brother then. I remember he woke me up as early as 3:00 am in the morning the week before the election. He gave a rich lecture on our family party and the need to vote for them. He stated how our family had benefited from them and how we have been voting them. I had no choice then than to vote for them (KII, August 2020)

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Again, one other respondent added:

> In my house, you dare vote for the party that is not the family party. Everybody will look at you as if you have committed a taboo. Unless perhaps you keep it yourself, of which your guilty conscience may not permit you. So we were always influenced by the voting history of our family (FGDs, North Kaneshie, August 2020)

Even though many other factors such as gender (4), religion (23) and competence (18) came to the fore as potentially influencing voting decisions in Ghana. It is clear that ethnicity is the most significant factor that influence voting decision in Ghana. As a result of this, voters of a particular ethnic group tend to vote for the same political party. For instance, while Ewes predominantly lean towards NDC, Asantes do not joke with NPP. Almost all tribes in the country have particular political parties they usually vote for and it is interesting to note that, the tribesmen of such political parties mostly represent the constituencies in these areas in the Ghanaian Parliament. For instance, most of the MPs from Volta Region are NDC MPs and also Ewes just as most of the MPs from Ashante Region are NPP MPs and Asantes as well.

4.4 Reasons why Ghanaians vote on ethnic lines (Objective Two)

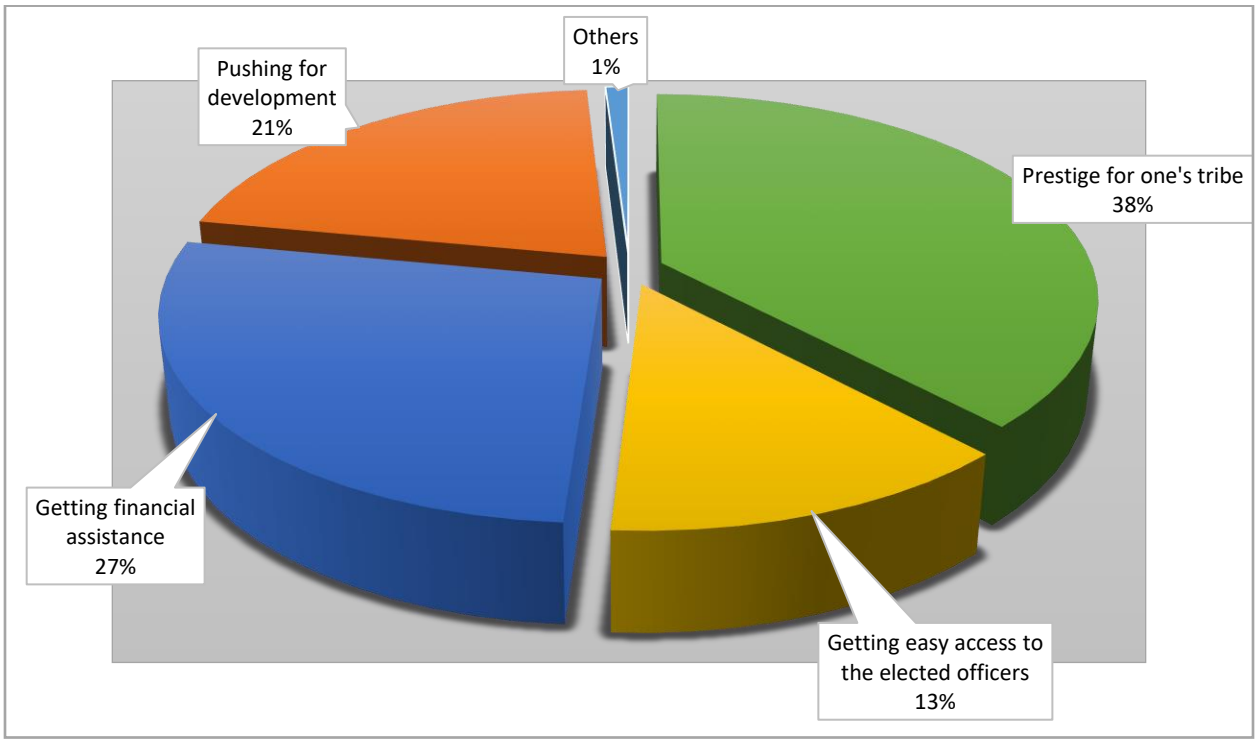
This section uses both the quantitative and qualitative interviews to assess the opinion of the respondents on the reason why they vote on ethnic lines. Figure 4.8 provides illustrations on the factors that in the opinion of the respondents of the quantitative survey motivate Ghanaian voters to vote for candidates of their choice.

