

**THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVISM IN GHANA: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ACTIVISTS OF THE NDC AND NPP IN  
WA CENTRAL AND LAWRA-NANDOM CONSTITUENCIES,  
(1992-2008).**

**BY**

**GEORGE MEYIRI BOB-MILLIAR**

**(10256463)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE AWARD OF THE PHD AFRICAN STUDIES DEGREE**

**JUNE, 2012**

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## DECLARATIONS

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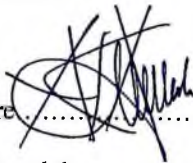
I hereby declare that this thesis is a result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in any University or elsewhere. All sources used are duly acknowledged.

Candidate's Signature.....



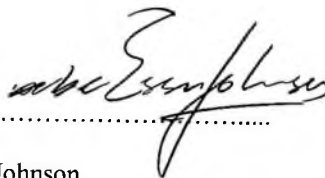
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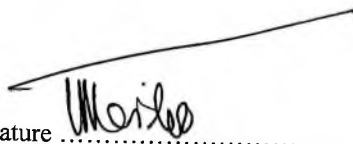
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Dr. Kojo Opoku Aidoo

## ABSTRACT

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Since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic on 7 January 1993, the NDC and NPP have dominated the electoral space. The thesis seeks to explain the motivational basis of political party activism in the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies between 1992 and 2008. The research findings were obtained by the application of mixed methods. The study argues that some Ghanaians signed up for the membership of political parties, and became party activists, because of the selective and material incentives the parties dispensed to their members.

Political party activism is the process of working to achieve collective party goals. Attitudinal and behavioural traits and the socio-economic status (SES) of activists enable us to group party activists into three categories: *patron activists*, *platform activists*, and *party foot-soldiers*. Party activism operates in two spheres: the formal and informal structures of the parties. The key to understanding why citizens join political parties in Ghana and become active in them lies in a multiplicity of factors. Altruistic, collective, and selective incentives and social norms are the main reasons Ghanaians joined the NDC and NPP. Party activists become contributors to the overall party agenda because they expect the political parties to satisfy their material motives. Citizens who become active in the NDC and NPP understand the possible benefits of their activism and the ways of achieving such goals. Party activists have realized that their “resources” (time, money and civic skills) (cf. Verba, *et al.*, 1995) are valuable, and that they can negotiate for material incentives. Indeed, material incentives stood out strongly as the motive for becoming active in the parties.

## DEDICATION

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In Loving Memory of Gaspard Bob-Milliar (1936-1998), also to Kaf for your love

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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This thesis would not have been possible without enormous support from several individuals. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of my supervisors, especially Professor Albert K. Awedoba. It was mainly due to his encouragement that my MPhil thesis was upgraded into this PhD. Thanks are also due Professor A. Essuman-Johnson and Dr. Kojo Opoku Aidoo. I also wish to thank my other, informal, academic advisors, especially Professors Cyril K. Daddieh, and Paul Alagidede, Dr. Franklin Obeng-Odoom and Bright Boye Kumordzi, for their unflinching support of my academic work; despite their busy schedules they all found time to read portions, and made very valuable suggestions.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ACP=Action Congress Party

AFRC=Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

APC=All People's Congress

APP=All People's Party

ARPB=Association of Recognized Professional Bodies

AYA=Anlo Youth Association

BPP=Black Power Party

CDRs=Committees for the Defence of the Revolution

CPP=Convention People's Party

DPP=Democratic People's Party

DWM=31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement

EAGLE=Every Accountable Ghanaian Living Everywhere

FPDG=Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship in Ghana

GAP=Ghana Action Party

GCP=Ghana Congress Party

GDP=Ghana Democratic Party

GDRP=Ghana Democratic Republican Party

GNP=Ghana Nationalist Party

GWP=Ghana Workers Party

GYP=Ghana Youth Party

JFM=June Four Movement

JP=Jehovah Party

LP=Labour Party  
LP=Liberty Party  
MAP=Muslim Association Party  
MFJ=Movement for Freedom and Justice  
NAL=National Alliance of Liberals  
NCD=National Commission for Democracy  
NDC=National Democratic Congress  
NGP=New Generation Party  
NJP=National Justice Party  
NLM=National Liberation Movement  
NP=Nationalist Party  
NPP\*=Northern People's Party  
NPP=New Patriotic Party  
NRP=National Reconstruction Party  
NSP=National Salvation Party  
NT=Northern Territories  
PAP=People's Action Party  
PFP=Popular Front Party  
PMFJ=People's Movement for Freedom and Justice  
PNC=People's National Convention  
PNDC=Provisional National Defence Council  
PNP=People's National Party  
PP=Progress Party

PPDD=Peoples Party for Democracy and Development

PPP=People's Popular Party

RAP=Radical Alliance Party

SDF=Social Democratic Front

SAA=Sub-Saharan Africa

TC=Togoland Congress

TEIN=Tertiary Institution Network

TESCON=Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy

TF=Third Force

UGCC=United Gold Coast Convention

UNC=United National Convention

UP=United Party



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: THE 1992 RE-DEMOCRATIZATION WAVE

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#### 1.1 Introduction

The early 1990s saw many Sub-Saharan African (hereafter SSA) countries embracing multi-party systems. Much attention has consequently been devoted to examining what Bratton and van de Walle (1997) called “democratic experiments” on the continent (e.g., Daddieh, 2011; Abdulai and Crawford, 2010; Cheeseman, 2010). Scholarly concerns have focused on the reasons for the democratic transitions at the times they happened; the nature or quality of the transitions; the structure or type of the party systems; the quality of the democracy process in the various states; and the challenges authoritarian rule has posed to democratic consolidation. Despite these challenges, the introduction of pluralistic systems has increased preference for democracy (i.e., liberal democracy). A large number of African citizens expressed a greater preference for multi-party democracy in Afrobarometer surveys<sup>1</sup>: Nigeria in 2000 (80.9%), Ghana in 1999 (74%), and South Africa in 1997 (56%), among other countries. Indeed, the 2008 Afrobarometer survey reported that a higher number (i.e., 79%) of Ghanaians prefer multi-party democracy over other political systems. In percentage terms, this was a four per cent increase over 2005, and the highest rating since 1999 (Afrobarometer, June 2008). Ghanaians’ approval of multi-party democracy is also backed by high voter turnouts in national elections. (For details on voter turnout, see Electoral Commission.) High voter turnouts are an indication of a healthy level

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<sup>1</sup> The Afrobarometer was launched in October 1999 to report on selected African countries surveys. See <http://afrobarometer.org>.

of political participation in Ghana. Nevertheless, political parties whose activities result in keen competition in these general elections have not seen an equally high participation in their structures. Simply put, few Ghanaians join political parties.

### **1.1.1 Background and Context**

Prior to 1990 only four SSA states qualified to be described as electoral democracies: Mauritius, Botswana, Gambia, and Senegal. This situation improved in the period between 1990 and 1995, when 38 out of 47 countries in SSA held elections (Manning, 2005: 702; Riley, 1991: 3-7). A point worth emphasizing is that by 1994 Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 8) reported that “not a single *de jure* one-party state remained in Africa.” Similarly, since 1989 only 12 Sub-Saharan African countries have experienced opposition victories (Cheeseman, 2010: 139), and of these Ghana is frequently singled out for praise because it is the only country where opposition victories have happened twice.

Domestic and international forces were important in the direction Africa took after the 1990s. Externally, the demise of the Eastern Bloc ushered in a “new world order” (cf. Chomsky, 1997) that affected the strategic importance of the continent generally; and, more specifically, some countries lost their strategic bargaining powers. As Decalo (1992: 17) notes, “what literally transpired was a massive devaluation in the ‘worth’ of Africa. African states were transformed from Cold War pawns, into irrelevant international clutter.” As the Soviet Union was liberalized, its allies in the developing world were forced to adjust to the new international order. Worse still, fluctuations in the world commodities prices (e.g., cocoa, coffee, gold) affected the economies of commodity dependent African states. As a result, many African states sought alternative funding to shore up their precarious domestic budgets. The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and

some advanced industrialized countries stepped in, and recapitalized their allies in Africa. In conjunction with Western states, the IFIs argued for the opening up of the political landscape (i.e., democratization) before additional financial assistance could be given to African states (see, e.g., Peiffer and Englebert, 2012; Abrahamsen, 2000). The options available to ruling despots and autocrats were very limited. One option that was attractive, however, and that if managed well would ensure the survival of the various one-party and quasi-military regimes, was to embrace multi-party systems. The so-called “class of 1990” military “strong men” replaced their medalled uniforms with the smart suits of civilian politicians (Baker, 1998).

The theoretical literature on democratization, however, suggests alternative explanations for regime change (see Doorenspleet, 2005). Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 19) discussed these alternatives under the broad theme “approaches to democratization.” The authors couch their arguments on democratization under the following sub-themes: “structural versus contingent explanations,” “international versus domestic explanations,” and “economic versus political explanations” (pp. 20-48). Whichever arguments scholars may advance, one fact remains: African states embraced constitutionalism as a direct result of the shifts in the tectonic plates of the domestic and international spheres.

Is democracy valued intrinsically or instrumentally in Africa? The intrinsic, rather than the instrumental (see Bratton and Mattes, 2001), value of democracy gained prominence in the debate on the transition to multi-party politics in Africa. The argument is that citizens will prefer democracy because of the positive rights that democratic governance promotes (Bratton and Mattes, 2001: 448). Conversely, the proposition regarding the instrumental value of democracy is that support for it is measured against a political transition, and it “is a means to other ends, most commonly the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of living standards” (Bratton and

Mattes, 2001: 448). The catalyst in the current wave of democratization in Africa was civil unrest<sup>2</sup> that had its origin in social, economic, and political grievances (Riley, 1991: 15). As Ake (1996: 138; 1993: 239-244) argues, citizens see liberal democracy in purely “economic and instrumental terms.” In this context, democracy is supposed to address the hardships citizens have faced under authoritarian systems. In Ake’s view, pro-democracy movements in Africa will emphasize “concrete economic and social rights rather than abstract political rights.” In this argument, democracy is valued not for what it means to Africans, but for its value to Africans in terms of being able to offer social protection. The wheels on which plural politics run are political parties: which are said to be crucial to the proper functioning of a democracy (see Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah, 2008; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001; Lipset, 2000; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). As Sartori (1997: 316) notes, without political parties, democracy would be “a highly chaotic affair.” It is consequently generally agreed that in both the new and old democracies political parties perform certain specific functions that cannot be fulfilled by other organizations. It must, however, be emphasized that it is the party membership that gives a party an identity and visibility.

Ghana’s attempt at re-democratization was immediately set in motion following the overthrow of the last civilian regime on 31 December 1981. The task of political reform was assigned to the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), which was established by the military junta in 1981. Unlike previous military regimes that faced well coordinated and sustained pressures to return the country to civilian control (Boahen, 1997: 111-18), the

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<sup>2</sup>. In January 1989 students poured onto the streets of Cotonou, capital of Benin. By July the number of protesters had swelled with civil servants and schoolteachers. Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana all witnessed strikes and student protests (see Bratton and van de Walle, 1997).

Rawlings-led Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) regime was very effective in neutralizing pro-democracy groups, either through coercion, co-optation, or infiltration. The price of dissent was simply too heavy and, coupled with an adjustment fatigue, a once talkative nation experienced a deafening silence from 1984 onwards. Any protests from the opposition and the pro-democracy forces were confined to paper (in the form of press statements). Nevertheless, as Ayee (1997: 416) rightly observed, “there are important social and political forces embedded in the fabric of Ghanaian society that support democratic government.” Consequently, the PNDC’s attempt at foisting a no-party concept on Ghanaians received mixed endorsement when proceedings at the Consultative Assembly indicated a popular preference for a multi-party system of governance (Oquaye, 2004).

The culmination of the public discontent rooted in deep-seated economic and political grievances occasioned the emergence of a pro-democracy movement in the early 1990s. Marginalized and voiceless citizens demanded inclusion in the governance of the country, and this occurred on two levels: the political elites demanded political incorporation, and the masses demanded economic incorporation (Aidoo, 2008: 30). The pro-democracy elements mobilized for the last offensive, and those efforts resulted in the birth of the Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ) in August 1990 (Oquaye, 2004). The MFJ advocated the liberalizing of the political system. Domestic and international forces have been credited with engineering the movement towards the opening of the political systems. Some scholars, however, give credit to international agencies (see Peiffer and Englebert, 2012). Nevertheless, domestic pressures appeared to be strongly toward democracy, and account for the return of the country to the democratic path; civilian party activities were legalized on 18 May 1992. Most Ghanaian political parties claim a large following. Two parties, however, are on top. The National

Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) have alternated power. Consequently, party activism in Ghana under the period of study is dominated by them. The combined popular vote of the two exceeds 95 per cent. (For details, see election results gazetted by the EC.)

### **1.2 The Problem Statement: The Neglect of Party Foot-soldiers**

On 7 January 1993 Ghana's Fourth Republic was born. Constitutionalism, with its liberalizing effect, culminated in many Ghanaians engaging in civic and political activism. The Fourth Republican constitutional dispensation has outlived all its predecessors; nevertheless, the political system is still bedevilled by several problems. For instance, the 1992 Constitution requires all political parties to practise internal democracy (Republic of Ghana, 1992[Article 55(5)]: 48). The consensus reached by several studies, however, is that the internal affairs of political parties are not transparent (see Abdulai and Crawford, 2010; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009a; Josiah-Aryeh, 2008; AfriMAP, 2007; Ninsin, 2006a; Smith, 2002; Ayee, 2001). The lack of internal democracy has undermined party cohesion, which has further resulted in the splitting of parties into factions (e.g., the NDC in 1999 and 2006). Deviation from democratic norms and values in the conduct of internal party affairs manifests in factions jockeying for influence at the grassroots level (see Bob-Milliar, 2012b). Party organs functions informally, and power is personalized and monopolized by the executives. Furthermore, representation, both internally and externally, is problematic. Party congresses and conferences are never free from accusations of manipulation of formal rules by factions and party leaders (AfriMAP, 2007).

The NDC lost power in 2000 and, along with it, control of state resources. An internal party report observed that the party's rank and file were generally dissatisfied with the party's



style of governance in the second quarter of the Rawlings regime (Interview, Kokomlemle-Accra, 18 June 2008; see also Josiah-Aryeh, 2008). Questions were also raised about weak internal democracy and the alienation of party activists by the “authoritarian imposition” of parliamentary aspirants by the national leadership of the party (Smith, 2002: 525).

Similarly, Arthur Kennedy (2009: 5-6) identified the neglect of the problems of the NPP’s foot-soldiers as a factor contributing to the weakening of the party base and its ultimate loss of power in December 2008. Indeed, Kennedy claimed that during the first term of the NPP administration there “were repeated complaints by party members that they were being neglected. This neglect involved party members who were by-passed for appointments or contracts ... [T]hese feelings were exacerbated by the feeling that quite a number of people who had not toiled for the party were now in prominent positions.” Much earlier, in May 2001, the issue of neglect in the NPP erupted in violence in the Wa Central constituency when party foot-soldiers destroyed party properties (a car and office building). The problem was, simply, as one respondent put it, *te di maynang taa* (Waale, literally meaning, “We have eaten and left each other”). The real problem was how to distribute patronage among party activists based on individual contributions to the success of the party. In both parties, candidates relied heavily on the mobilizing power of activists to succeed in the nomination process and in the general elections. Under such conditions, as correctly observed by Bruzios (1990: 581-601), party activists wield considerable influence on political candidates. Additionally, the issue of Parliamentary representation for the NPP in the 2004 election for the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies was problematic. Party activists resorted to “aggressive political participation” (cf. Muller, 1979) when some 500 NPP foot-soldiers from the Sokpariyiri section of the Wa Central constituency resigned, and joined the smaller Nkrumahist leaning party, the

People's National Convention (PNC). The key reason for their defection was what they called "the undemocratic manner in which Mr. Clement Eledi was kicked out of the parliamentary race for Wa Central" (Ghana New Agency [GNA], 26 October, 2004). It appears that party activists or foot-soldiers are not well integrated into party structures. All party activists complain of being neglected after performing their part in ensuring victory for their respective parties and candidates.

The purported neglect of the concerns of party foot-soldiers at the grassroots raises critical questions about the internal workings of political parties. Indeed, in established liberal democracies, party activists, volunteers, and supporters expect politicians to "deliver the goods" promised when the election has been won: that is, they expect the politicians to implement agreed party goals. In the Ghanaian context, however, it appears that party activists and supporters usually expect the party and candidates to deliver part of the "contract" before the election, and thereafter to continue providing private or personal goods. This problem calls for rigorous investigation to ascertain the individual motives for activism in the NDC and NPP. Academic studies have paid little attention to individual motives for political activism. Party offices are won if the main contenders can count on the support of loyal party such people. Campaigning and lobbying party delegates is the work of foot-soldiers. Party activists expect mostly material rewards for their activism -- from the party in government, and from individual candidates. An illustration of this point is the headline "Ablekuma Central NPP foot soldiers cry for rewards." The *Ghana News Agency* (GNA) reported:

After the party has stayed in power for almost seven years, the foot soldiers have been forgotten and none of the foot soldiers have seen a change in their lifestyles and right now there are troubles in our marriage homes where some of us cannot pay our children's school fees and even most of us are thrown out of our homes because we cannot face our responsibilities. We want the NPP



government to come out and address these issues; other than that, we will not involve ourselves in any critical party activities within the constituency (GNA, 22 April 2007).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study mainly deals with the broad research question of *the motivational basis of party activism at the grassroots level*. While pursuing this broad research question, the study aims to address four more specific problems. The questions are designed to investigate the variables that act as incentives for individual level activism in the two parties. Experts in social science research methodologies (e.g. Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2008) have suggested that “how” and “why” questions are suitable for a case study. Because such factors as education, socio-economic status, and ideology have been shown to influence party activism, the study explores the following questions: *Why do citizens join political parties? Why do citizens become active in political parties?* and, *To what extent are political party activists motivated by ideology?* Finally, it is important to measure the depth of internal democracy in the parties. The final question is in two parts: (a) *What are the internal party structures and mechanisms, if any, that ensure activists’ participation in decision making?* and, (b) *In what ways do activists actually participate in decision making at the grassroots level?*

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to provide an overview of the development of political party activism in Ghana since the Fourth Republic began. The specific objectives are as follows: *first*, the study will assess the level of political participation in each party; *second*, it examines the influence of political party tradition on political mobilization, *third*, it seeks to examine the factors that motivate individual level activism; and *finally*, it will investigate the internal functioning of both political parties.