From Figure 4.8, 38% of the respondents in the quantitative study said the main reasons they vote on ethnic lines is the prestige they derive from their tribemate being in positions of power. 27% of

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the respondents said when their tribemates are in position of power, it helps them in getting financial assistance. Other factors that was brought to the fore are getting easy access to elected officials (13%) and pushing for development (21%)

Figure 4.7: Reasons why Ghanaians vote on ethnic lines



Source: Field work, December, 2019

With regards to prestige for ones tribe, respondents of the various qualitative interviews had some experiences to share. A man had this to say:

> For the fact that Dr. H.S Bannerman was Ga and I am Ga too and also my personal Doctor. It influenced my choice of voting. Although other people were contesting together with

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> him, it felt good to have another Ga man on the seat. Looking at people in high positions at that time, the Gas were not many (FGDs, Osu, July 2020)

Another woman said:

> Other tribes feel good when their people are in power, so why shouldn't I fight for my people, my husband has always been teasing me that my people don't learn, so I will always vote for my kind to be in power. If not for anything, it will make me feel better (FGDs, Ashaiman, August,2020)

Another man said:

> As for my tribe, we like power and money so a lot of people want to associate themselves with us and everybody knows that. So for me I will vote for my tribemate to be in power and get more money. By so doing a lot of us will have money and we shall be the best. Who doesn't want good things in their house (FGDs, Ashaiman, August 2020)

One woman said:

> It feels good to point at one person in a high position of power and boast that he/she is from your hometown or from your ethnic group. I am from Akyem kibi, and we always boast that the President Nana Akufo Addo is from our hometown. I am sure others from other places with such personalities do same (FGDs, Kaneshie, August 2020)

Another person had this to say:

> I voted for the current president because he is from my home region. I do not if there was ever a president who hailed from the Eastern region but to the best of my knowledge, he was the only one I knew. I also did not know when we would get such an opportunity again,

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> so I had to get behind the agenda and I must confess it feels good to have a president from my home region (FGDs, Kanashie, August 2020)

Another factor that was brought to the fore as to the reasons for voting on ethnic lines was to getting financial assistance, some of the respondents of the qualitative interviews had this to say, a trader said:

> The former MP of this constituency was from my hometown. He grew up not too far from our family house in our hometown. When he was in power, he used to help me pay for the school fees of my children. Even when I need money urgently to open my shop, he helped me with some money, so for me if I should vote for my fellow tribemate, I will gladly do that (FGDs, Madina, July, 2020)

A politician also had this to say:

> I have had instances where some people told me, they voted for me because of one financial favour I did them in the past. I do not turn a blind eye to that because I know it influences some people to vote for me one way or the other. However, I do not use that as a yardstick for votes (Expert interview, August 2020)

Another respondent said:

> I voted for my MP because he was from my hometown and we attend the same church, anytime he comes to church, he gives me money. Sometimes even if he does not come to church and I some way somehow pass by his office, I get some money. So for me as long he contests for elections, I will always campaign and vote for him (FGDs, Madina, July 2020)

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A middle age man had this to say:

> I voted for my MP because he is a good man with a good heart. Everybody in the neighbourhood says it. He has helped many people pay the fees of their children. Even if you do not have food to eat, when you go to him, he will give you food. I voted for him because I know when I need any help he will assist me. As long as he contests for the seat, I will vote for him. Such a good man (FGDs, Osu, July 2020)

Other respondents made it clear that pushing for development by elected officials is the reason they vote on ethnic lines, many of the respondent said when their tribemates are in power especially representing places of their origin, it motivates them to push for the development of those places. This is what some respondents had to say about pushing for development. A middle age man said:

> My brother, where I'm from, it is only someone from that place who will understand what we need and do not need. Someone who hails from another place will not understand the needs of my people. So to solve all that, it is best I vote for someone who comes from my place, understands my language and my people. If he is not one of us, he will not feel the pain of my people. So for me I will always vote for one of my own who I know will help develop our place (FGDs, Ashaiman, August, 2020)

Another woman said

> As for me, I am in Accra, but my family is still in the North. I may be getting good water to drink but my people may not have, so when it is time to vote and I go to the north to vote, I vote for someone who will help bring good things to the North, not some who will forget us. When we vote for one of our own, since the person has experienced the bad things In the north, he will push hard to bring development to the North (KIIs, July, 2020)

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Another respondent said

> To talk about development, who is in a better position to push for it than my fellow tribemate? I will always vote for my fellow kind because I think he will push harder than someone who does not belong to my tribe. I always feel like people who do not belong to my ethnic groups are outsiders, and may not have our development on his heart. If that is the case then I prefer someone who is my ethnic group member (KIIs, August 2020)

One woman was eager to talk, she said:

> In this constituency of ours, in 2008, one man was voted for. At the time, he had just come from abroad so he had a lot of money to campaign to win him the seat. After winning, nobody saw him again. The roads were so bad and even a public place of convenience was a problem. A lot of people started agitating for his removal and in 2016; we voted him out and voted for one of our own. Can you imagine that between 2016 and today, we now have three public places of convenience and our roads are being fixed? All I am saying is, when one of your own is in power, they understand and know the needs of the people and they help push for development (KII, August 2020)

A Civil Society Organisation official said:

> My friend let me tell you the truth, individuals feel safe when their fellow tribemates are in power, they feel these officials will aid their development in one way or the other vis-à-vis other members of other ethnic groups. Individuals who are keen on development feel other tribemates will not help them as compared to members of their own tribe (Expect Interview, August 2020)

A politician said

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> As a politician, I am motivated to help my people more because I know they depend so much on me. Not forgetting that they voted for me, and expect me to develop my constituency or at least make life easy for them. So sometimes, if lobbying is difficult or government says they do not have money, sometime I use my own money to help in the little way I can. In 2015 for instance, I use my money to build a borehole for my people as a way for easy their water problems (Expect Interview, July 2020)

Getting access to elected officials is yet another reason individuals vote on ethnic lines as the data suggested, respondents felt that voting for members of their ethnic groups would give them better chances of getting access to these elected officials than members of other ethnic groups. Some respondents had this say:

> My MP was appointed a ministerial appointment, anytime people go to see him, I learnt they don't get to see him, but anytime I go there and mention that I am from our hometown, I get to see him. He has helped me a couple of times. Imagine I was not from his hometown or his ethnic group, he wouldn't see me. So for me I will always vote my tribemate (KIIs, August, 2020)

Another respondent said

> Senior man, the big people if they don't know you or come from the same place with you, it is difficult to get to them. Where I vote, I only get to talk to the MP when he comes for funerals in my hometown. Those days, before he leaves for the city he will organise get together so we can talk to him. If he were not a member of my ethnic group, I would not get such access to him (KII, August 2020)

A respondent said:

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> In other places or constituencies, there are people who have not laid eyes on the political representative not even once simply because they have no relationship with them. My MP and I both come from Winneba. Anytime we meet at Winneba for a funeral we have a chat and laugh about issues. He even helped my son in his National service placement. So you see, I wouldn't have had all these privileges if he was not my tribe mate. I will still vote for him again if he contests (KII, July 2020)

A man gave his opinion and said:

> For me I would rather vote for someone who is a fellow brother whom I can go to anytime and anywhere to talk to and he will not see me as a stranger than someone who is from another ethnic group and would not see me as one of his own. I do not know of other people but for me brotherliness gives me great comfort. I need a leader I can feel confident in accessing him (FGDs, Madina, July 2020)