## 1.5 Operationalization of Key Concepts

“*Activism* is most commonly associated with collective or group action by ordinary people, usually volunteers, who come together to change what they consider to be unacceptable or unfair circumstance” (Takahashi, 2009: 1). In his study of what he terms “occasional activists” in the two main American parties, Nexon (1971: 716-30) differentiated activists from other party members based on the “amount of time and effort people devoted” to the candidate they support in elections. Similarly, Whiteley and Seyd (2002: 1) defined political activism in terms of the nature and form of the “intensity” of political activity. Accordingly, any political “participation that takes a lot of time and effort on the part of those who are involved in it” qualifies to be called “high-intensity participation” (p. 1).

In this study any party member or members and any non-party member or members who undertake one or a combination of the following activities that directly promote the policy goals of the NDC and NPP will be referred to as party activists, and the process will be taken to constitute “political party activism.” These activities include: taking part in political campaigns or political radio discussions; organizing or attending meetings; running for an elective office; making a financial contribution; and working for the party. Activism is operational in both the formal and informal party structures. Using socio-economic status (SES), individual attitudes and behavioural traits, I suggest three categories of activists. At the top of the party hierarchy are *patron activists*, in the middle are *platform activists*, and at the bottom are *party foot-soldiers*.

First, a *patron*<sup>3</sup> *activist* is an individual who holds formal membership with a political party. A great majority of them keep their membership secret; as a result, their membership is not known to the generality of the rank-and-file members. In terms of career, many are self-made

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<sup>3</sup> I borrowed the term from the NPP’s second category of party membership, known as “Patrons”; see NPP Constitution Article 3 (2009: 5).

middle class professionals (e.g., academics, physicians, lawyers, bankers, senior public servants, and teachers) or businessmen and women. They are thus also the main financiers of political activity in their party. In addition to making substantial financial contributions, they provide other logistics for the sustenance of party work. In this category activism is seen as an investment.

Second, a *platform activist* is typically a young graduate from one of the tertiary institutions in the country who has not attained the age of 40. Most of them emerge from the ranks of the Tertiary Institution Network (TEIN) or the Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy (TESCON). These organs represent the student wings of the NDC and the NPP on the campuses of the country's tertiary institutions. Most are thus unemployed graduates seeking jobs. Their membership in the parties is formal. Platform activists work for their parties in various capacities. During national elections they act as their party's polling agents, electoral officers, and collation officers in constituencies across the country. The bright ones work in the research wings by supporting the party apparatus with the information necessary to guide policy debates. Others serve as special aides to cabinet ministers or other influential politicians. Yet others work with the communication wing of the party; they are deployed daily to defend their party programmes in the public arena. They sometimes appear on TV and radio to defend their party policies or to rebut the charges of their co-competitors.

Finally, a *party foot-soldier* is usually a young man with little or no formal education who devotes a lot of his time to party work. Many are engaged in casual work known as their "by day job."<sup>4</sup> Their engagement with the party operates on two levels: formal and informal (many are not registered, card bearing members). Party activism is understood to be reciprocal. They expect

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<sup>4</sup>. For an academic discussion of casual labour, see Van Hear (1984).

material rewards for their activism, which is sometimes negotiated on terms favourable to them during electioneering periods and between elections. In a nutshell, the politically active are using their “resources” (time, money and civic skills) (cf. Verba *et al.*, 1995) to promote the policy goals of the parties they support.

Finally, by political ideology, I mean the political values or beliefs that provide the basis for formal or informal political activity. The political ideologies used here are the populist and socialist ideologies and, on the other hand, the liberal and conservative ideologies.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The two major parties (NDC and NPP) have been chosen because of their electoral strength; they also represent the predominant centre-left and centre-right divide in the party spectrum. Scholarly studies on Ghana’s democratization to date shed little light on the incentives that encourage individual participation and leave unanswered the key question of the benefits Ghanaians look for when they join the NDC or NPP. This study is significant because it is the first scholarly attempt at investigating individual level motives of political party activists at the grassroots. Most analyses of Ghana’s Fourth Republican politics limit the discussion to the formal aspects of the political system and voter preferences, but do not deal sufficiently with the formal or informal internal dynamics of political parties and, most important, the people who make party politics possible. Again, such analyses are fragmentary, and not very detailed. To escape both defects requires a culturally suitable comparative approach. The findings of the study will provide useful information to political parties, and constitute a database for relevant government and governance institutions, non-governmental agencies, and researchers.

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

The study is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1 has provided background information to the subject of the study, and touched upon political participation in Africa. It has also described the problem, and outlined the research questions and objectives. A concise but relevant literature review is offered here. Finally, the significance of the study and the research methodology and methodological constraints are discussed.

Chapter 2 focuses on a discussion of some of the theoretical issues pertinent to this study. Those reviewed include the civic voluntarism model, the rational choice model, and the general incentives model. The chapter acknowledges that the three theories originated in Western democracies, and may not be able to account fully for the problem under study. The cultural approach to the study of comparative politics is suggested. Finally, the conceptual framework for the study is outlined.

Chapter 3 of the study is devoted to history and background. It offers a historical backdrop against which the study assesses the Fourth Republic's democratization. Moreover, the chapter seeks to analyse the evolution of political parties in Ghana. It is thus organized around political parties and party activists. The chapter discusses party activism chronologically in three phases: 1946-1966; 1969-1972; and 1979-1992.

Chapter 4 gives an account of the general situation in the research area, the Wala and Dagara part of the Upper West Region. The geographical location, local government, demographic features, and economic conditions are described and analysed. It discusses how an indigenous institution such as chieftaincy interacts or interfaces with party politics.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the institutionalization of the political parties. It pays particular attention to party systems and party institutionalization, and further discusses how the parties

operate within a liberal and neo-liberal environment of austerity measures. Political party traditions in Ghana are revisited in this chapter, emphasizing the importance of traditions to party institutionalization and the emergence of the two-party system. It also describes and analyses the origins and ideological leanings of the parties; finally, the external legal regulation of political parties is discussed.

Chapter 6 deals with political parties as campaign organizations. It discusses the “organizational dynamics of changes in campaign styles,” as well as parties’ communication campaign strategies. The chapter offers a critical review of party campaign manifestos, and the themes that have dominated the five elections to date are analysed.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the internal dynamics of party politics at the grassroots. This chapter discusses how the parties are organized internally; particular emphasis is on decision-making. The chapter, therefore, also deals with the internal organization and decision-making of the parties at the grassroots.

Chapter 8 discusses the research findings specifically in relation to the theoretical and conceptual models, and central questions explored in this study, and draws several conclusions. In addition, it outlines the theoretical and policy implications of the study with regard to political participation and party activism, and suggests areas for future research.

## **1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Ghana’s liberal or free market democracy is 20 years old, and during this period three major sets of scholarly studies have appeared. These studies have built on earlier classics, such as Kimble (1963), Austin (1964), Apter (1972), Austin and Luckham (1975), Ladouceur (1979), and Chazan (1983), among others. Judging from the titles or themes appearing in Ghanaian politics

in the past two decades, the vagaries of political participation would seem to have been rather thoroughly mined. A search revealed that over 600 journal articles and book chapters and some 28 monographs have been published on Ghana's democracy. The University of Ghana's Department of Political Science is the leader in this respect, and has come out with several edited volumes (e.g. Boafo-Arthur, 2006; Ayee, 2001; 1998). Larger portions of these works are, however, devoted to constituency and thematic studies. The survey method was the most favoured instrument of study in the constituency studies. The thematic studies focused on selected national issues pertinent to Ghanaian politics. Themes such as ethnicity, chieftaincy, gender, leadership, and youth were explored. A study conducted in 1996 was limited to 27 constituencies, and another study in 2000 surveyed 40, including Wa Central constituency (see Ayee, 2001; 1998). The 2004 study, which was undertaken in 50 constituencies, featured Wa Central constituency for the second time (see Boafo-Arthur, 2006).

The second set of literature to have emerged during the period under review comes from two sources. The proceedings of internationally sponsored workshops, *Political Parties and Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic*, edited by Ninsin and Drah (1993), was the first book to appear. The second is independent individual research published in academic journals (for a sample, see Abdulai and Crawford, 2010; Jockers *et al.*, 2010; Fridy and Brobbey, 2009; Lindberg, 2008, 2003; Lindberg and Morrison, 2005; Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi, 2001; Jeffries, 1998). The third set of relevant literature comprises work by reputable think-tanks, such as the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), among other agencies. For example, the CDD-Ghana *Afrobarometer* surveys, *Critical Perspectives*, and the newsletter *Democracy Watch* are reliable and relevant data sources.



Despite the increased interest in party politics, it is surprising that so little empirical research has been conducted on the motives and incentives of individuals when they become formal members of political parties. Currently only two studies have directly explored the Wa Central constituency (Amponsah, 2006; Akanlig-pare, 2001). In the first, the focus was the 2000 General Elections. Akanlig-pare surveyed the Wa Central and Sissala constituencies in pre- and post-election surveys, and reported that the incumbent NDC lost power because of its poor management of the economy. No reference was made to the disillusionment of the core of the NDC supporters in Wa Central as a factor contributing to its defeat. Several questions arise: what was the role of the NDC or NPP activists in the 2000 election campaign? Were the activists provided campaign logistics, and what were the main issues raised in the indictment of the incumbent government for not handling the economy well? Akanlig-pare's is an interesting study, but several unanswered questions remain, and these the present study will attempt to explore further.

Political traditions were the main focus of Amponsah's (2006: 287-307) study of the Wa Central constituency. The author wanted to measure the role of political traditions in voter behaviour in the constituency. He concluded that political parties' policies and programmes had little impact on the electorates. "Attachment to political traditions," however, "makes up for the void created by choiceless political contestation in which the citizenry find themselves and serve as the foundation for a viable multi-party culture" (p. 303). What is novel about Amponsah's study is that it reveals the importance of the enduring political traditions followed by supporters of the political parties when they vote. What remains obscure in this otherwise excellent study is whether political traditions have any influence on activism in the constituencies studied.



The NDC has consistently won the Wa Central parliamentary seat, but a critical analysis of the election results according to polling station would reveal that certain sections of the community always voted for the NPP. For instance, the Nayiri and sections of the Limanyiri have posted impressive results for the NPP. What accounts for such voting behaviour? What level of motivation, moreover, can be linked to political traditions in the constituency? The need for further empirical study of the questions makes this current study compelling and timely, as Ghana approaches another crucial election in 2012. It is thus also evident that few studies have researched activism in both constituencies, in particular, and in Ghana generally. Indeed, many nationwide studies of voting behaviour undertaken by western Africanist scholars have tended to ignore the Upper West Region. Lindberg and Morrison (2005: 569), for example, justified the exclusion by claiming: “The northern part of the country was not included, due to the lack of resources and problems of accessibility during the summer rainy season.” In fact, to date no study has been carried out in the Lawra-Nandom constituency. In the section following, the study will focus on reviewing other local content studies, which will be interspersed with international literature.

It is important to begin the review by considering some scholars’ definitions of a political party. According to White (2006: 6), “defining what a political party is and what functions it should assume is hardly an objective task.” I would rather not pursue that line of enquiry. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the answers of scholars have differed over time. Writing in the eighteenth century, Burke (1770) observed that “[a] party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed” (quoted in Langford, 1981: 317). Anthony Downs (1957: 24-5) posits that

[i]n the broadest sense, a political party is a coalition of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by legal means. By *coalition*, we mean a group of individuals who have certain ends in

common and cooperate with each other to achieve them. By *governing apparatus*, we mean the physical, legal, and institutional equipment which the government uses to carry out its specialized role in the division of labor. By *legal means*, we mean either duly constituted or legitimate influence.

Furthermore, according to Schlesinger (1991), “a political party is a group organized to gain control of government in the name of the group by winning election to public office.” Similarly, Aldrich (1995: 19) writes that “political parties can be seen as coalitions of elites to capture and use political office. [But] a political party is more than a coalition. A political party is an institutionalized coalition, one that has adopted rules, norms, and procedures.” The common thread running through my selection of definitions is that parties are formal organizations formed by like-minded individuals to contest elections and, ultimately, form a government. Another common ingredient is that parties are voluntary social organizations. A valid critique of these excellent definitions is about their origins: all the definitions have been informed by the historical experiences of the advanced industrial societies. These generalized definitions, in the view of this study, may not apply equally well to emerging democracies, where democratic norms are relatively new, and the citizens are still learning to internalize such principles. What is important is that different historical and socio-cultural environments will definitely produce different political parties. Indeed, a political party in Ghana will be defined as a political grouping consciously formed by citizens, and used to seek power and engineer national development by the distribution of the national cake.

A study by Gunther and Diamond (2003) challenges the various definitions in the preceding section. As they (2003: 167) pointed out, over the years several party models have emerged, advanced by scholars to explain the nature, structure, or features of particular political organizations. The literature is consequently littered with categorizations and classifications. But

do these models capture the new political parties that have emerged the world over, especially since the 1990s? This study agrees with the suggestion by Gunther and Diamond that current Western European models of “political parties do not adequately capture the full range of variations in party types” found across the globe, including in Africa.

Against the background of multiple classifications and characterizations of political parties in the “standard” political science literature, Gunther and Diamond (2003) conclude that the “various typologies of parties, based on a wide variety of definitional criteria, have not been conducive to cumulative theory-building.” The Western model of party structure and organization, first of all, suffers from over generalization; and this generalized model has been extended to include political parties such as those that this study is investigating. The NDC and NPP emerged within a certain historical and cultural milieu. As Gunther and Diamond (2003) notes, Africanist scholars have been compelled to apply these models or labels to political parties in emerging democracies.

The alternative offered by Gunther and Diamond is based on their “three criteria.” The “nature of the formal organization” is the first (p. 171). Political parties with a large following and with allied bodies are classified as organizationally thick, while those without such auxiliary bodies are “organizationally thin” (p. 171). According to the authors, organizationally thin parties emerged in the nineteenth century in Western Europe and much later in Latin America, where upper class citizens mobilized for political action (pp. 171-72). On the other hand, organizationally thick parties were born through rapid urbanization, by industrialization, and by the mobilization of the working classes (Gunther and Diamond, 2003). When adult suffrage was extended to the rest of the population in western European countries, it resulted in the emergence

of new party forms: in particular, the large mass membership party type (Gunther and Diamond, 2003).

The second classificatory criterion suggested by Gunther and Diamond concerns the “party’s *programmatic* commitments” (p. 171). Political ideologies and philosophical values serve as the bases of some parties’ programmatic agendas. The third criterion in the Gunther and Diamond schema concerns the “strategy and behavioural norms of the party” (p. 171). Is the party “tolerant and pluralistic,” or “proto-hegemonic” in aims and “behavioural style”? (p. 171). The programmes and internal functioning of some parties conform to generally agreed democratic standards. They are thus very tolerant of their co-competitors. Based on an extensive review of the literature and the various arguments, Gunther and Diamond (2003) suggested that “15 different ‘species’ of party that [they] believe better capture the basic essence of political parties around the world” (p. 172).

On the question of party organization, Gunther and Diamond (2003) further identified the following elements: “elite-based parties,” “mass-based parties,” “ethnicity-based parties,” “electoralist parties,” and “movement parties” (p. 172). Applying this model to the NDC and NPP, the differences between the NDC and the NPP can be seen in their programmatic commitment and tolerance levels. In the early days of the transition to democratic rule, the NDC was very hostile to its political opponents, especially the NPP. The party has since, however, become very tolerant of its opponents. On the issue of organization, both parties qualify for the thickness criteria of Gunther and Diamond because of their mass-membership base throughout the length and breadth of Ghana.

Other models of political parties have emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century. Scholars, including Katz (2001) and Katz and Mair (1995), developed the “cartel party model”

by tracing the evolutionary paths of the various party models from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Based on this extensive research, the authors conclude that political parties have metamorphosed from society based (i.e., mass parties) to becoming enmeshed in the governmental arrangement. The cartel party model says that most of the older western European parties, faced with declining rates of participation, have devised mechanisms that include turning to using public resources in a “collusive manner.” The outcome is the cooperation of the state and major parties. In this context, rival parties come together to “run a party cartel” that denies other, new and smaller, parties effective and meaningful participation. As Detterbeck (2005: 173) notes, the cartel party model marks a major shift in the development of parties in modern times. The cartel parties depend on public servants for the running of party activities. In this process, the rank and file members exercised limited influence, and political activities are run by hired professionals (Katz and Mair, 1995).

Another party model most applicable to African states is the “dominant party” type. The “dominant party” thesis advanced by Ishiyama and Quinn (2006) to study political parties in Africa poses questions concerning parties that survived the transition to multi-party elections in Africa. The dominant party thesis may be applicable to this study. By “dominant parties,” the authors mean “parties which were formerly the governing party in the authoritarian regime and which inherited the preponderance of the former ruling parties’ resources and personnel” (p. 318). An appreciation of the nature, structure, functions and operations of the so-called dominant parties in Africa sheds more light on the current democratization project (see Bob-Milliar, 2012b; Cheeseman, 2010; Christensen and Utas, 2008; Mihyo, 2003; Momba, 2003). But can these formerly dominant authoritarian regimes be classified as dominant parties? Applying the model to the many cases the authors studied will be challenging. Most were not single-party, but

outright military regimes. In Ghana, the formerly dominant party was not a party *per se*, but a quasi-military ruling council, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Its claim to the dominant party thesis merits consideration because the successor civilian party, the NDC, inherited the bulk of the resources of the PNDC, and its executive leadership is made up of key personalities from the former regime (see Nugent, 1996; Gyimah-Boadi, 1991).