The data appear to suggest that motivations for voting for people from one's ethnic group in Ghana includes prestigious reasons. In other words, some Ghanaians vote for their tribesmen to raise the prestige of their ethnic groups higher. For instance, some Ghanaians feel proud to belong to an ethnic group with majority members of the ruling class. Apart from this, other reasons such as financial assistance were brought to the fore. People get motivated to vote for their fellow tribemate because of certain financial assistance they may derive from them. As others vote on ethnic lines with the hope of getting financial assistance, others pay back a favor of financial assistance by voting. Easy access to the elected official was also another factor that motivates people to vote on ethnic lines as suggested by the data. It appeared people feel more comfortable when dealing with people of their own ethnic group vis-à-vis members of other ethnic groups. People tend to vote for them because they feel it gives them a better chance of having access to them than if they were of

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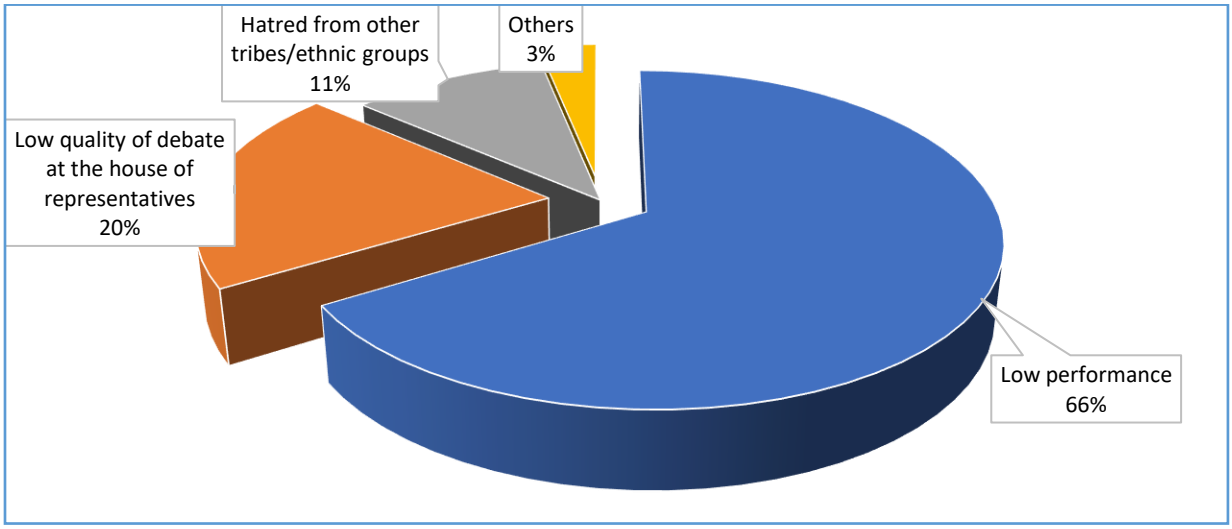
different ethnic groups. Development of one's ethnic community appeared to be one of the reasons that motivates people to vote on ethnic lines. People feel that it is only members of the same ethnic group that will understand and feel the pains and needs of its people. That is to say, members from other ethnic groups may not necessarily have indebt knowledge about the needs of other groups. From the interviews, it was alleged that individuals who had been voted for on ethnic lines turn to push harder for the development of the communities than others who were not members of the ethnic group. In conclusion, the reasons that motivate people to vote on ethnic lines include, prestige for one's tribe, financial assistance, easy access to elected official and push for development of communities.

4.5 The Effects of voting along Ethnic Lines (Objective Three)

The last objective sought to identify from the respondents what they think could be the effect of voting along ethnic lines and Figure 4.8 shows the responses from the quantitative survey. The data suggest 66 per cent of the respondents as indicating low performance on the part of the elected officials as a possible consequence for voting along tribal lines. This could be the case because these elected officials are not challenged enough to perform better. Number one, the thought of being easily voting back could make them relax. Again, it could also be that these people happened to be naturally incompetent who sail through the corridors of power because of ethnic cards played by the electorates. Therefore, it does not matter how such a personality would want to make it, his/her performance would be a mediocre.

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Figure 4.8: Effects of voting along ethnic lines



Source: Field work, December, 2019

Aside the low performance, respondents of the quantitative survey also mentioned issues such as low quality of debate at the House of Representatives (20%) – which could either be an assembly or parliament. One another factor, hatred for one's ethnic group (11%) also came out as a potential adverse effect of voting along ethnic lines. Indeed, some Ghanaians look down on the ethnic groups that vote mostly along ethnic lines and the also members of the dominant ethnic group sometimes look down on the less dominant ones.

Even though respondents of the quantitative data were asked to indicate the effects of voting along an ethnic line (in an open-ended question), all the responses that came happened to be negative. However, the qualitative interviews brought to the fore both positive and negative effects of the behavior.

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Negative effects of voting along ethnic lines

From figure 4.8 above one of the major effects of voting on ethnic lines that was brought to the fore was low performance or low productivity. Many of the qualitative interview respondents had quite a lot to say about low performance by the elected official. One expect said:

> Chairman just look at this, someone may not even have a university degree but because he has the of support of his fellow ethnic members, they vote for him to go to parliament. Such a person what meaningful contribution can they do in parliament. They go there, buy big cars, and build big mansions at the expense of the country. While other people who may have the knowledge but simply because they do not have ethnic support from the dominant ethnic group are there without such opportunities. (Expect Interview, August 2020)

Another respondent said:

> My brother, I know of one MP who is in my church, he went to parliament in 1992 and until just recently he left parliament. Could you believe that, from 1992 till he left in 2012 this man never spoke in parliament? We never heard him for once contribute on the floor parliament but this man had so much support from his Krobo people until he said he was tired and was attending to his health. For all you know, there were people in his constituency who will contribute so well to the quality of debate on the floor of parliament but they do not have the ethnic support of the people (KII, August 2020)

Another Expect had this to say:

> You see when this happens; it causes what is known as square pegs in round holes. That is to say, people who cannot do the work effectively are voted for to the neglect of those who

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> can actually to the work. In the long run, the state suffers. I am not saying those who have ethnic support are incompetent. I am saying if individuals do not focus on competence and they let only their ethnicity cloud their judgement, then we are heading for a bad future.

Another respondent said:

> The country loses economically, because the right people are not in positions to move the country forward. This do not only occur in political positions but also in recruitment of people for our security agencies like the police, immigration and the army. This causes problem for the country (KII, August 2020)

One of the respondents was quick to add that:

> I know it is wrong to vote for someone just because he is my fellow ethnic brother but the thing is, all of them are doing it so I feel my ethnic group would lose out. Also looking at the benefits I get from current MP, it is hard to consider even if he is not competent (FGSs, Madina, July 2020)

Another effect suggested by the data and qualitative interviews was hatred for other tribes or ethnic groups. The respondents explained that, when one ethnic group dominates the other by always voting of ethnic lines, it brings about hatred between the dominant ethnic group and the less dominant ones. One of the politicians had this to say:

> Psychologically people do not feel safe if they are always the minority. An example is the brutality that happen in Rwanda. I do not want such a thing happening in Ghana but still want to feel safe. It can even bring about hatred and eventually tribal war (Expect interview, August 2020)

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Another expect added that:

> When an individual finds himself or herself constantly under the minority there is always the state of discomfort. Either he or she wants to fight himself and herself to the top and this cause a conflict or wars. Woman and children are killed, raped, no work and the country's economy fail. My organizations are affected, people are laid off, children drop out of school and so on. People fall for all manners of jobs, scrams and involve themselves in activities of criminal nature (Expect Interview, August 2020)

From the above, one could easily identify that low performance is the most major consequence of voting on ethnic lines. According to some of the respondents, this does not just affect the individuals but the country as a whole. Low performance means low productivity and efficiency. Others were of the view that low quality debate on the floor of parliament is another consequence of ethnic voting. Parliament is the place where laws are made together with other important decisions that shape the lives of citizens. Hence, it is a place that require great knowledge and technical expertise to be able to contribute meaningfully to debate and proceedings of the house. In that regard, if MPs are voted for on ethnic lines to the neglect of competence and knowledge, it will affect the quality of debate, thereby affecting the quality of decision-making. Hatred among ethnic groups is another consequence of ethnic voting. In the event one ethnic group dominates through voting, it will cause the less dominant ethnic group to hate the dominant ethnic group which can cause conflict and to a large extent tribal war which may hinder the peaceful coexistence we share in Ghana.