Africanist political scientists, including Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah (2008), Debrah (2009; 2007), Morrison (2004), and Bofo-Arthur (2003; 1999), have studied political parties in Ghana. Debrah (2007: 107) writes that political parties are very important with regard to Ghana's democratic institutionalization (see also Whitfield, 2009). He posed the following questions: "Why are political parties the dominant actors in Ghanaian politics?"; "What positive role have the parties played in the democratic trajectories?"; and, finally, "How can the parties improve their performance toward consolidating democracy in Ghana?" Although these questions are relevant, they fail to link political activists with political parties, and to identify the important role party activists play in relation to democratic consolidation. Do political parties exist and operate in a vacuum? Absolutely not; political parties are made up of large followings, and a significant number of those become very active in the various parties. What is refreshing, though, is Debrah's exposition of how political parties have oscillated between several military regimes. The author rightly observed that political parties are quick to organize around old political traditions any time the military withdraws to the barracks, as they did in 1969, 1979, and 1992. Debrah (2007: 115) notes that political parties have come to function as platforms "for organized groups and individuals, including private entrepreneurs" to promote Ghana's economic development. He further adds that the detailed organizational structures of the parties "have provided the [bridges for] connecting the ordinary citizens – the mass of the population that



lacked access to traditional [centers] of power – to the corridors of political decision-making” (p. 115). Additionally, parties provided, and continue to provide, the platform for activists to express divergent views on Ghanaian society.

An equally important study is Morrison’s on political parties in Ghana from 1951 to 2004. It used five indicators – “recruitment,” “elections,” “socialization,” “aggregation,” and “organization” – to evaluate the contributions of political parties since the 1950s to the consolidation of democracy in Ghana. “With the new wave of democratization,” writes Morrison (2004: 421), “parties seem critical again in organizing public preferences. Parties are vehicles that express and aggregate the diverse ideals of citizens in a competitive process.” Ghana became a nation-state with two vibrant political traditions – the Nkrumahist and the Danquah-Busia blocs. The conclusion Morrison draws is that these two power blocs have given Ghana a “virtual two-party system.” This study agrees with this observation, because the 2008 election confirmed that the NDC and NPP still dominate the political space.

Drawing data from a national survey, Borre (1999: 211-27) attempted to determine voters’ preferences for political candidates based on issues such as “satisfaction with the way democracy works,” “foreign investment in Ghana,” and on “political party traditions.” None of the respondents surveyed were asked why they chose to campaign for a particular political candidate and, second, no attempt was made to determine the motives of the individuals who choose to become active in the various political parties. Studies of political behaviour according to the party voted for or the issues considered before voting are important in electoral politics (Oquaye, 2001: 338-49). Individual behaviour, however, in terms of the incentives and motives for joining and participating in one party or another, are neglected. Overall, this local and

international literature sheds light on the “What?” and “How?” of political parties. In the next section I will explore why individuals participate in party politics.

### **1.8.1 *Who Participates in Party Politics?***

In relation to British parties, Whiteley, Seyd, Richardson and Bissell (1994: 79) have argued that “[p]olitical parties could not function without a significant group of active members, who play a very important role in the political system as members of the ‘middle level elite.’ That is, they are key intermediate actors between the mass of voters, on the one hand, and the political elites and decision makers on the other.” Locally, a study by Richard Asante (2006) confirms some of the authors’ observations.

Asante (2006: 213) noted that the 2004 elections heralded “the renaissance of youth politics and activism.” It is important to point out that Ghanaian youth have always been at the forefront of political activism in civilian administrations (see Boahen, 1989b; Chazan, 1983). Nonetheless, the contribution of the youth to the 2004 elections was Asante’s main focus. The author argued that youth in Ghana have been excluded from executive positions within the various political parties. He further enumerated the role youth played in the run-up to the election, and on Election Day itself. Among its roles was “serving as foot-soldiers of their various parties.” They became the “vehicles through which political party messages were passed onto the electorate, especially those in remote areas.” Though it constitutes a good reference point, Asante’s study focused too narrowly on Ghanaian youth and their contributions to the general elections. By its methodology and adoption of the concept of “youth” as defined in the constitution, it neglected other age groups, and thus leaves several unanswered questions. What were the motivating factors that drove the youth to campaign for their various parties? What was



the nature of youth activism? Asante writes about youth marginalization, but stops short of investigating internal party structures and determining whether these structures, if they exist, adequately address the issue of marginalization of youth activists. The studies reviewed in the foregoing section are significant inasmuch as they shed light on major themes in the partisan process in Ghana. Nevertheless, the gaps in the literature are noteworthy. Most of these studies underestimate the dynamics of grassroots political activism in Ghanaian politics.

### **1.8.2 Socio-Cultural Cleavages**

Ethnicity has been said to play a major role in electoral mobilization in Africa. Scholars have analysed the voting behaviour of citizens exclusively on the effect of ethnicity, and at other times analyses are framed within the neo-patrimonialism model (Ishiyama, 2011; Nugent, 2001; Lindberg, 2010, 2003; Aidoo, 2008, 2006). Jonah (1999), echoing views expressed by earlier Africanist scholars, such as Naomi Chazan (1982), wrote that “irrespective of what different observers think about ethnicity in Ghana’s politics,[it] is a fact that ethnicity is a major factor that influenced Ghanaian voters in both the 1992 and 1996 Presidential elections” (p. 246). Jonah courageously adds that “to ignore the ethnic factor is to ignore a major key to understanding the mind of the Ghanaian voter.” Similarly, Fridy (2007: 302) concludes that ethnicity seems to be “an extremely significant although not deciding factor in Ghanaian elections.” Using voting data from the strongholds of the two main parties, Fridy asserts that citizens in the Volta and Ashanti Regions are likely to cast a ballot for the NDC and NPP, irrespective of who is on the platform. Most interestingly, his analysis, just like the study that contradicts his findings (Lindberg and Morrison, 2007), is based on individual data analysis from Ghana.

Most recently the perception that ethnicity is a major factor that influences voter alignment in Ghana has been challenged. Lindberg and Morrison (2008) point out that there is no strong empirical evidence available for this conventional wisdom; “evidence” is often assumed, rather than empirically grounded. Using interview data from Ghana the authors “conclude that only about one in ten voters is decisively influenced by either clientelism or ethnic and family ties in choosing political representatives, while 85 to 90 per cent behave as mature democratic citizens” (p. 96). Similarly, Oelbaum (2004: 268) points to the problems, in popular and scholarly accounts, of ethnicity with regard to electoral mobilization, and concludes that most of these interpretations have been exaggerated. He notes that the perception that the NPP is the Akan favourite party is valid. This claim is, however, overplayed “in current analyses” by the party’s co-competitors (p. 268). In this context, much scholarly focus on ethnicity conceals the actual motives of Ghanaian voters. Indeed, a pioneering study by Whitfield (2009) reveals that Ghanaian citizens vote on the issues that matter most to them. These could be policy goals either advanced during electoral campaigns or based on assessment of past achievements.

## **1.9 Research Methods and Data Collection**

### *1.9.1 Research Design*

The design of the study is based on the mixed methods research approach (also known as triangulation). According to Bergman (2008), mixed methods research is the “combination of at least one qualitative and at least one quantitative component in a single research project” (see also Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). The importance of the mixed method approach cannot be overstated. Pawson (2008: 120) asserts that it “is the new methodological Holy Grail. After years in their paradigmatic silos, social

researchers have woken up to the discovery that society is multi-faceted, multi-layered and multi-perspectival.” The approaches that dominate the humanities and social science inquiries are the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The quantitative method, as its name suggests, measures aspects of a problem (Miller and Brewer, 2003). As Ragin (1987) point out, this approach is best “suited to testing theories, identifying general patterns and making predictions.” The qualitative method, on the other hand, encompasses several related research approaches. It allows an investigator to explore all aspects of a human phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Methods may include participant observation, the in-depth, face-to-face interview, and literature study. It enables the researcher to spend considerable time on a particular field of study. Using an orderly process, the data is first gathered and analysed, and then sorted into various themes (Creswell, 1998: 16–17). Researchers are increasingly turning to mixed methods to explore a range of phenomena (see Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Bryman, 2008). Rationales for using mixed methods are many. Several scholars, including Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), Creswell (2003), Patton (2002), Rossman and Wilson (1985), have identified the benefits. Following Greene *et al.*, (1989), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008: 101-110) have categorized the rationales into the following seven: *complementarity*, which argues that mixed methods are utilized to gain complementary views about the same phenomenon. Research questions for the two strategies of the mixed study approach address related aspects of the same phenomenon. Second, in mixed methods there is a *completeness* in the designs utilized in order to ensure that a complete picture of the phenomenon is obtained. The full picture is more meaningful than each of the components. Third, *developmental* questions for one strand emerge from the inferences of previous ones; in other words, one strand provides hypotheses to be tested in the next one. Fourth, *expansion*: with mixed methods one can expand on or explain the understanding obtained

in a previous strand of a study. Fifth, *corroboration or confirmation* states that mixed methods are used to assess the credibility of inferences obtained from another approach. Sixth, *compensation* enables the researcher to compensate for the weakness of one approach by utilizing the other. Seventh, *diversity* allows researchers using mixed methods to obtain divergent pictures of the same phenomenon (p.103). Both the selection of the methods and the sources of data have been guided and directed towards answering the central question.

### 1.9.2 Data Collection

In this study, data were collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews, direct observations (i.e., the researcher observes without participating), literature study, and audio-visual materials. The survey research (using a questionnaire) was the quantitative method applied. Whereas the qualitative data have constituted the major part, selectively and to a limited extent data have also been gathered through structured/closed-ended questions designed to provide additional information. Many scholars, including Cross and Young (2008), Pattie and Seyd (2003), Whiteley and Seyd (2002), Costantini and Valenty (1996), Costantini and King (1984), who studied political behaviour in the West, used data generated through mail surveys. Surveys are appropriate in a literate population. In Ghana, however, where the illiteracy rate is high (see Chapter Four), surveys (especially the mail survey type) are not appropriate. The study found the interview survey method, used by Lindberg and Morrison (2008, 2005) and Fridy (2007) to study the behaviour of Ghanaian voters, the most suitable. The different methods and techniques applied in this study have sought to complement and supplement each other in order to obtain in-depth knowledge of activists' behaviour, their views on political participation, incentives for participation, and the internal functioning of the NDC and NPP. For the in-depth

face to face interviews, the opinions of party leaders, MPs, MCEs, DCEs, and traditional authorities, as well as respected notables, were sought.

The initial stage was the preparatory phase of nearly six months (January to June 2008), which concentrated mainly on reviewing relevant literature and newspapers at the Balme and Institute of African Studies (IAS) libraries of the University of Ghana. Newspapers in Ghana often have political affiliations – the *Chronicle* devoted far more coverage to developments in the NPP, for example – but the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* had more balanced coverage. From the newspaper sources, the author extracted 6,301 articles related to political activities in both major parties in the period between 1992 and 2008. Extensive archival research was also undertaken at the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Accra office. The next phase was the administering of questionnaires. Self-administered questionnaires were also given to literate and non-literate informants. Each instrument contained 20 items (closed-ended questions) that addressed four main areas of interest. The first section of the questionnaire probed the social background of the respondents, and asked conventional questions about sex, age, education, and employment status. A second section, on political participation, asked questions about party affiliation, political traditions and incentives for signing up for formal membership. A third section asked questions on party ideology and incentives for becoming active in the parties. Finally, the study investigated levels of internal democracy in the parties by asking about activists' involvement in decision-making and how power is distributed (see Appendix). Concurrently, party activities as they unfolded were closely observed. As discussed by various scholars, among them Miller and Brewer (2003: 213), “observation is a fundamental part of social life and is critical to many forms of social interaction and work.” I

attended political rallies and sectional clubs sessions, visited constituency offices, and observed activities. The monitoring of political activities on radio and TV yielded further data.

For an extended study of political participation, an open-ended, semi-structured interview guide was used to make an inquiry into the different categories of persons who have formal and informal links with the parties. These categories of respondents encompassed party leadership, Members of Parliament, party members, elders, chiefs and local opinion leaders with whom the parties have an established relationship. The type of sampling applied in a mixed method study has consequences. According to Creswell *et al.*, (2008) different sample sizes are common in mixed methods designs because data are collected to address different research questions according to the approach being used. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggested that researchers use the same samples in a “concurrent design in order to make the data and results more comparable.” On the issue of sample size, though, the authors suggest that the sizes of the “quantitative and qualitative samples may be unequal given the nature of quantitative research to generalize to a population, whereas the qualitative sample is to provide an in-depth understanding of a small group of individuals.” The technique used to identify the target population in the two constituencies was the simple random sampling technique. As Sprent (1988: 188) notes, sampling “provides a mechanism whereby we can make an estimate of the population characteristic and get, based on probability theory, a numerical measure of how good that estimate is.” The samples of the study were drawn from NDC and NPP branches within the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies. The total sample size was 650. As noted by Twumasi (2001: 22),<sup>5</sup> in a sample size of a 1,000 people a sample size of 300 respondents would be an adequate representation. The subjects for key informants were selected purposively

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<sup>5</sup> Twumasi's suggestion is based on his research in rural communities, pp. 21-22.



because of their involvement in politics (e.g., MPs, DCEs). The face-to-face, open-ended, long interviews (lasting for from 45 to 60 minutes) were conducted with 200 party activists.

### 1.9.3 *Conducting the Field Survey*

The field work was conducted in two phases, each lasting for four months. I visited the field during the dry season when people stayed at home. I chose the survey method as the prime method of data collection because of the population size of the study area. As Yin (2008) cautions, for an explanatory study of real-life happenings, the survey instrument is the appropriate tool. The survey questionnaire was administered with the assistance of two final year undergraduate students from the University for Development Studies (Wa Campus). It became necessary to recruit two local assistants when the researcher did a pre-test and realized that illiteracy was a major problem in the study area and, second, when he discovered that the size of the constituencies was such that they required two or more hands to conduct an effective and timely survey. The two research assistants were thoroughly vetted on their political affiliations in order to minimize personal biases. Fortunately, neither was a member of either of the two major parties studied. I realized also that they were familiar with the survey method, and fluent in the local dialect; and, above all, their knowledge of participatory rural approaches was helpful in dealing with some rural respondents. These advantages notwithstanding, the two assistants were thoroughly briefed on the research objectives, and they initially worked alongside the researcher in one NDC branch and one NPP polling station area. Questions were translated into the local dialect, and clarifications of certain concepts sought from local language experts, and the appropriate local expressions were used in place of the English ones.

#### 1.9.4 *Data Analysis*

As Marshall and Rossman (1999: 150) stated, “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data.” The data are processed employing sorting and coding by various identifiable themes. Coding and triangulation aided in the interpretation of the data in this study. The coded data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17) software, and the output generated. Descriptive statistics were mainly used to classify and summarize the numerical data, and these are represented in tables in Chapter 8. The data have, moreover, been analysed using descriptive statistics. Open-ended responses were recorded verbatim. To maintain originality and authenticity, the qualitative findings were often transcribed verbatim by retaining the original Wala and Dagara expressions, but with English translations. The study also triangulated qualitative findings from official documentation (party constitutions, policy documents, and state documents), newspapers, personal observations, audio and visual materials (campaign songs and posters), and secondary data.

#### **1.10 Methodological Challenges and Constraints**

It is, of course, a mark of intellectual honesty for a researcher to admit the constraints of a study so that readers may be aware of its shortfalls, and to enable them to judge the level of reliability of the outcome. Neither the national leadership of the major political parties, nor the regional level party leadership, nor the constituency executives keep systematic records on party activities. Certain constraints affected the field study, especially concerning the administration of the questionnaire. The high illiteracy rate of the respondents was a limiting factor, as more time was required for effective discussions. Furthermore, during interview sessions most respondents



offered extensive views of the region's historical development and why party politics is esteemed in certain quarters. Respondents also gave extensive views on various aspects of the political system. Even so, the majority did not want to disclose the most important motive underlying their support for one of the two parties, or how much, in monetary terms, they had contributed. Vital information on how the parties are funded was thus limited. The non-co-operation of some respondents, partly through fear of victimization, was anticipated. Party politics is a "zero-sum game" in Ghana, one in which any gain for one party must be an equal loss for the other. The respondents' reticence is embedded in the local socio-cultural perspectives; exposing such information could reveal their exact financial condition, and might encourage family or kin to put more pressure on them for financial assistance. In some extended interviews, however, it was possible to record slightly more information about the financial status of particular party members. For the purposes of this study, it was sufficient to limit data collection to the overall socio-economic status of those interviewed, and to related estimates of their wealth. Furthermore, some members who provided valuable information during their interview did not want their identity revealed. In those cases, pseudonyms have been used.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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#### 2.1 Introduction

Why do some citizens participate in activities that inure to the benefit of whole communities? Social scientists have been puzzled, or fascinated, by what is generically called collective participation, and have questioned the rationality of collective behaviour in relation to political participation and other social movement activities. This chapter is devoted to the theoretical frameworks used to study and analyse party activism in the NDC and NPP. The aim is thus to review the mainstream theories that have been advanced to explain collective or conventional participation. Generally, five broad approaches have been suggested in the literature: the civic voluntarism model; the rational choice model; the social-psychological model; the mobilization model; and the general incentives model. In view of the overlap of the central arguments in the five broad theoretical approaches, only three frameworks will be reviewed in this chapter. The emphasis will be on their strengths, while also pointing out their weaknesses. The chapter will make extensive use of four seminal works: *Voice and Equality* (Verba *et al.*, 1995), *High-Intensity Participation* (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002), *Culture Troubles* (Chabal and Daloz, 1999), and *Africa: the politics of suffering and smiling* (Chabal, 2009).

The first three sections examine three mainstream political science theoretical approaches. The cultural environment in which politics occurs is equally important in interpreting and analysing a particular phenomenon. Against this background, the study finds the

cultural approach to comparative politics most suitable for the study. The conceptual framework for the study is also outlined.

## **2.2 Civic Voluntarism Model**

In their 640-page book, *Voice and Equality* (1995), a study that took almost three decades to complete, Verba, Scholzman, and Brady developed a “Civic Voluntarism Model” (CVM) that combined three factors – “resources,” “engagement,” and “recruitment” – to explain the mechanism through which American citizens became active in politics. The three influencing factors are important for understanding political participation in the CVM framework. The authors asked the same conventional question that engaged the attention of political scientists several decades ago: “[W]hy [do] people participate [in politics]?” (p. 269). Instead of following the same trend, however, Verba *et al.* suggested that we invert the question: “[W]hy [do] people *not* become political activists?” (p. 269). The authors delineated three contributory factors that explain why some citizens will not engage in any political activity.

The authors singled out “resources” as the “most critical component” of the CVM (p. 288). Time, money, and civil skills combine to define resources (p. 271). Nevertheless, the availability of these resources varies across politically significant groups in every society. Upper and middle class citizens may have the money and civil skills to participate in a political activity. The same group, however, may lack the time to, for example, attend a political rally and canvass for votes. While it is true to say that working class citizens or idle youth may have time, they do not have money, which is the magic wand of politics, in this case of participating effectively in a political activity. As Verba *et al.* noted, within the resource component of factors fuelling political activity, money and time are the ingredients most needed in any such activity. The

authors further point out that it is almost impossible to make any impact on a political campaign without enough disposable income (p. 289). Similarly, political campaigns, rallies, and attending meetings will be almost impossible without the availability of “free time” (p. 289). Civil skills constitute the third “resource” for political participation (p. 304). An individual with civil skills can engage the political system in several meaningful ways. “Those who possess civic skills should find political activity less daunting and costly and, therefore, should be more likely to take part” (p. 304). Civil skills allow citizens to analyse the programmes of the political parties and, further, enable them to question the bases of certain policy initiatives of governments. Civil skills can further propel citizens into joining a political party so as to promote a particular policy goal, or to join a political party and oppose certain policies of a rival party (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992).

The second component of the CVM is “engagement” (p. 272). Engagement brings about political activity as a result of the “psychological predispositions” of citizens. According to this explanation, citizens’ interests in politics make them want to take part in political activity. “Recruitment networks” are the final component of the CVM. Several social circles, such as place of work, church, drinking clubs, and golf clubs, stimulate recruitment. Verba *et al.* observed that the “requests for participation that come to individuals at work, in church, or in organizations often lead to participation” (pp. 272-73).

The importance of the CVM is evident in the growing number of scholarly works outside the discipline of political science that cite it. Cramer (2002), for example, adopted the approach to the study of factors that influence organized political participation in the nursing profession. Nevertheless, like most theoretical frameworks, the CVM has its weakness. The use of socio-economic status (SES) as a predictor of political participation is problematic. If SES is such an

important stimulus of political participation, most Western societies should, of course, report higher rates of participation. The evidence is that many citizens in the advanced democracies are increasingly uninterested in their political systems, and are using their resources to oppose formal political institutions. Protest movements have gained credibility in recent times.

Another weakness of the CVM is shown in a direct quote from the authors:

[T]he SES model is weak in its theoretical underpinnings. It fails to provide a coherent rationale for the connection between the explanatory socioeconomic variables and participation. Numerous intervening factors are invoked – resources, norms, stake in the outcome, psychological involvement in politics, greater opportunities, favorable legal status, and so forth. But there is no clearly specified mechanism linking social statuses to activity (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995: 281).

### **2.3 Rational Choice Model**

A second competing theoretical approach that explains political participation in a very distinctive way is the rational choice model, which was made popular by Anthony Downs (1957) in his political science treatise, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. In this work Downs suggested that when confronted with alternatives, an individual can make a choice based on preferences and by choosing the alternative at the top of his or her priority list. The following quotation illustrates the central argument of Downs's framework:

A rational man is one who behaves as follows: (1) he can always make a decision when confronted with alternatives; (2) he ranks all the alternatives facing him in order of his preferences in such a way that each is either preferred to, indifferent to, or inferior to each other; (3) his preference ranking is transitive; (4) he always chooses from among the possible alternatives that which ranks highest in his preference ordering; and (5) he always makes the same decision each time he is confronted with the same alternatives (Downs, 1957: 6).

The application of rational choice to analysis of political participation has proved challenging. The problem of the operationalization or applicability of the rational choice model to conventional political participation is known in the scholarly literature as the “paradox of participation” (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2002: 41). Simply put, a rational individual will not participate in any event that will benefit other people. Thus, a collective action that targets a large audience will not appeal to any rational individual (see Whiteley *et al.*, 1994). In the realm of politics, scholars have argued that rational individuals will not engage in collective action aimed at realizing community or societal goals. As Samuelson (1954: 387-89) pointed out in his article *The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure*, “public goods” are characterized by two distinct features: “jointness of supply” and the “impossibility of exclusion” (see also Whiteley and Seyd, 2002: 41). What is implied here is that the utilization or consumption of a “public good” by an individual in a particular society will not reduce its availability to others. Similarly, irrespective of their efforts towards the production of a particular public good, an individual cannot be excluded from enjoying that public good. Applying Samuelson’s theory of public good to the NPP’s signature policy, the school feeding programme, we realize that the NDC, then in opposition, vehemently opposed the implementation of the policy. The policy is a public good, and children of NDC members cannot be excluded from schools where pupils are given meals during school hours. Nonetheless, a caveat must be added that the NDC members opposed the policy on political grounds, but not necessarily because they are rational actors.

How, then, do scholars explain the paradox of participation? Some, including Granik (2005) and Whiteley and Seyd (2002), have proposed a novel explanation. Granik (2005: 604) writes that the “congruence between motivation and incentives theories and rational choice suggests that participation is better explained by an alternative question.” The issue of incentives

becomes crucial in explaining the paradox of participation. Certain incentives of value must thus be on the table before an individual will engage in collective action. Granik argues that before an individual will participate in an organization whose interest is in pursuing collective goods, there must be a “pre-requisite.” That is, only “selective incentives” will be powerful enough to attract individuals to work to achieve collective goods. Whiteley and Seyd’s (2002) theory of general incentives corroborates Granik’s powerful postulation.

#### **2.4 General Incentives Model**

The pioneering study of Clark and Wilson some five decades ago generated scholarly interest in the theory of “general incentives.” This seminal study proposed a general theory for organizations that include political parties. Indeed, Costantini and King (1984: 81) stated definitively that “no one can study political motivations without reckoning with the Clark and Wilson typology, the dominant conceptual framework in this area of analysis.” Indeed, if we know the kinds of incentives that an organization may give to induce members’ greater cooperation, then we can learn something about the incentives systems a political party uses to sustain members’ participation in its activities. Clark and Wilson (1961: 130) pointed out that the internal and external events of organizations may be explained by understanding their incentive systems.

All organizations in good standing must provide “tangible or intangible incentives” to their members to induce their optimal contribution (Clark and Wilson, 1961). The authors cautioned, however, that an organization’s incentive scheme must not exceed whatever resources it can afford. Nevertheless, a dilemma arises because every responsible leader must promote the growth of that organization without jeopardizing its survival. Clark and Wilson suggest that



responsible leadership of an organization can achieve its targets by “attempting to obtain a net surplus of incentives and distributing incentives to elicit contributions of activity.” Three kinds of incentives are suggested by Clark and Wilson that influence participation. First, “material incentives” are “tangible rewards such as money or reward that can easily be converted into monetary value.” Second, “solidary incentives” are “intangible rewards which mainly result from the act of associating and socializing.” Finally, “purposive incentives” are also intangible, but “result generally from the stated ends and supra-personal goals of the organization, such as the achievement of public objectives” (pp. 130-45).

Furthermore, in their analysis the authors identified three types of organization that rely on one of the three categories of incentives. One is “utilitarian organizations,” such as political parties. Parties maintain their membership levels through a rewards system. In utilitarian organizations “individuals become contributors expecting the organization to satisfy their material motives” (Clark and Wilson, 1961). Significantly, in such organizations there is an “understanding of the possible benefits and the ways of achieving such goals.” In other words, “there is a cost accounting system.” For instance, the cost of supporting a political party can be measured against having access to government funded projects, employment as a result of “jobs for the boys,” and so on. Clark and Wilson identified a problem with the distribution of incentives for organizations that rely on material incentives. For instance, what formula will be used to distribute ministerial portfolios? Who gets selected for an ambassadorial posting? Since Clark and Wilson, other scholars have built on their model.

Notably, British political scientists have deepened our knowledge of the incentives for political participation on parties’ platforms. Whiteley and Seyd (2002; 1998), Whiteley *et al.*, (1994), and Seyd and Whiteley (1992) have elaborated on the “incentives system,” and have



called their theory the “General Incentives” model. According to Whiteley and Seyd (2002), the general incentives model was the product of the blending of the rational choice and the social psychological accounts of participation (p. 51). The theory argues that individuals need incentives to ensure that they participate in politics, and that a wider array of incentives must be attended to than those individual incentives appearing in rational choice models (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002: 51). The authors emphasized “selective incentives” as essential to understanding why some people join and become active in a party. They identified three types of selective incentives: “process,” “outcome,” and “ideological” (p. 52). Process incentives are the goals individuals want to achieve when they join a political party. Outcome incentives measure the returns on a political activity, while an ideological incentive will compel ideologically minded individuals to engage with likeminded ideologues to reach a target. The theoretical perspectives just enumerated are the product of empirical studies undertaken in Western societies. They may be unable to fully address the problem under study. We propose to supplement the outlined theories with a cultural approach to the study of comparative politics.

## **2.5 Cultural Approach to Comparative Politics**

In the past two decades scholars of African politics have increasingly sought historical and socio-cultural explanations for political crises and the underdevelopment of the continent (see Chabal, 2009; Chabal and Daloz, 2006; 1999; Ake, 2000; 1996; Schatzberg, 1993). The adoption of heterodox political science theories, concepts, and models has become imperative because, according to Kabongo (1984), Africans disagree with Western conceptualizations of politics as a formal activity with strict procedures and distinct norms. Similarly, Schatzberg (1993: 445) notes that all students of politics in Africa have misunderstood the nature of

“political legitimacy.” The reason underlying this confusion, according Schatzberg, “is that attention to political economy and other theoretical models which derived primarily from the experience of the West, have tended to underestimate the importance of political culture” (p. 455).

In a recent study Chabal (2009: 176) notes:

Many Africanist political scientists, wanting to avoid controversy, tackle political interpretation from the safety of universal theories of development. Running large-N surveys, which mirror those carried out in other parts of the world, they explain Africa by dint of using methodologies applied everywhere else.

What concepts, then, should be used in Africanist political theory? There is a debate as to whether concepts and measurements used in social sciences are able to properly account for the African situation. The assumption that concepts are universal is flawed. There “can be no undisputed universal concepts.” According Chabal (2009: 177), “all concepts are historically and contextually generated and, therefore, bounded by the historical circumstances in which they appear. Paradoxically, therefore, they are in this sense local and not universal.”

Culture is intertwined with partisan politics; the behaviour of party activists and foot-soldiers is illustrative. For example, on 13 October 2008, before an assembled press in Kumasi, Daniel Ohene Agyekum,<sup>6</sup> then NDC Ashanti Regional party chairman, invoked the *Antoa Nyamaa*,<sup>7</sup> a popular river deity of Asanteman, to prove that the NDC was innocent in an inter-party dispute. “Enough is enough,” Agyekum intoned, “we can no longer stomach the dirty propaganda machinery of the NPP. I am a devout Christian, but I do also believe in our traditional customs and culture. I will therefore seek the intervention of the powerful river *Antoa*

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<sup>6</sup>. Currently Ghana’s Ambassador to the U.S.

<sup>7</sup>. The *Antoa Nyamaa* is a powerful river deity located in the Ashanti region. It has been invoked by prominent politicians to prove their innocence of alleged crimes. For details see Agyekum (2009) and Obeng (1996).

to judge this case between us [NDC] and the NPP.” He went ahead and sanctified his invocation by presenting two bottles of schnapps and three eggs, as Asante customs demanded.<sup>8</sup> Agyekum acted in his capacity as Regional party chairman and within the framework of a supposedly modern political party. His actions can be understood at two levels. First, in the field of political studies, it is legitimate to analyse the NDC as a formal political organization. This analysis will validate the use of the Western concept of political parties within a multi-party system. Second, within cultural studies the role of deities in Asanteman will yield different meanings. Explaining the actions, however, of the chairman within the framework of inter-party competition will be limiting, insofar as it involves the invocation of a local deity (a cultural symbol), because it falls outside the realm of “real” political science. The actor in the example given is a career politician; his actions acknowledged the cultural heritage of his constituents while, at the same time, he employs cultural symbols for partisan purposes.

Can normative political theories adequately explain the cultural variables in the example? To Western trained political scientists, the actions belong to the realm of the irrational; supposedly, the event cannot be explained logically. Chabal and Daloz (2006; 1999) fundamentally disagree with that view. They acknowledge the centrality of culture to the study of comparative politics. To the authors, “culture is not simply ‘relevant’ to comparative politics. Much more fundamental, comparative politics can only be meaningful insofar as it succeeds in making sense of the cultural environment that provides the very framework within which local politics take place” (2006: 23). The study of political participation has often been based on empirical work. As Chabal and Daloz (2006: 273) argue, “it is not really possible to understand

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<sup>8</sup>. The press conference was monitored on METRO TV news item, 7pm, 14 October 2008.

fully the complexities of political representation without taking into account the cultural dimensions of the relationship between representatives.”

In *Africa Works*, Chabal and Daloz (1999) proposed a strategy for Africanist political scientists to overcome the limitations of generalized theoretical frameworks. The study accounted for the instrumentalization of contemporary African politics using a cultural approach. In another ground breaking study, *Culture Troubles*, Chabal and Daloz (2006) expanded their cultural approach to the comparative study of politics. In this respect, the authors note that:

A cultural approach to politics is neither an attempt to reduce politics to culture nor a desire to cast agency into a relativist mould. It is a framework that makes it possible to understand the exercise of power in its relevant context. What this means is that there is no obvious mechanism by which it would be possible to explain the politics of a particular setting without making sense of the cultural factors that affect power and induce individuals, as well as groups, to behave as they do (Chabal and Daloz, 2006: 94).

The cultural approach is the “study of meaning of actions that makes sense to the people concerned.” Significantly, analyses are informed by local perspectives. For instance, returning to the illustration, how the people of the Subin constituency made sense of Agyekum’s invocation of a local deity against his political opponents is a conundrum. In this respect, Chabal and Daloz (2006: 4) note that “[u]nravelling what makes sense to the actors and their contextually relevant ‘spectators’ is to enter the realm of the interpretation of meaning, that is, to make the effort to decode the significance of such events from the other’s viewpoint.” A satisfactory explanation would ideally address the cultural issue. Why invoke *Antoa Nyamma* to prove a political party’s innocence? According to Chabal and Daloz (1999: 148), well-grounded analysis of politics at the grassroots must take into account four fundamental aspects: namely, the “boundaries of politics,” the “different registers on which politics is played out,” the “character of rationality” as evidenced in political action, and the “nature of political causality.”

As Chabal and Daloz note, the cultural perspective “enjoins the analyst to study phenomena within the appropriate *local* context.” This study is grounded in the same theoretical perspectives. Having examined the frequently cited theories in the discipline of political science, noting their strengths and weaknesses, it must be said that because a number of different theoretical perspectives are very relevant to the concerns of the study, a judicious combination has been selected to inform it. The cultural approach, however, is elevated above the rest.

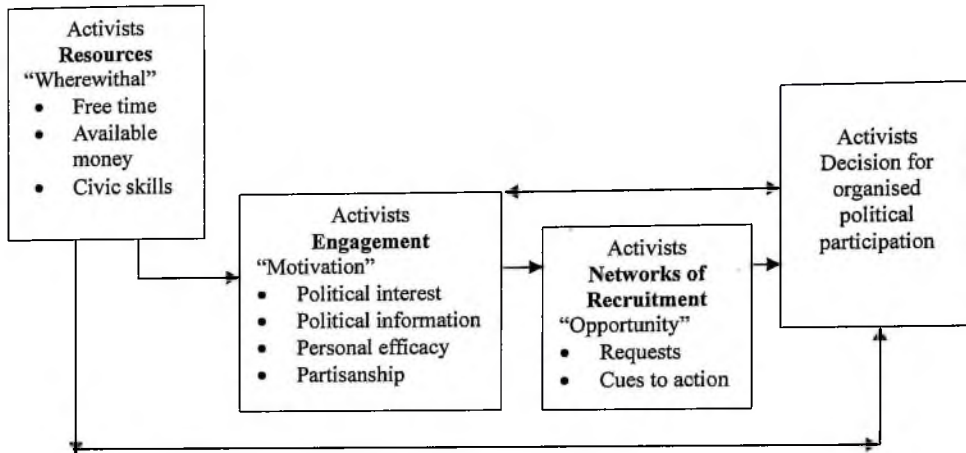
## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

The CVM approach of Verba *et al.* (1995) was adapted to frame the concepts of “high intensity participation.” The CVM explains political participation based on “three participatory factors.” The first stimulus that allows individuals to take part in a political activity is called “resources.” The resources component combines time, money, and civil skill to bring about participation. Another stimulus to political activity in the CVM framework is “engagement.” That is, individuals have the interest to be involved in a political activity. Finally, place of work, church, and social networks will serve as “recruitment” grounds. Invitations are extended to acquaintances to participate in a political activity (pp. 270-73). On the whole, the CVM says that “engagement” is an important but not a necessary element to stimulate participation. Participation on the individual level is also dependent on the availability of certain vital ingredients or “resources,” such as money, time, and knowledge (civic skills). The possession of the necessary resources and exposure to engagement channels cannot bring about political participation until the necessary recruitment channels (e.g., work place, church) are activated.