Although most of the effects of the respondents were negative in nature, a few positive effects were brought to the fore. Notable among these were low expenditure on campaigns and fostering of brotherhood among ethnic groups. Voting along ethnic lines means, there will be cut of

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campaign budget. In recent times, political office holder in the quest of retaining their offices spend huge budget on campaigns by buying cars, television sets, refrigerators, money sharing among others. Some go as far as promising the sharing of money upon winning the election. This will be reduced since office holders will not need much to convince electorate to vote because they would vote based of their ethnicity. One of the respondent gave a very good example of an ashanti man who lives in Kumasi and is contesting for a member of parliament position in say Bantama constituency together with other people who may not be from the Akan ethnic group. Such a man would not get much head ache in winning that seat comparatively to if he was to be an ashanti man contesting for a seat in the volta region. That is to say, by virtue of ethnic voting, this ashanti man would easily win the seat. Likewise, in the volta region, an ewe man who contests against other members of other tribes in the volta region will do next to nothing to win that seat. This automatically reduces the budget needed for campaigns. Again, ethnic voting fosters a sense of belonging and brotherliness among members of the same ethnic group as it binds them together. When members of the same group participate in the same activity or are bonded by the same ideology, it fosters not only physical unity and mental unity. This will reduce both inter and intra conflicts in the country. This would also go a long way to foster mutual help and assistance among them, which will contribute, to the overall wellbeing of the ethnic group. One Expect had this to say:

> Thinking carefully about this, it is not all bad news because I think it will reduce campaign budget for a lot of MPs. A Bantama MP would not need a large campaign budget because he knows his people would vote massively for him, likewise a Ho MP (Expect Interview, August 2020)

Another Respondent added that:

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We all see ourselves as brothers and sisters helping one another. When I vote for you today, tomorrow you will vote for me (FGDs, Madina, July 2020)

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to explore the impact of ethnicity on voter choice in Ghana. This chapter presents the summary of the key findings based on the objectives of the study. Conclusions on the key findings are made based on which policy recommendations are subsequently suggested.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study sought to address three objectives, namely; identifying factors that influence voting decisions in Ghana, examining the motivation for voting along ethnic lines and the assessing the effects of voting on ethnic lines. A mixed method approach was used with a nationally representative quantitative data and qualitative data collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions with respondents being purposively selected from some communities in Greater Accra.

It came of the study that ethnicity has a major influence on voting decision in Ghana. This finding was consistent with the outcomes of studies from Uganda and Mozambique. Discussions from both the quantitative and qualitative data sets indicated ethnicity as a key issue many voters use to choose their candidates. Apart from ethnicity, issues such as religious affiliation, gender and voting history of the voters also could, to some extent, affect voting decisions of voters. Religious affiliation came out as second most important factor that explain the voting choices of Ghanaians. Gender was the third factor that proved to have influence of the voting decisions of Ghanaians. It

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is imperative to add that, most of the people who showed that gender influenced their voting were women.

The second objective sought to find out the reasons why some Ghanaian vote along ethnic lines and the following factors came out: prestige for one's ethnic group, access to elected official, financial assistant and development of one's ethnic locality. Among these factors, the most important happened to be prestige for one's ethnic group. Voters explained that they take pride in voting for the people of their own kind (ethnic group) to top position. Again, according to some of them, voting for a member of one's ethnic group provides the space for them to get easy access to the elected officials. Some also stated that they found it easy and comfortable to relate better with members of their own kind. To some of them, voting for a member of one's ethnic group also help their localities to develop faster as it is only an insider who will understand the pains and needs of its people.