In spite of the complementary roles of all three dimensions of the CVM, resources are singled out as the most important element influencing political participation. Nevertheless, the

“three participatory factors” interact to bring about participation in mutually enforcing ways. A diagrammatic representation of the various linkages that explain party activism is in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1 FACTORS STIMULATING POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVISM



Source: Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995).

## 2.7 Conclusion

Several theories explain political participation. This chapter has reviewed only three of the frequently cited theoretical perspectives and the analytical framework within the social, historical, and cultural approach of Africanist scholars. The CVM argues that political activity results from three “participatory factors”: resources, engagement, and recruitment. Rational choice models claim that individuals can decide between a range of alternatives, and choose the alternative at the top. The operationalization of the rational choice model, however, triggers what is known as the “paradox of participation.” This paradox argues that rational individuals will not engage in any activity that produces public goods. Finally, the general incentives model argues that individuals need incentives to participate. Selective incentives best explain why citizens become active in political parties. The boundary between formal politics and the cultural

environment in which politics is practised in Africa is very thin. Politics and culture overlap. The perspective that enables analysis within the cultural approach is the foundation of this study.



## CHAPTER THREE

### A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PARTY ACTIVISM IN GHANA

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#### 3.1 Introduction

In 1951 the British parliamentary democracy model, with more than two political parties, was inaugurated by the first pre-independence African administration. The system was maintained for elections in 1954 and 1956. Multi-party systems underpinned the country's political administrations well into the post-independence era. The periods between October 1969 and January 1972 and between September 1979 and December 1981 saw the inauguration of two short-lived civilian regimes, interspersed with military administrations. The military regime of the PNDC returned the administration of the country to civilian rule in the early 1990s. The argument of this chapter is that there appears to be a linear progression in political party traditions (cf. Boahen, 1989), and this is at least partly responsible for Ghana's Fourth Republic having a *de facto* two-party system (Whitfield, 2009; Morrison, 2004).

The objective of this chapter is to examine the origins of political parties, campaign strategies, and styles used, and intra/inter-party competitions in a historical and comparative manner. The narrative is divided into three sections. The first covers 1946 to 1966; the second section the period from 1969 to 1972; and finally, the third section examines 1979 to 1981. The missing years were periods of military rule: political parties and civilian political activities were banned.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> . There were, nevertheless, some dissenting or critical voices.



### 3.2 The Birth of Two Political Traditions

On 7 April 1947 the Gold Coast timber merchant, George Alfred Grant (popularly known as Paa Grant), invited about 40 “representative” leaders to a conference held at Canaan Lodge, Saltpond. The delegates were to consider proposals for the formation of a political party (Austin, 1961: 279). In the 1940s the dissemination of news was very slow, and not many heard about this very important gathering of the country’s business and political elites. The few, however, and not least the Gold Coast press, that learned of the gathering at Saltpond relished the moment. The published editorials of some of the newspapers of the day conveyed a moment of great joy:

U.G.C.C. – a name to conjure with! It has a magical ring! It has no doubt startled some persons in certain quarters and set them thinking, what! what is it all about? The Gold Coast too? Are they not a pack of self-complacent, easy-going, pleasure-loving creatures? Yes, assess the Gold Coast African and give him any unfavourable or low value you like, yet at heart he is entirely different: he possesses latent qualities that elude the foreign appraiser or assessor. Even the most aimless and self-loving indigene of this country possesses a spark that can be easily fanned into flame (*Gold Coast Observer*, 25 July 1947: 151).

Since the days of the Fante Confederacy in the 1860s and the Aborigines Right Protection Society of the 1890s (see Boahen, 2000), Gold Coasters had waited patiently for another organized group to lead the people. Indeed, a chronicler of the period noted that “there have been, undoubtedly, obvious divisions in our ranks which have, for a considerable time, rendered us easy prey for the exploiter and enslaver.” The UGCC excited many people because it claimed it was neither an association, nor a party exclusively for the chiefs, nor for the intelligentsia; “it was for, and belonged to the people of the Gold Coast irrespective of tribe, clan, class, creed or sex” (*Gold Coast Observer*, 25 July 1947: 151). The Gold Coast press was fully in support of the nationalist cause. The Editor of the *Spectator Daily*, commenting on the forthcoming convention, wrote: “The Gold Coast has lagged behind while it is being falsely patted as one of the best

advanced in the colonial Empire. We have made enough fools of ourselves; time we thought seriously and put aside petty differences” (cited in the *Gold Coast Observer*, 25 July 1947). The *African Morning Post*, another Gold Coast newspaper, opined: “We admire the gesture of the organizers since the country gains all by unity and nothing at all by division in ranks, individual or collective.” It continued: “The proposed Gold Coast Convention therefore is a public desideratum and we can only hope it is going to prove a blessing to the rising generation in the same way as the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society proved a boon to the old generation and to the products of that generation to this day and forever” (cited in the *Gold Coast Observer*, 25 July 1947).

In spite of all these interesting political developments in the Colony and Ashanti, the Northern Territories were completely cut off from them (Kelly and Bening, 2007: 182-89). During this critical period the whole of the Northern Territories was on the periphery of national politics. The British colonial authorities treated the territory with utter contempt. The zone was seen as a “hinterland” that needed to be protected from the liberating southern influences (see Lentz, 2006). Consequently, the North was not represented in these early political gatherings at Saltpond. In fact, “organized political activity” was unknown in Northern Ghana until 1948 (Lentz, 2006: 176-77; Brukum, 1998: 16; Ladouceur, 1979: 79).

According to Paul Ladouceur, the only “organized political activity” in recorded Northern history prior to the advent of nationalist politics occurred about 1936, when a group of teachers in the service of the colonial administration agitated for improvements in the colonial education policies. The political developments in the Gold Coast mirror others in the colonial world. As Cooper (2002) notes, colonial rule “choked on the narrowness of the pathways it had created” after the Second World War. Colonial regimes throughout Africa discovered that “Africans would

not confine themselves to the tribal cages created for them,” and neither would the policy that sought to deny Africans the worth of their labour go unchallenged (Cooper, 2002: 20). The period 1946-47 was the point of the highest degree of discontent with colonial governments in Africa generally, and more so in the Gold Coast (see Meredith, 2005; Cooper, 2002; Boahen, 2000; 1989a). There the country was run with the assistance of chiefs, whom the British saw as the legitimate rulers (so-called natural rulers). The political elites challenged this arrangement, and sought inclusion in the administration of the country. “The ‘colour’ picture of Ghana was irritating,” writes William Ofori Atta (1988: 5):

Every senior or high office in the Civil Service was occupied by an expatriate – a white man. In the commercial field, all the bosses were white. Even in the churches the situation was no different: all the top clergy were white. To add insult to injury, those few Africans who were fortunate enough to attain high office were described as occupying European posts. And certain areas of our country were described as European quarters or areas.

In short, their education, whether university or Standard VII, guaranteed them neither partial nor full participation in the running of the country. Dissatisfaction with the colonial system, particularly the discontent of the ex-servicemen, provided a powerful argument for the nationalist cause (Awoonor, 1990: 133-4). With the disapproval rate of the colonial system at an all-time high, the news of the nationalist attempt at forming a political party was welcomed with enthusiasm in the southern part of the country. All the excitement generated in the press was, however, just the prelude to the official inauguration of the first formal political party of the Gold Coast. On 4 August 1947, at Saltpond and before “a great assembly composed of paramount chiefs, clergymen, intelligentsia, traders and thousands of men, women and children, all in gala attire,” George Alfred Grant inaugurated the United Gold Coast Convention (*Gold Coast Observer*, 8 August 1947: 173). The leadership of the Convention consisted entirely of people

from the southern part of the country, and it included the following: George Grant (president); Dr. J. B. Danquah (vice president); K. Bentsi Enchill (vice president); R. S. Blay (vice president); Dr. J. W. deGraft Johnson (General secretary); and F. Awoonor Williams (Treasurer). The objective of the UGCC was to ensure that by “all legitimate and constitutional means, the control and direction of Government shall within the shortest possible time pass into the hands of the people and their chiefs” (*Gold Coast Observer*, 15 August 1947: 185). Several groups of Gold Coasters backed the motion that established the UGCC. One such group, which is often inadvertently ignored in the “standard” literature, is the Gold Coast women. “A grand lady,” however, Mrs. J. B. Eyeson of Saltpond and Kumasi, spoke on behalf of the women of the land and in support of the motion when she said: “We had in the past given enthusiastic support to the cause of the church. Today it is the cause of the nation. Women of the country are behind you” (*Gold Coast Observer*, 15 August 1947: 185).

Much has been written about the Working Committee of the Convention (see Austin 1964; Boahen, 2000). One individual, though, whose personal disposition stood out, and was to become the determinant factor in the course on which the nationalists’ agitation was to lead the nation, was Kwame Nkrumah. He became the paid General Secretary of the Convention in January 1948; the circumstances surrounding his appointment as General Secretary are too well known to require repeating (see Boahen, 2000; Milne, 1999). The issue that needs emphasizing is that by all standards, the Working Committee of the Convention consisted of two ideologically divergent groups. The conservatives, consisting of wealthy merchants and legal luminaries, dominated the leadership; but it was the radical group, consisting of persons from working class backgrounds, that was to determine the pace of the movement. Nkrumah represented the radical wing of the Convention, and was more than determined to bring the masses on board; it was,

therefore, no surprise that the radicals soon collided with the conservative leadership (see Rooney, 2007; Milne, 1999). The first cracks began to appear in the front of the leadership after the 1948 Riots (see Amenumey, 2008: 205-207, Milne, 1999: 33-56). While the conservative group regretted the extremity of the disturbances, for the radical wing the disturbances were a Godsend; they were determined not to let the opportunity pass them by, and they actually exploited the situation (Austin, 1964). Indeed, as noted by Milne (1999: 41), “while Nkrumah hoped to make use of the opportunity to discuss future tactics, the others spent most of the time bemoaning their fate, blaming Nkrumah for their predicament.” The other advantage of the riots was that they generated the badly needed oxygen of publicity for the party and its leaders. Paa Grant, for instance, disclosed at a meeting held on 15 May 1948 at Sekondi that membership had more than doubled since the disturbances; nevertheless, the leaders were hesitant in seizing the opportunity (*Gold Coast Observer*, 28 May 1948). Furthermore, they were slow in launching the party in the North.

The political incorporation of the Northern Territories into the overall Gold Coast colonial project was a very slow process. In 1946 a modest representation in the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly was initiated with the creation of the Northern Territories Council (NTC). In the NTC the various “Native Authorities were to discuss matters of common interest” and to learn “to think further than purely local affairs” (quoted in Lentz, 2006: 176). In December 1948 a committee of 40 members was constituted to undertake major constitutional reforms, and in the chair was Justice Henley Coussey. Among the 40 African members of the Coussey Committee were five northerners. The inclusion of northerners, noted Ladouceur (1979: 74), “symbolized the formal end of the policy of isolating the North from events in the South.” J. A. Karbo (the *Lawra Naa*) was the only nominee from the North-West (p. 74). The report of the Coussey

Committee recommended the disbandment of the local authorities and the full inclusion of the Northern Territories into the Gold Coast administration (Lentz, 2006; Ladouceur, 1979: 72-79; Wilks, 1989: 187). With regard to electoral participation in the Northern Territories, the report recommended that all 19 members from the zone be elected by an Electoral College, perhaps because it was the first time the people were exposed to partisan politics (Lentz, 2006). The 1950 Constitution of the Gold Coast “enfranchised the North only indirectly.” Consequently, there would be no direct election along party lines in the North in the 1951 local government elections (Ladouceur, 1979: 75).

Even though the NTC was mandated to explore issues of national interest, its members were not involved in political activism and agitation on the leadership front of the UGCC. Indeed, the UGCC opened its Northern branch in 1948, with its headquarters at Tamale; membership initially consisted entirely of southerners, mostly civil servants working in the North (Gandah, 2004: 220-21; Ladouceur, 1979: 80-3, 88-9; see also *West Africa*, 26 January and 2 February 1952). In fact, before 1954 few northerners held party membership cards. The first to join in the politics of the nationalists was Ebenezer Adam, a teacher of 10 years’ standing in Kumasi. Adam was a member of the UGCC in Kumasi and, on transfer to Tamale, became the secretary of the UGCC Committee (Ladouceur, 1979; Austin, 1964). Together with a fellow northerner, R. S. Iddrissu, a transport owner who had also worked and lived in Kumasi, he was able to attract other northerners to the platform of the UGCC (Ladouceur, 1979: 81).

In the twilight of the colonial enterprise in the Gold Coast, few northerners could read and write. As Lentz (2006: 201) reported in 1945, only “a mere thirty-three pupils from Lawra Confederacy were able to attend” schools outside the territory. According to Lentz (2006), those natives with formal education in the Lawra district were acquaintances, because they either came



from the same village or passed through the same school. Their public or mission based education did not, however, prepare them to dislodge the colonial system or question its operations in the Northern Territories. Nevertheless, some form of uncritical political education engaged the attention of the “literate” in the various social clubs established in the Native Authorities (Lentz, 2006: 202). With the founding of the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948, its Department of Extra-Mural Studies was able to send resident tutors, who gave lectures throughout the northern district towns (p. 202). The natives with formal education grouped together in associations known as the People’s Education Association (PEA). As Lentz notes, these social groups became “training grounds” for some of the “political activists” who emerged later in the 1950s (pp. 202-203). She cites the example of S. W. D. K. Gandah, a member of the Tumu branch, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Northern People’s Party (NPP) in the Lawra and Tumu Districts (Lentz, 2006: 203; Gandah, 2004). With the advent of nationalist politics, the PEA in the various northern districts collapsed because of the very nature of multi-party politics. Local issues became intertwined with party matters (Lentz, 2006: 203).

Meanwhile, differences over how to prosecute the all-important agenda of fighting for independence for the Gold Coast had emerged on the leadership front of the UGCC: the radical wing announced it would divorce from the marriage of the Convention on 11 June 1949. The following day, 12 June 1949, Nkrumah announced the birth of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) at the West End Arena meeting ground in Accra. The party aimed at “fighting relentlessly by all constitutional means for the achievement of full self-government *now*” (Boahen, 2000: 1957, emphasis added). Herein lay the difference between the two political parties. While, moreover, the UGCC was home to the conservatives -- notably, chiefs, businessmen, and political elites -- the CPP was founded by youths from poor backgrounds; they thus preferred to

call themselves the “verandah boys.” The UGCC had its popularity and numerical strength depleted by the split with Nkrumah. Within a three-year period, the Gold Coast had evolved two political traditions. While businessmen and professionals populated the ranks of the UGCC, the CPP followers were generally society’s poor and unemployed. They argued for a progressive and socialist style of governance. Earlier, in the 1920s, two groupings with similar beliefs were founded. A prominent Ghanaian historian, Adu Boahen, argues that the “bipolarization of the Ghanaian political culture predates the CPP and UGCC.” The Mambii<sup>10</sup> Party and the Ratepayers’ Association of the 1920s had leftist and rightist colourings (see Boahen, 1989b: 63; Kimble, 1963: 451-55; Shaloff, 1972: 21:34; Spitzer and Denzer, 1973: 413-52). Based on this historical development, Boahen (1989b: 63) concluded that one could trace a “direct linear progression” from Kojo Thompson (Mambii Party) and from Dr. Nanka-Bruce (Ratepayers’ Association) to the Kwame Nkrumah/CPP and Danquah/UGCC groups, respectively.

### **3.3 Party Ideology, Membership, and Methods of Mobilization**

Even though there were other political parties, such as the Gold Coast Liberal Party, the Freedom Defence Society, the National Democratic Party and the Ghana Freedom Party, “none received as much real grassroots following as comparable [*sic*] to that of the CPP” (Austin, 1964). The grassroots following of the CPP gave the party the identity of a “mass-based party,” while the composition of the UGCC qualifies it to be called an “elite-based party” (cf. Gunther and Diamond, 2003; Duverger, 1954). The CPP mobilized along horizontal lines, and had a large following of dues paying members. In an effort to disseminate the party’s programme, the party

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<sup>10</sup> Mambii is a Ga word for townspeople, especially illiterates.



attempted to include trade unions and other social organizations (see Essuman-Johnson, 2007: 205-06).

The policy goals of the two main parties varied. The UGCC aimed “to establish a free society based on the principles of democratic socialism” (UGCC, 1951: 7), while the CPP was inclined to “African socialism” (CPP, 1959: 6). Nonetheless, there was a common thread in economic policy between the UGCC and the CPP. Austin (1964: 138) notes this when comparing the 1951 election manifestos of the UGCC and CPP: “In general there was very little difference between the CPP goal and the UGCC plan.” Similarly, Genoud (1969: 95) claimed that “a comparison between the economic content of the CPP electoral manifestos and those of the opposition parties showed no fundamental difference.” Another commentator noted that the parties “could not provide any overarching ideology beyond promises of economic prosperity” (Owusu, 1970: 143).

The CPP emerged as the leader of the commoners. “Forward Ever Backward Never” was the battle cry, and many came to identify with the slogan of the CPP. As a mass-based party, the CPP organized branches throughout the country, with youth wings and women’s groups constituting its auxiliary units (Saaka, 1994). The northern branch of the CPP mobilized the young men and women. In early 1952 the weekly news magazine, *West Africa*, reported that the CPP had 35 branches in the Northern Territories towns and villages, the largest being Tamale, with a following of 2,000. In the North West, the settlements of Wa claimed a CPP following of 800, while the Birifu branch reported membership of over 300 (*West Africa*, 26 January, 1952: 55; 2 February, 1952: 85-6). The actual membership of CPP’s card bearing members could be less than what was reported. The account of Jack Goody, the British anthropologist who undertook research in Birifu in the 1950s, is very illuminating. Goody (2007: 151-2), a card

bearing CPP member, reported that during his field study (August 1950-December 1951) in Birifu no party meeting was held. Nevertheless, every town and village had its CPP youth branch, called *samari*, and was led by the *sarikin samari* (Ladouceur, 1979: 82). The women were mobilized from the market centres, and the market queens, known as the *magasia*, led the various women's groups in the market (p. 82). The slogans and symbols associated with the party were so powerful that within a short period its leaders in the Northern Territories had succeeded in mobilizing the masses for the nationalist cause.

### **3.4 Motivations: “Self-Government Step-by-Step” versus “Self-Government Now”**

The motivations for nationalists' activism were multi-faceted, and they ranged from generic self-determination to local rivalries. Rathbone (1973: 392) pointed out that the Gold Coast economy bred discontent at various levels. The businessmen were dissatisfied with the unhealthy trading practices of their Western counterparts, while the professional classes were discriminated against at the work place. Worse of all, youth clamoured for non-existent jobs. Austin (1961: 273) affirms this observation when he wrote that “the mass of the people were becoming clear about what they disliked. Prices were rising, jobs became difficult to get, cocoa incomes falling off as swollen shoot spread ... [T]he more-than-barely-literate now included many from the middle schools, some with two or three years secondary education.” The appeal by all the political parties on the grounds of self-determination was powerful enough to trigger nationalists' activism. A CPP campaign advertisement summed up the aspirations of most Gold Coasters: “Stand firm, party members! Remember there is more beyond for all who will keep the faith and set the banner flying” (*Evening News*, 3 May 1954).

What about the political ideologies of the various parties? Indeed, is discussion of political ideology during this period appropriate? When Nkrumah was asked by Joe Appiah, a close friend<sup>11</sup> and the CPP's representative in the UK, to sanction corrupt party officers, he replied by arguing that many party followers had given the CPP their support on grounds other than political ideology, and that to "dismiss or severely discipline any minister or high party official at that time would invite mass resignations and, consequently, the disintegration of the party" (Appiah, 1996: 207). Similarly, Goody (2007: 152) notes, "The ideological component of party membership was low, though all were well aware that the growth of the CPP meant independence and hence better positions." Furthermore, Lentz (2006: 200) has argued, in relation to the Lawra and Jirapa-Lambussie Districts, that "political platforms were largely irrelevant to the initial decision of party membership." She adds that "ideologically, all the chiefly houses tended to the NPP, but local power struggles often resulted in one faction – initially the 'losing' one – joining the CPP" (p. 200). Party factional disagreements continue to shape contemporary partisan activities.

There were economic motivations at play. As Rathbone (1973: 399) notes, some party members were "undoubtedly committed ideological nationalists, proud tribalists, or social democrats." Cocoa merchants in Asante shifted their loyalty to the NLM after 1954 because the material incentive in their case was the promised price increase that never materialized. In the Northern Territories, the leadership was also concerned about "constitutional development" and the role of traditional institutions (Ladouceur, 1979).

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<sup>11</sup>. Appiah wrote that "Nkrumah and I had stood in the same bath and used the same water and one towel; I had cut his hair many, many times...He had become a friend in the fullest and truest sense: but when he saw wrong and refused to put it right, he ceased to be a moral being and a friend." p. 243.

The period from 1933 to 1949 was one of crises in the Wa Township, characterized by a vicious religious factionalism. Until the 1930s the Orthodox religious sect had reigned supreme (Wilks, 1989). The entry of a second Islamic sect occasioned a period of prolonged crises. The Ahmadiyya Movement was introduced into the Wala society in that decade by one Alhaji Salih, a Wala trader who had settled in Adanse and come into contact with the Ahmadis, and converted (Bin Salih, 2001; Wilks, 1989; Dougah, 1966). Earlier, in 1929, Mumuni Koray, a Wala prince then serving in the Customs Preventive Service, became the first Wala man to convert to the Ahmadiyya (Wilks, 1989: 179). In April 1933 Alhaji Salih returned to Wa, and started an Ahmadiyya Mission. Despite the opposition of the Orthodox community and the ambivalence of the British colonial authorities, the movement grew by leaps and bounds. The growth of the Ahmadiyya, and intolerance from their rival sect, were to be exploited by political parties and government agencies from the 1950s onwards (Bin Salih, 2001; Wilks, 1989).

The introduction of party politics in the Northern Territories in the 1950s opened up old conflicts, particularly in the North-West. According to Lentz (2006: 199-251), this period is referred to as “the time when politics came” to the Lawra District. Local disagreements became intertwined with party politics. The first political incident of significance, reported by Wilks (1989) and other writers, occurred on 11 December 1951 during a CPP rally. An Ahmadi, J. B. Jinsun, challenged CPP speakers on controversial issues raised during the campaign. The Jinsun challenge resulted in fisticuffs. Nonetheless, it was the culmination of two earlier incidents. In 1948 Mumuni Koray became the first Ahmadi, and the first literate, to be enskinned as a chief of *Sing* (the head chief of the Jonyosi Gate). His enskinment was highly controversial in many respects. The traditionalists in Wala society were alarmed at a lettered person occupying a chieftain position. Literacy had been introduced into the Wa *Naalung* (chieftaincy), and illiterates

worried that literacy would henceforth be used as one of the criteria for eligibility (Bin Salih, 2001: 309). The worst fear of the Orthodox community was confirmed when Koray ascended the Wala skin in November 1949. The new chief “had his skin and the other paraphernalia” of the Wa *Naalung* placed in the Ahmadiyya mosque (Wilks, 1989: 185). In June 1951, while *Naa* Koray was in Accra attending his legislative duties, Muhammad Saghir, the Orthodox Wa Liman (Islamic spiritual head), died suddenly. The office was occupied by another Orthodox Muslim, Alhaji Said Soribo. When *Naa* Koray returned to Wa, however, he not only refused to recognize Alhaji Soribo, but proceeded to enrobe a fellow Ahmadi, Alhaji Salih, as the Wala Liman (Wilks, 1989). Occupation of the two most important traditional offices in the Wala polity by the minority Ahmadiyya became a source of conflicts (Bin Salih, 2001; Wilks, 1989; Dougah, 1966).

The Wala Ahmadiyya converts saw the Ahmadiyya movement as very progressive and liberating (Wilks, 1989). In its day the CPP, too, was the leading light of progressivism, as it stood against conservatism. It therefore stands to reason that the CPP should ideally have been the party of choice for most Wala Ahmadi. As Fikry (1969: 218) reported, though, when the Ahmadi tried to join the CPP, the Orthodox told them, “We have enlisted because of you people. If we allow you to come, then we have defeated our aim.” The motive for the Ahmadi joining the nationalists in their activism was, therefore, basically to protect the movement from harassment and intimidation in the Wa Township (Bin Salih, 2001: 317-28).

### **3.5 Nationwide Election Campaigns: the “Operation 104” Strategy**

Between 1951 and 1956 the CPP convincingly won three General Elections (Austin, 1964). The General Election of February 1951, the first of its kind in the history of the country, was won by the CPP, followed by a second on 15 June 1954; the third before independence was

granted was held on 17 July 1956. The reasons for the CPP's success are many. Scholars who chronicled the events of the period give credit, however, to the exceptional organizational abilities and campaign strategies adopted by the party activists (Boahen, 2000). After participating in internal "Self-Government" for three years, the Justice Van Lare Commission (1953) recommended a new Constitution for the country. This time the CPP was opposed not by the UGCC alone, but by as many as seven parties (see Table 3.1). For the opposition mouth piece, the *Daily Echo* (4 January 1954: 2), what the Gold Coast needed was a clean sweep, one that would remove the CPP from power, and put in place "honest and well-trying men experienced in the intricacies of government." For the CPP the election was a battle that had to be fought on all fronts, and it had to be won to enable it now to continue on its path to full self-government. The party launched the "Operation 104" campaign, signalling its readiness to annex all of the 104 legislative seats that were on offer. An editorial in the *Evening News*, the official mouthpiece of the CPP, succinctly explained what Operation 104 meant. "Operation 104, the biggest paramilitary political operation ever launched in the African liberation struggle, the result of which will be a most surprising 100 per cent victory for the Ghana common people" (*Evening News*, 8 May 1954: 2). It added that "this operation has unleashed all the pent-up revolutionary energies of a toiling people yearning for national independence, and nothing can stop that spirit from accomplishing the battle so nobly prosecuted with the achievement so far of internal Self-Government" (*Evening News*, 8 May 1954: 2).

The Northern Territories had been on the fringes of nationalists' activism in the 1951 elections. All of its 19 Parliamentarians were elected not on a party basis, but from an Electoral College. In the early 1950s the most important issue that concerned the northern leadership was the "upliftment of the whole country," and not partisan issues (quoted in Lentz, 2006: 178).

Nevertheless, the positive impact of the six years of political interactions between the north and the south, and three years' participation in the Gold Coast legislature, was the emergence of "a clearly defined political leadership" (Ladouceur, 1979: 84). As far as the north was concerned, this emergence necessitated a rethink of the colonial policy.

TABLE 3.1  
Political Parties and Legislative Election of 1954

Party	Leader	Symbols	Seats
Northern People's Party (NPP*)	S. D. Dombo	A clenched fist in black on a white background	12
Convention People's Party (CPP)	Kwame Nkrumah	A cockerel in red on white background	74
Ghana Congress Party (GCP)	K. A. Busia	An elephant in blue on a white background	1
Ghana Nationalists Party (GNP)	E. O. Obetsebi-Lamptey	An elephant with a raised trunk in black on a brick-red background	0
Anlo Youth Association (AYA)	M. K. Apaloo	Crossed keys in white on a green background	1
Muslim Association Party (MAP)	Bankole Renner	A crescent and a star in white on a green background	1
Togoland Congress Party (TCP)	S. G. Anto	A five pointed star in yellow on a white background	2
Ghana Action Party (GAP)	Ansah Koi	A house and linguist's stick in red on a green background	0

Source: Compiled by the author, from the *Daily Echo*, 11 May 1954.

From that point onwards, colonial authorities preferred to work with those among the northern political leadership who had "the support of the traditional leadership and represent continuity with it, and at the same time [are] able to articulate their views to the vastly more experienced Southern politicians and to the colonial officials themselves" (Ladouceur, 1979: 84).



The CPP launched its country-wide campaign at the Accra sports stadium with great fanfare. The party employed very innovative campaign strategies to market its candidates. The verandah boys within the Accra municipality used the Asafo concept, and formed the Bukom Asafo Company, with comrade E. C. Quaye (Kakaboka) as the “captain” of the Asafo. They were tasked with hoisting the “Freedom Flags,” a form of campaign strategy, at the various wards of the municipality. Flag hoisting eventually became a political ritual. The unfurling of flags at the various wards was preceded by a bugle alarm and the making of a libation, usually by the high priest of the ward. Over a million Freedom Flags were hoisted in communities throughout the country. The grandest of the flag hoisting ceremonies was the one performed by Kwame Nkrumah at Bukom Square on 28 April 1954. The *Evening News* (29 April 1954: 1) described the scene as follows:

Bukom Square had its thickest crowd on record and there was not even elbow room when the Osagyefo Tufuhene Nuu fenuu, Kwame Nkrumah hoisted the CPP tricolor there yesterday amid thunderous ovation befitting a hero and statesman... The whole area was thrown into consternation and completely electrified when the arrival of the Wonder Boy and Star of Africa was announced... He was led by Asafo Drummers and a CPP flag and shouts of Freedom, Freedom, 104 Freedom, 103 No Mistake completely charged the atmosphere. Nai Wulomo, the highest priest of the Ga State poured libation and blessed the CPP flag which was to be hoisted and proudly the flag of Africa’s New Glory was unfurled to the skies.<sup>12</sup>

Even allowing for journalistic hyperbole, we can still glean some of the seriousness attached to these flag hoisting ceremonies by party activists. Ako Adjei explained that the hoisting signified that the CPP was on a “war path.” Wherever a Freedom Flag was raised, it meant that the territory had been captured by the CPP.

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<sup>12</sup> See also *The African Morning Post* (5 April 1954: 1), which has details of the official launch of the CPP’s electioneering campaign held at the Accra Sports Stadium.



To pave the way for another election, in early 1954 the Prime Minister and Leader of Government Business, Dr. Nkrumah, advised the Governor to dissolve the Legislative Assembly. With the announcement of the dissolution of Parliament, the northern Parliamentary caucus held discussions with other influential northerners to decide on the appropriate response. Of concern to them was the backwardness of their territory. As Bawumia (2004: 46) notes, after deliberating the state of development in the north, the northern politicians “came to the conclusion that the North would be worse off if certain developments in physical, social and economic infrastructure did not take place before independence was granted to the Gold Coast.” For the northern leadership, the solution was in the formation of a political party. Consequently, the Northern Peoples’ Party (NPP\*)<sup>13</sup> was inaugurated in Tamale on 10 April 1954; its official logo displayed a clenched fist, “symbolizing unity” (Lentz, 2006; Bawumia, 2004; Ladouceur, 1979). The leadership of the party included Chief S. D. Dombo (Chairman), Mumuni Bawumia (Vice-Chairman), Fuseini Dramani (Secretary), Imoru Salifu (Propaganda Secretary), and J. B. Fuseini (Treasurer). The NPP\* was still in the process of opening its branches when the political campaign began. It could thus not mobilize the needed campaign funds, and had to depend on the generosity of members and well-wishers. Indeed, its first campaign van was donated by an Accra-based lawyer.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, unlike the southern-based parties, it embarked on a campaign devoid of propaganda (Gandah, 2004: 236).

The party drew its following from the chiefs and persons linked to the ruling houses (Lentz, 2006; Ladouceur, 1979). Eighty candidates contested for the 26 seats in the north: while

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<sup>13</sup>. Note that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) has the same acronym.

<sup>14</sup> Two published autobiographies give two different names for the Accra-based lawyer. Bawumia (2004: 43) mentioned N. A. Ollenu of the Ghana Congress Party as the one who donated the van. In his account, Gandah (2001: 236) identified Kwesi Lamptey as the person who donated it.

the CPP ran candidates for all the seats, 18 candidates represented the NPP\* and the Muslim Association Party (MAP) (Gandah, 2004: 224). In the Tumu constituency, five independents stood for election. The CPP sponsored Imoru Egala's candidacy, however, when it paid his deposit, as demanded by the electoral laws. In the Lawra-Nandom constituency, the election was a straight fight between the CPP's candidate, Nonantuo Gandah, and the NPP's Abayifaa Karbo. Three other candidates ran as independents (Gandah, 2004). S. D. Dombo and Bapenyiri Yel Poe ran on the tickets of the NPP and the CPP in the Jirapa-Lambussie constituency (Lentz, 2006). In the Wala North constituency, five persons contested the elections. Jatoe Kaleo, the NPP candidate, was opposed by Darimani, the CPP candidate. The other three stood as independents. The contest for the Wala South seat was a race between B. K. Adama (NPP) and Mumuni Adama (CPP). Overall, the CPP won over the combined forces of the opposition parties (see Lentz, 2006; Gandah, 2004; Ladouceur, 1979). In Table 3.1, even though the party fell short of an outright 100 per cent, it won 72 of the 104 seats.

The ruling CPP coalition assumed that the election outcome would convince the British of the preparedness of the country to chart an independent path. Not everybody was convinced of the promises of independence. On 19 September 1954 the National Liberation Movement (NLM) was inaugurated in Kumasi (see Boahen, 2000; Allman, 1990; Austin, 1964). The demands of the NLM would require another election to be organized. In pledging his support to the NLM a year after its formation, the reigning Asantehene, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II (1931-1971), informed his subjects at the Kumasi State Council that "the National Liberation Movement was a National Organization. It was not a political party" (quoted in Austin, 1964: 264). Consequently, the Asante citizens were obliged to throw their weight behind the NLM. The royal endorsement of the NLM saw a decline in the membership of the CPP in Asante. Prominent CPP figures in

Asante deserted its ranks and join the NLM (Allman, 1990; Austin, 1964). The main issues that dominated the campaigns in Asante, in particular, concerned cocoa prices and the achievements of the CPP in office (Oelbaum, 2004). On the question of a party's overall policy, however, the disagreements between the NLM and the CPP were based on the administration systems of a federal state versus a unitary state (Boahen, 2000). The NLM aligned itself with the other, smaller, parties: the NPP\*, the MAP, and the TC. The fear of another CPP victory brought these disparate groups together. In spite of the tensions that preceded the elections, the CPP campaign machinery proved once again its effectiveness in a more decisive way. Consistent with its national character, the CPP was the only party to have won seats in all the four electoral zones. None of the opposition parties won a single seat outside their stronghold (Ladouceur, 1979: 143-45; *Daily Graphic*, 19 July 1956: 1).

The new nation was born on 6 March 1957 under the leadership of the CPP. In October 1957, the "Avoidance of Discrimination Act" was passed in the CPP dominated Assembly. The opposition groups cried foul, and described the legislation as "dictatorship." The "Avoidance of Discrimination Act" outlawed ethnic, religious, and regional based political parties (see Boahen, 2000). This Act was informed by the experiences of the 1954, and more so of the 1956, elections. Consequently, all six opposition groups<sup>15</sup> agreed to unite into one political body, to be known as the United Party (UP). The next competitive election within the framework of multi-party politics was held in June 1960, and it marked the last campaign of the two foremost political adversaries. Dr. J. B. Danquah and the UP campaigned for a "NO" vote to the proposal of an executive president under a Republican constitution. The CPP won the "YES" campaign and, in

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<sup>15</sup> The NLM was joined by the NPP, MAP, Ga Adangbe-Shifimo Kpee, the Wassaw Youth Organization and the Ashanti Youth Organization.

1964, Ghana was declared a one party state. The CPP was the official state party until it was ousted in a military coup by the National Liberation Council (NLC) on 24 February 1966.