Lastly, the study sought to assess the effects of voting along ethnic lines and the following came out: low performance, low quality of debate in the house of the representatives and hatred for the ethnic groups that indulge in such practices. According to the voters, once the elected officials (such as MPs and Assembly members) get to know that their tribesmen are behind them irrespective of whether they perform or not, they tend to perform abysmally because they know they will definitely be voted for. While all the three factors indicated above came out of the quantitative analyses, the qualitative findings were consistent with them. Additionally, an interesting outcome from the qualitative analyses that appears positive suggested that politicians do not have to spend a lot of money on campaign since their election to power is seen as a shared responsibility and solidarity for all tribesmen.

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5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that ethnicity significantly influences voting decisions in Ghana is not too strange. This is because Ghana is made up of a number of ethnic groups some of who lived together in kingdoms before the white man came to lord things over them. As a result, some Ghanaians loyalty to their ethnic groups appears higher or paramount to that of the state. Therefore, an assistance to one's ethnic group member is a responsibility to the entire ethnic group and show of solidarity. The competition among the ethnic group is so intense that members will do whatever within their means to help their tribesmen get into positions of power. The study therefore concludes that a higher loyalty to one's ethnic group would motivate him/her to vote for their own kind. Again, the study concludes that economic and social issues not do have much influence on the voting decision of Ghanaians. The ethnic groups have political parties they normally vote for and members would not mind whomever or whatever he/she would do when elected to power.

The study concludes that human beings are naturally self-centred and may therefore want to benefit personally and immediately from any action or decision taken. As a result, voters vote for individuals they can easily approach for financial assistance or aid and not so much consider the competent ones whose efforts could bring eventual relief to all Ghanaians. Some voters have in mind that voting for a tribesman could facilitate development at their localities because such an individual one of their own who knows their needs and will not neglect them.

In spite of the various reasons for voting along the ethnic lines, the respondents were almost unanimous in suggesting a number of adverse implications for voting along ethnic lines. The study therefore concludes that Ghanaians are aware of the negative consequences for allowing ethnic affiliation to be a major influence on their voting decisions. Respondents are aware of the fact that if ethnicity overrides all interest and incompetent tribesmen are voted to power, they tend to

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underperform. Again, they are aware that low quality of debate in parliament and other assemblies could be because voters mostly voted for their own people some of whom were not too competent or had the requisite knowledge and expertise. Indeed, some political parties have become parties for some ethnic groups and therefore, voters vote mostly for the parties with not too much concern for the competence of the candidates of the political parties.

5.4 Policy Recommendations of the Study

The study suggest that National Commission for Civic Education become serous with civic education for Ghanaians to know that in all things, Ghana should come first, before individual and ethnic groups. The national songs and anthem should be played frequently for Ghanaians to whip up loyalty of Ghana. Once Ghanaians see themselves as one people with a common destiny, they would not mind voting for people of other ethnic groups.

The National Commission for Civic Education can also intensify their education in deep rural areas who do not have access to social media both print and electronic media. This would make sure loyalty to country is internalised among the people.

Relegation of socio-economic issues and evidence-base politics to the background and over reliance on ethnicity to make political decision could be the reason for political violence during campaigns and elections. The study suggest that the civil society organisations join forces with the political parties to make campaigns more of an issue based.

Again, politicians of other ethnic groups should give hope to the voters of other ethnic groups to trust them. Their utterances should be devoid of chauvinistic tendencies to put their ethnic groups ahead of all others. Parliamentarians should be encouraged to visit and interact with people of

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other constituencies and different ethnic groups more often. Regional Ministers of different ethnic backgrounds should be appointed to manage other regions of different ethnic groups. This would go long way to foster unity and peace in the country.

5.5 Future Research Directions

The findings of this research have major implications and points to a number of research avenues. A new research study is suggested to use a robust analytical technique to disentangle the counterfactuals in order to identify the exact effect of ethnicity on voting decisions.

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