### **3.6 Activism for the Restoration of Democratic Rule**

The leadership of the NLC authorized the publication of the Political Parties Decree on 28 April 1969, to be operational on 1 May, when the ban on political activities was to be lifted (*Africa Diary*, 5 – 11 March 1969). The Decree forbade the use of “symbols and names of a previously registered party” (Crabbe, 1975: 130). The political elites were, however, the same as in the 1950s. At the head of the Danquah-Busia coalition was Dr. K. A. Busia, who went into a self-imposed exile in England in 1959. On his return to Ghana, after the demise of the Nkrumah regime, he was appointed chairman of the Centre for Civic Education, and charged with re-orienting the mind set of Ghanaians through civic skills. Similarly, another returnee from the Nkrumahist side of the political divide was K. A. Gbedemah (*West Africa*, 16 August 1969: 949-50; Austin 1976)<sup>16</sup>. These two politicians, and others, were the poles around which citizens were mobilized to canvass support for the parties they led.

On 29 April 1969 representatives of over 20 organizations trooped to the offices of the Electoral Commission. They included the All People’s Party (APP), Black Power Party (BPP), People’s Popular Party (PPP), All People’s Congress (APC), Progress Party (PP), National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), National Reconstruction Party (NRP), Ghana Democratic Party (GDP), Labour Party (LP\*), Ghana Workers Party (GWP), Ghana Youth Party (GYP), People’s

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<sup>16</sup> This source draws from Dennis Austin’s article, “A month in the country: 1”, *West Africa*, No. 2724 (16 August 1969): 949-950. It is important, however, to draw the attention of readers to the fact that Austin later republished this article and others in a book, *Ghana Observed: essays on the politics of a West African Republic* (London: Unwin Broder, 1976).

Action Party (PAP), Nationalist Party (NP), Radical Alliance Party (RAP), Liberty Party (LP) and the Jehova [*sic*] Party (JP) (Crabbe, 1975: 130). Clearly, what is remarkable in the choice of names is the preponderance of the word “people’s.” The names were suggestive of the type of political system in vogue: soviet style socialism. Of the 20 plus groups that rushed to the Electoral Commission offices, only nine were formally issued with certificates of registration (Crabbe, 1975: 131). Finally, only five parties presented themselves to the roughly 2.5 million registered voters for election to form the first post-Nkrumah government (*Daily Graphic*, 28 August 1969: 6). As shown in Table 3.2, of these, only the PP, led by Dr. K. A. Busia, and K. A. Gbedemah’s NAL had a real following.

Concurrently, the Constituent Assembly (henceforth, CA) of 154 members continued proceedings on crafting a new constitution for the Second Republic. The Constitution was formally enacted on 15 August 1969. Among all the Articles of the Constitution, none proved as controversial as Article 71 (2) (b) (ii) (*West Africa*, 30 August, 1969: 1034). Article 71 dealt with the verification and certification process for members of the future Parliament and government. It was alleged that appointees of the NLC smuggled the clause into the draft constitution (*West Africa*, 20 December 1969: 1562; Austin, 1976). It would eventually disqualify K. A. Gbedemah and others from the Nkrumah side of the political divide from holding any state portfolio. The Northern and Upper Regions had come of age politically. The zone had a respectable and formidable political leadership in the persons of S. D. Dombo, Mumuni Bawumia, B. K. Adama, and Jatoo Kaleo, among others (Ladouceur, 1979; Saaka, 1987). Nevertheless, the leadership did not seek to revive or form another political party. Former members of the UP joined forces with other like-minded politicians to found the Progress Party. The campaign was dominated by local

development issues. The Upper West Area was the least developed of all the three northern regions.

At the national level, the campaign period was not without problems. The candidature of K. A. Gbedemah proved difficult to sell to the Ghanaian electorate. His opponents were quick to point to his past association with the defunct Nkrumah administration. Indeed, Gbedemah would spend precious campaign time defending his record in that regard. Nonetheless, his opponents saw the NAL party simply as the proxy of the banned CPP (see *West Africa*, 30 August 1969: 1017; Austin, 1976). Similarly, the leader-in-waiting, Dr. K. A. Busia, had to defend himself against charges of weak leadership. His unwillingness, first, to account for funds entrusted to him while in exile for the upkeep of the families of political detainees during Nkrumah's rule infuriated some of his colleagues in the Danquah-Busia coalition (see Appiah, 1996: 278). Second, his exterior rivals likened his decision to go into self-imposed exile to that of a coward who fled to seek comfort in Europe while others suffered political persecution so that democracy would become entrenched in Ghana (*West Africa*, 30 August 1969; Austin, 1976). Other competitors complained of the lack of a level playing field. For instance, the NAL candidate at Sekondi, J. W. Acquah, accused the Centre for Civic Education officials of engaging in partisan politics. Imoru Ayarna, leader of the People's Action Party (PAP), alleged that faulty registering forms were issued to PAP candidates in the Northern and Upper Regions (*West Africa*, 16 August 1969: 972).

Out of Ghana's population of eight million, 3.2 million were eligible to vote. Altogether, 20 independents and 458 party sponsored candidates presented themselves for election to Parliament (*West Africa*, 13 September 1969: 1076; Austin, 1976). The two bigger parties, the PP and the NAL, each fielded 138 for 140 constituencies (*West Africa*, 13 September 1969).



Campaigning by the parties was done in both urban and rural areas with vans mounted with speakers. The campaign was nevertheless dominated by the two rival parties from the Danquah and Nkrumah traditions. As reported in the press, the NAL and PP propaganda vans dominated the scene (see *West Africa*, 30 August 1969: 1017; Austin 1976). The rallying slogan of the NAL was, “NAL! Say it loud. I am NAL and proud,” and that of the PP was, “PRO, PRO, PRO Sure,” or, simply, “Progress Sure, Sure” (see *Ghanaian Times*, 16 July 1969: 6; Austin, 1976). The campaign slogans of the other, smaller, parties were: “PAP, Action” for the PAP, and “*Ame Baa Ba See*” for the UNP (see *Ghanaian Times*, 16 July 1969). The parties used various exciting and memorable symbols and slogans to appeal for votes from the electorate (see Table 3.2). Again, the campaign signs and bodily gestures used by activists and supporters of the main parties were subject to different interpretations. The “V” sign made popular by war time British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was used by NAL activists, also to represent victory. Their opponents assigned a different meaning to it. To the PP activists, to display the “V” meant, “They will let the money run away through their fingers as before.” This was a direct reference to allegations of corruption levelled against functionaries of the CPP regime. On the other hand, the PP’s activists interpreted their clenched fist sign to mean, “We will hold it [the money] tight” (*West Africa*, 30 August 1969: 1034; Austin, 1976). The only things that differentiated the parties were their bright colours and slogans. There was particularly little that could be used to differentiate NAL programmes from those of the PP (Twumasi, 1975: 141-42).

The PP replicated the successes of the defunct CPP on 29 August 1969 when it won most of the Parliamentary seats in the Akan populated areas of southern Ghana. In the northern part of the country, it appeared that no party had the upper hand. The two main parties had to compete with the other, smaller, parties for votes (see Table 3.2). The leaders of the two main parties won

their seats in their various strongholds: Busia garnered 9,745 votes at Wenchi East, and Gbedemah posted 8,679 at his Keta constituency. Other party leaders performed less well. The UNP leader, Joe Appiah, failed to win his old seat at the Atwima-Amansie constituency, and Imoru Ayarna, the PAP leader, lost at the Tempene-Garu constituency (*Daily Graphic*, 30 August 1969; see also *West Africa*, August 1969; Austin, 1976). The candidates who stood on the PP's ticket in the Upper Region were more successful than their competitors on the NAL's ticket when they won 13 against three seats (*ibid.*).

What were the variables at play that produced such lopsided results? Indeed, the Progress Party's triumph has been described by Joe Appiah as the "long expected victory" (Appiah, 1996: 278). Scholars have outlined a number of factors that contributed. First, the PP's victory was long expected because the party's leader, more than any others, enjoyed the support of the leadership of the NLC. While Gbedemah bore the misfortune of being a former associate of Nkrumah, Busia was seen as the man who challenged Nkrumah. Second, Busia had a larger non-political platform on which to air his opinions long before the ban on party politics was lifted. His work as Chairman of the Board of the Centre for Civic Education enabled him to travel the length and breadth of the country, while Gbedemah was held up in Accra. Third, Busia's ethnic background as an Akan was important, but most significant was the Asante-Brong coalition (see Austin, 1976). The Asante's dislike of the CPP administration was transferred to Gbedemah's NAL. On 13 September 1969 the Second Republic was inaugurated at the forecourt of the State House. The work of Parliament had barely got started when a writ was filed by E. B. Awoonor-Williams, Gbedemah's competitor for the Keta constituency. The defeated PP candidate pleaded with the Supreme Court to declare opposition leader, K. A. Gbedemah, disqualified under Article 71, referred to here in the previous section. Gbedemah was declared disqualified from being a



Member of Parliament by the Supreme Court on 24 November 1969 (*West Africa*, 29 November, 1969: 1455; Austin, 1976).

TABLE 3.2  
Political Parties and Legislative Election of 1969

Party	Leader	Symbol	Slogan	Seats
National Alliance of Liberals (NAL)	K. A. Gbedemah	A morning sun with nine jagged rays in red over a gold background	NAL!	29
Progress Party (PP)	K. A. Busia	A red sun rising from black clouds against a white background	PRO, SURE!	105
United Nationalist Party (UNP)	Joe Appiah	A broom and corn on white background with green borders	<i>Ame Baa Ba See</i>	2
People's Action party (PAP)	Imoru Ayarna	A hand holding a blazing torch in red, black and white	PAP Action	2
All People's Republican Party (APRP)	E. V .C. de Graft Johnson	A torch crossed by a hoe and oar, all three in gold against a black background	Fair Play	1

Source: Compiled by the author, from the Daily Graphic & Ghanaian Times, August 1969.  
+ One Independent Candidate was elected.

The single most important local issue that dominated the elections of 1969 was that of rapid development for the Upper West area. The PP campaign manifesto promised to decentralize development to the local levels (see Twumasi, 1975). The coming into office of the PP government in August 1969 consequently resurrected the issue of "lack of development" in northern Ghana. The success of the PP raised the hopes of many Upper Westerners.<sup>17</sup> Through his previous work, Dr. K. A. Busia was well acquainted with the grievances of the Upper West area. Again, he was full of praise for the leadership of the UP while in exile. Chief S. D. Dombo

<sup>17</sup>. E. K. Mumuni, MP for the Tumu constituency, was the only independent candidate elected in the whole country.

held the opposition parties together in the face of CPP's aggression in the 1950 and 1960s.<sup>18</sup> Dombo, Kaleo, and Adama were rewarded with plum ministerial portfolios in the Busia government.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.7 Post-Busia Activism

Ghana's second experiment with constitutional rule was short-lived. On 13 January 1972, the military, under the leadership of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, returned to govern the nation for the second time. The Progress Party government was disbanded, and the constitution annulled. After seven years of military rule, however, the people demanded a return to a civilian regime. The military initially tried to prolong their stay through applying the concept of Union Government. Civil disobedience by the citizens, though, forced the military to announce a time table for the return of the country to constitutional rule.

The ban on political activities was lifted in January 1979; by March, as many as 19 political parties had emerged. Significantly, political elites regrouped under the Nkrumah and Danquah-Busia labels. Some anti-Acheampong activists, including the charismatic retired Head of State General Akwesi Afrifa, and others without affiliation to the two dominant traditions, argued for a "broad based party" (Appiah-Menka, 2010). This proposal was rejected by some ex-PP members who favoured a party solely based on the Danquah-Busia tradition. The disagreements on the subject of Danquah-Busia resulted in the inauguration of two political parties: the Popular Front Party (PFP) and the United National Convention (UNC), headed by Victor Owusu and William Ofori-Atta, respectively (see Chazan, 1983). Besides the PFP and

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<sup>18</sup> . When Busia fled into exile in 1959, it was his deputy, Dombo, who held the opposition groups together.

<sup>19</sup> . Dombo was made Minister of Home Affairs, Kaleo (Labour and Social Welfare) and Adama (Parliamentary Affairs and later Defence).

UNC, four parties contested the elections. These were the People's National Party (PNP), Action Congress Party (ACP), Third Force (TF), and the Social Democratic Front (SDF) under the leadership of: Dr. Hilla Limann, Colonel Frank George Bernasko (retired), Dr. John Bilson, and Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama, respectively. Four others candidates, including Dr. R. P. Baffour, Alhaji Immoru Ayannah, Kwame Nyanteh, and Nii Diamond Mark Addy, ran on independent Presidential tickets (*Daily Graphic*, 17 June 1979: 10).

Yet again, the Political Parties Decree (1978) (SMCD 208) Section 23 (2) made certain that individuals found guilty of abuse of power by Commissions of Inquiry were disqualified from any major role in partisan politics. The enactment of the "Disqualification Decree" affected 104 persons who had served in the Nkrumah and Busia governments (*Daily Graphic*, 1 January 1979). The PNP founder and leader, Imoru Egala, and some leading members from the Danquah-Busia coalition were barred from running for public office either as Members of Parliament or as presidential candidates of a political party. Dr. Hilla Limann, then aged 45, and a native of Gwollu, near Tumu in the Upper West area, was nominated as the presidential candidate of the PNP in February 1979. The vast majority of the PNP members were staunch Nkrumahists (Oquaye, 1980).

Departing from their usual practice, all of the parties emphasized the personal qualities of their presidential candidates. The newspapers were flooded with full page advertisements exalting their virtues. The UNC presidential candidate, William Ofori-Atta, aged 67, was the oldest. He capitalized on his seniority in age and his status as a survivor of the Big Six (Founding Fathers of Ghana). With no adverse finding against him, "[h]e is the Mr. Clean, incorruptible, responsible and humble leader of our time" (*Daily Graphic*, 3 May 1979: 6). Similarly, a campaign advertisement about the ACP leader claimed that "at 48 – he has the right age and the

vim to meet the challenge of a virile nation. In 44 months they called him Commissioner for ACTION, it was action, action and more action throughout. First, as Central Regional Commissioner, he brought new life and hope to the region. His stamina was phenomenal” (*Daily Graphic*, 30 April 1979: 6). The campaign advertisement further exaggerated his international credentials. It claimed, “The Americans admire his work. The British have confidence in his ability. The Germans say he shows good results and the Chinese trust his leadership” (*Daily Graphic*, 30 April 1979: 6).

The PNP presidential candidate was a career diplomat, and had spent considerable time at the Foreign Service outside Ghana. Consequently, he had no grassroots achievements to boast of. Nonetheless, the PNP candidate was projected as the new face, who was untainted by any association with past regimes. Above all, he was “young, humble and dynamic.” His strong points were emphasized. For instance, “Dr. Limann speaks fluent French which is a great asset in these days of personal diplomacy as Ghana shares borders with French-speaking countries.” His verandah boy (i.e., non-aristocratic background) credentials were also emphasized by informing the electorate that “with his humble background as the son of a labourer, Dr. Limann has sympathies for the common people” (*Daily Graphic*, 2 July 1979: 6).

The PFP presidential candidate, Victor Owusu, 55, was a prominent lawyer and a veteran politician, who held the portfolios of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General in the Busia government (*Daily Graphic*, 23 April 1979: 6). The PFP promised the electorate, especially rural dwellers, electricity and an efficient health system, among other things (*Daily Graphic*, 23 April 1979). Before the election could be held, though, the military unsuccessfully tried to topple the Supreme Military Council (SMC II). Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, the leader of the coup, and his associates were arrested on 15 May 1979. A counter coup was

successful, and the Akuffo-led SMC II fell in the popular uprising. The time table for the election remained unaffected. Indeed, the military's actions quickened the transition process.

TABLE 3.3  
Political Parties and Parliamentary seats won in 1979 Election

Party	Leader	Symbol	Slogan	Seats
People's National Party (PNP)	Hilla Limann	A green palm tree in a white background with red strips to left and right	<i>Eye abe ara na oreko</i>	71
Popular Front Party (PFP)	Victor Owusu	A golden star on concentric circles of Red, Gold and black	<i>Eye popular</i>	42
United National Convention (UNC)	William Ofori-Atta	A fist in circle	<i>Paa Willie a na oreko</i>	13
Action Congress Party (ACP)	Frank George Bernasko	A white dove	Action Now	10
Third Force Party (TFP)	John Bilson	A lantern	<i>Eye kanea, eye hann</i>	0
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	Ibrahim Mahama	A crescent with a woman breastfeeding a baby and cutlass and pickax beneath	Keep the faith	3

Source: Compiled by the author, from the *Daily Graphic & Ghanaian Times*, May/June 1979.

Three of the seven parties filed nomination papers for all 140 constituencies. They were the UNC, the PNP, and the PFP. The ACP sponsored 126 candidates, the TFP 118, and the SDF 113. In addition, eight independent candidates filed their nominations (*Daily Graphic*, 1 May 1979: 1). In all, on 18 June 1979 1,788,199 voters out of the 5,056,952 on the electoral register voted. This represented a 35.09 per cent turnout for the presidential elections. The PNP and Dr. Limann posted 631,559 votes (or 35.32%), and the PFP's Victor Owusu polled 533,928 (or 29.86%). As none of the candidates achieved the mandatory 50 per cent, a runoff ballot was organized for the two front-runners. The PNP emerged victorious, and Dr. Limann was declared

President Elect (*Ghanaian Times*, 28 June 1979: 1). The victory of the PNP, according to Oquaye (1980: 171), “was a victory for Nkrumah’s sake” because the PNP inherited the party machinery of the CPP. It must be stated, however, that the NAL, the party that inherited the core of the CPP membership, failed to win the 1969 elections. The PNP success at the polls was due to the factionalism that dogged the Danquah-Busia tradition.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The first formal political party was successfully launched in 1947 by the country’s elites and businessmen. It had the single objective of freeing the country from the shackles of colonial rule. Its strategy to realize this objective was a gradual process. This strategy alienated the country’s youth, culminating in the launching of another political organization in 1949. The UGCC and the CPP began the two-party competition in the country. Elections in Ghana are, consequently, essentially two-party contests. Political campaigning in Ghana has always been an area where policies are put forward. Activism within the two political traditions we have analysed has, to a large extent, generated the Fourth Republic parties’ “founding mythologies” (cf. Whitfield, 2009). The situation in the Fourth Republic, however, is somewhat different, and I argue (in Chapter 5) that the consolidation of the two-party system since the 1992 elections was the result of a hybrid tradition (the PNDC tradition), represented by the NDC, which has effectively appropriated the Nkrumahist tradition.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OVERVIEW OF THE LAND, THE PEOPLE, AND THEIR CULTURE

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#### 4.1 Introduction

In Africa, as elsewhere, land is subject to multiple uses. According to Kirby (2006: 135), “it is primarily a ritual or sacralized entity governing the fertility and vigor of life. The most elementary feature of this wider ecology is peoples’ relationship to the land as a spiritual and physical source of life.” Ethnic communities in the two constituencies are not all the same. The argument in this chapter is that some of the outcomes of the interaction between humans and their physical environment could act as stimulants to political activism in both constituencies. The goals here are twofold. First, the chapter seeks to show the human population inhabiting both areas. The final, and most significant, goal is to examine the political, social, and economic characteristics of the two dominant ethnic groups, and the connections, if any, to party politics.

#### 4.2 Geographical Coordinates (Location and Size)

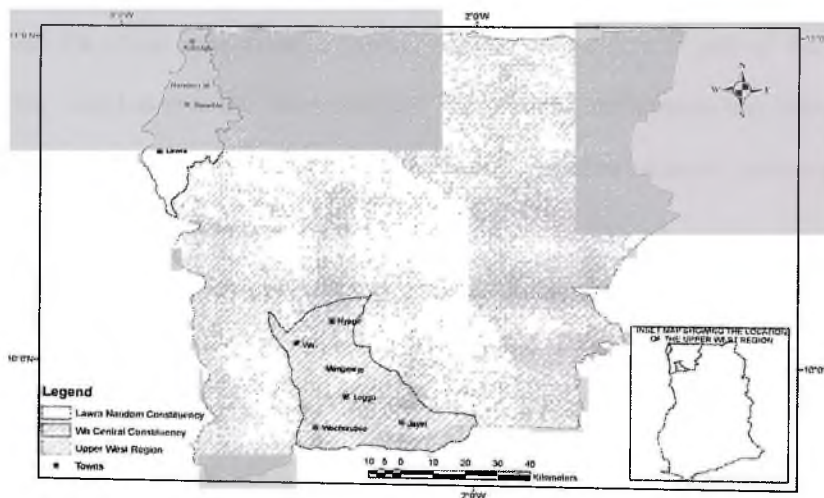
The Upper West Region (UWR) is located in the north-western part of Ghana. Within it are the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies. Wa Central's territorial size roughly corresponds with that of the Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA), and is situated in the southern part of the region. The Wa Central constituency lies within latitudes 1°40'N to 2°45'N and longitudes 9°32' to 10°20'W. It covers a landmass of approximately 23,474 square kilometres, which is about 6.4 per cent of the region's total landmass (see Wa Municipal Assembly Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009). It is bounded to the north by the Nadowli West constituency, and



to the east and south by the Wa East constituency, and it shares its western boundary with the Wa West constituency.

On the other hand, the Lawra-Nandom constituency corresponds with the Lawra District Assembly (LDA).<sup>20</sup> It is located at the north-western corner of the region. Lawra-Nandom is located between longitude 2°25' W and 2°45' W and latitude 10°20' and 11°00'. It is bounded to the east and south by the Jirapa and Lambussie/Karni constituencies, and to the north and west by the Republic of Burkina Faso. The area constitutes about 5.7 per cent of the region's total land area, which is estimated at 18,476 square kilometres (see Lawra District Assembly Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009). At the time of writing, the EC was planning to create a new constituency for the Nandom District. The geographical coordinates and political configurations will thus be affected (see Figure 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1: MAP SHOWING THE STUDY AREA



Source: University of Ghana, Department of Geography, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> On 28 June 2012 the new Nandom District Assembly was inaugurated. The Electoral Commission will create a new Nandom constituency from the old Lawra-Nandom constituency.



### **4.3 Local Governance and Administrative Structure**

Extensive political reforms in the 1980s resulted in Ghana adopting decentralization as the governance framework (see Ahwoi, 2010; Kyei, 2008; Crook, 1994; Ayee, 1992). The structure of Local Government is made up of a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), and a four-tier Metropolitan and a three-tier Municipal/District Assembly system (Ahwoi, 2010: 67). Within each of the country's 10 regions is a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), whose basic role is to coordinate and evaluate the activities of lower level organs, including the Municipal and District Assemblies, as well as all other government departments in the region.

Both constituencies operate according to the three-tier system. Whereas a Municipal Assembly is established for single compact settlements with a population of 95,000 and above, District Assemblies exist for "geographically contiguous areas" with populations of 75,000 and above (Ahwoi, 2010: 68). The Wa Central constituency is located within the Wa Municipal Assembly,<sup>21</sup> with Wa as the administrative capital; and Lawra-Nandom is part of the Lawra District Assembly, with Lawra as the District capital. The structure and composition of the local assemblies are very ambiguous. Of interest here is the constitutional requirement that says that a local assembly's election must be non-partisan.

The current decentralization program was initiated during the reign of the PNDC. The 1992 Constitution and the accompanying 1993 Local Government Act (Act 462) recognized and reaffirmed the importance of a system of decentralized local governance (see also Ahwoi, 2010). That recognition confirms the principle that every government must "... make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions

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<sup>21</sup>. It attained municipal status in 2004.

and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and in government” (Article, 35 [6][d]).

In 1994 the first district level elections were conducted under the auspices of the 1992 Constitution. The district level elections have become an institutionalized conduit in expressing and upholding institutional and political accountability in local governance. In spite of their growing importance, the elections have been fraught with challenges that have called into question the country’s commitment to local participatory democracy. Indeed, as Amponsah (2006: 277) notes, while there is considerable evidence of progress in the quality of elections and the electoral process at the national level, the lukewarm attitude to the management and organization of the local elections persists. A major feature of Ghana’s decentralization program is the four-year “non-partisan” district elections. Those elections, unlike the national ones, are fought on a common platform mounted for all contesting candidates, who stand individually, with no express party support. To be sure, Article 248 sub-sections 1 and 2, respectively, of the 1992 Constitution state that “a candidate seeking elections to a District Assembly or any lower local government units shall present himself [or herself] to the electorate as an individual, and shall not use any symbol associated with any political party”; and “a political party shall not endorse, sponsor, offer a platform to or in any way campaign for or against a candidate seeking elections to a District Assembly or any lower local government unit.”

The 2010 District Assembly election, the most recent, was the fifth to be organized since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic constitution. These elections, though described as “non-partisan,” have become the testing grounds for incipient politicians. Party officials at the constituency level encourage and, sometimes, sponsor the campaigns of known party activists. The elected representatives go by the honorific “Honourable Assemblyman,” and the ultimate

goal of many politicians at the assembly is to enter the national Parliament as MPs (see Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012).

As noted, a unique feature of the district level elections is their non-partisan nature. It is a feature that seeks to permeate the communal and developmental character of the governance process at the grassroots level. Indeed, the reasoning behind the ostensibly non-partisan nature of the local election is to avoid the squabbles and intense politicking that characterize partisan politics. In this way local resources could be mobilized effectively for total development. In spite of its non-partisan nature, however, the involvement of political party activists in the election campaigns is growing. To be sure, not only have instances of political party support for candidates vying for elections been observed and reported; party executives have also shown interest in contesting the elections (see Republic of Ghana, 2011; Frempong, 2003). The General Secretary of the governing NDC confirmed the direct involvement of party activists in the district level elections. Johnson Asiedu Nketia reported the success of NDC candidates to the party delegates in Sunyani during the 2011 presidential primary election when he said: “Overall, NDC sympathizers scored over 60 per cent countrywide” in the district assembly elections.

Aside from the indirect involvement of party activists in the activities of the assemblies, the design of the assembly allows the government (and by extension, the political party in government) to appoint the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives. While 70 per cent of assembly members are elected in local elections, 30 per cent are appointed by the President, acting in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups in the constituencies (see Local Government Act 462, Section 5 of 1993).

The mechanism for the appointment of the 30 per cent of the President’s nominees is carried out by the Local Government and Rural Development Minister, in conjunction with the

Regional Minister. Both ministers hold office at the pleasure of the appointing authority, the President. As political appointees, they cannot divorce themselves from the influence of the political parties they represent. Indeed, Ayee (2003: 3) correctly observed that ministerial interference has tended to undermine the “effectiveness of the DAs in the discharge of their functions as the highest political authority in the district with deliberative, legislative and executive powers.” Nonetheless, the Assemblyman (or woman) who can lobby central government, politicians and business groups gets the resources for development of his or her community.

#### **4.4 Demography and Human Population**

The *2000 National Population and Housing Census* reported that the Wa Municipality (formerly Wa District) had the largest population at 224,066, representing 38.9 per cent of the entire region’s population. This figure implies that the constituency has a population density of 38 persons per square kilometre. The area of highest density is the township of Wa. The gender composition of the population is 48.9 per cent (male) and 51.1 per cent (female). By comparison, the Lawra District population was put at 87,525. It is the district with the lowest population, about 15.2 per cent of the region’s total population of 576,583, and comprises 40,804 males and 46,723 females, representing 46.6 per cent and 53.4 per cent, respectively (Republic of Ghana, 2002). The gender composition in both constituencies favours females. In each constituency, females are a little over half of the population. Nonetheless, Lawra has a slightly higher proportion of females, and a higher population density of 45 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. This could be a result of the seasonal migration of men to the southern part of the country in search of job opportunities.

#### 4.5 Social Characteristics

Northern Ghana has several language groups. In the Upper West Region, social anthropologists and linguists have surveyed at least eight spoken languages (see e.g. Kropp-Dakubu, 1988). Dagara, Dagaare, Nandom, and others are widely spoken in the Lawra-Nandom constituency, while Waale, Waala, and Dagaare are spoken in the Wa Central constituency. Paradoxically, Twi<sup>22</sup> and pidgin Hausa (or the zongo Hausa) are used as trading languages in the main towns.

For the sake of consistency, the limited term “Dagara” shall be used in this study to refer to all non-Wala people. Even though the Dagara and Wala have co-existed peacefully, one’s ethnic background is questioned when they enter the political terrain and declare their intention of contesting an elected party position. The identity markers (ethnicity and religion) cannot be entirely ruled out on the party platform. The cases of NPP’s Clement Eledi and NDC’s Khalid Mahmud are discussed in Chapter 7 to illustrate the interplay of ethnicity and politics.

In terms of social organization, Wala and Dagara societies are “characterized by a predominantly communal mode of production in which village communities are relatively autonomous, with the Earth-priest (*Tendaana*) acting as a mediator between the people and their land” (Songsore and Denkabe, 1995: 73). Farming is the major communal form of agricultural production among the residents of Lawra-Nandom. Consequently, between August and November the end of the farming season is celebrated with two major “neo-traditional” cultural festivals, one each in Lawra and Nandom (see Lentz, 2001). The two cultural festivals, Kobine and Kakube, are organized by the residents of those two towns. Kobine (a Dagara word that means “dance of working in the fields”) is an annual cultural festival that was instituted in the

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<sup>22</sup> Many northerners either served in the colonial constabulary or worked as migrant labourers in the cocoa plantations and gold mines in southern Ghana.

1970s by the paramount chief of Lawra to celebrate the end of the farming season and to thank the ancestors for the farm produce (Lentz, 2001). The celebration itself takes place in the first week of October, and must coincide with the first market day<sup>23</sup> of the traditional year. Previously, the market centre used to be the venue for such festivities; however, because of the commercialization of cultural festivals in Ghana, with their huge tourism potential,<sup>24</sup> open public spaces are now used for the celebrations in order to accommodate the large number of invitees and the occasional foreign tourists (for details see Lentz, 2001). Critics have argued that the over commercialization of cultural festivals has robbed them of their ritual significance. The Kobine festivities are considered finished when the dancers proceed to the Babile market to ritually collect ashes. The people of the Nandom Traditional Area also celebrate Kakube – literally, “millet mixed with stones” (Lentz, 2001). It is another dance festival celebrated annually in the month of November to thank the ancestors for a good harvest. According to Lentz, the festival, which began in 1989, is observed on the last Sunday of November every year. The celebration of Kakube is intended to show reverence to the ancestors “for a bountiful harvest, while invoking blessings for the next season” (Tier-kaa, 2005; see also Lentz, 2001). The festival thus has both ritual and secular components.

Kobine and Kakube have more than social significance. Lentz (2001: 58) writes that despite the “limited constitutional possibilities for political influence, a paramount chief in present-day Ghana can actually be described as an unelected politician for life who seeks to represent local and regional interests with the central government.” Traditional festivals have

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<sup>23</sup>. The trading in village markets follows a six-day cycle.

<sup>24</sup>. Tourism is currently the fourth highest contributor to Ghana’s foreign exchange earnings, and contributes some six per cent to GDP, while employing more than 250,000 people, both directly and indirectly, *Ghana Statistical Service*, 2006.



increasingly become the “convergence zone where the secular and traditional dialogue.” The politicization of cultural festivals in Ghana is significant. Cultural areas that previously had no known festival, or were, simply, subsumed by their larger neighbours, have “revived old traditions,” and had myths created to legitimize them.<sup>25</sup> The Kobine and Kakube cultural festivals, celebrated within a month, present a unique opportunity for the traditional authorities in the Lawra and Nandom to demonstrate publicly how great a following they can each mobilize (cf. Lentz, 2001). The public showing of large crowds could be politically interpreted as indicating potential eligible voters that each traditional area could deliver to a political party during elections. The official invitations to Kobine and Kakube that are extended to guests demonstrate or, perhaps, exaggerate the mobilizing power of the two paramountcies.

In the past two decades, indigenes have increasingly used these cultural platforms as political forums to “publicize local interests, while government representatives, in their speeches to the festival attendees, seek to bring government policy closer to the people” (Lentz, 2001). The category of politician that represents the government at the Kobine or Kakube festivals is taken as an indication of the significance the government attributes to the political loyalty of the community (Lentz, 2001). At election time festival grounds become sites to evaluate the popularity of political parties in a particular locality. For instance, in October 2004 (less than a month before that year’s general election), President J. A. Kufuor was the guest of honour at the Kobine festival. In his official speech, the President promised that his government would construct a dam on the Kamba River in the Lawra District, “for irrigation to permit year-round

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<sup>25</sup> Personal Communication with Kwesi Aikins, University of Ghana, 1 October 2010. For example, since his stoolment in 2005, the Yam Festival of the Asogli Traditional Area has been popularized by *Agbogbomefia*, Togbe Afede XIV. The celebrations now include a pilgrimage to Notsie (ancestral home of Ewe) in the Republic of Togo. Similarly, the chiefs and people of Anlo-Afiadenyigba communities in Keta, Volta Region, in 2009 instituted the *Tagbaza* (literally, lagoon festival) festival; see *Daily Graphic*, 6 November 2010, p.10.

food production.” The Lawra *Naa* “commended the government for the numerous projects it had undertaken in the area” (*GNA-Wa*, 17 October 2004). It was the turn of Nandom on 27 November 2004, when the Vice-President, Aliu Mahama, led a government delegation to attend the Kakube festival. He also promised the residents the Kamba Irrigation Dam in order to “raise the living standard of the people, since it would create many job opportunities.” The Nandom *Naa* commended the government for the “significant development projects undertaken in the Nandom Traditional Area,” describing them as “testimonies to government’s sincere and genuine commitment to improve the conditions of rural communities.”

The widely celebrated cultural festival in Wa Central is the Muslim Dumba festival. It is a period of thanksgiving to the ancestral spirits for a successful year. The celebration lasts seven days, and its climax is marked by the Wala *Naa* successfully jumping over a live cow (Bob-Milliar, 2002: 31). Following the death of Wa *Naa* Momori in January 1998, however, and the resulting disagreements over the Wala Skin, the celebration has been suspended to avert communal clashes between the various competing gates. Dumba has many rituals, and some of these are performed by the reigning Wala *Naa*; and since there were multiple claimants to the Wa skin (on chieftaincy conflicts see Awedoba, 2009), security concerns were cited in suspending the celebration of the festival.

#### **4.6 Economic Characteristics**

The economic landscape of both constituencies is based mainly on farming. Agriculture is the major economic activity in both constituencies. Agricultural mechanization, however, is on a limited scale, with cotton plantations being the only mechanized farms; modern industrial manufacturing hardly exists, except for a ginnery owned by Plantations Development Limited



(PDL)<sup>26</sup> at Wa. Both constituencies over the years have recorded very low agricultural yields (Blench, 2006). The combination of high dependency on agriculture, poor soils as result of over cultivation, erratic and unreliable rainfall, and dwindling vegetative cover have resulted in low food production and low domestic incomes (Blench, 2006).

#### 4.7 Human Development Indices

The consensus in the empirical literature (see Berinsky and Lenz, 2010; Cross and Young, 2008; Karp and Banducci, 2007; Norris, 2003; Milbrath and Goel, 1977) on political participation is that education positively correlates with it. The more educated a person is, the more likely they are to participate in politics and, by extension, in party activism. This postulation is, however, inconsistent with the reality in much of Africa. The foot-soldiers of the NDC and NPP, for example, are poorly or not at all educated (see Chapter 8). In terms of political participation, they epitomize Karl Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*, yet they are actively engaged in political activities.

The available data on educational attainment and literacy in the two constituencies, drawn from the *2000 Population and Housing Census*, is not encouraging. Yet voter turnout has exceeded 50 per cent. The 2008 elections registered 71.7 per cent and 68.0 per cent in Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom, respectively (*Ghana Gazette*, 5 January 2009). What is the relationship between the inhabitants' level of "formal education" and political participation? Does formal education equate to political and civic consciousness? Census enumerators collected information on formal education for all persons aged three years and above. It was reported that the percentage of residents of the region who had never attended school was 69.8 (Republic of

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<sup>26</sup> The PDL started operations in 1985, but was hampered by the unreliability of the electricity supply. The extension of the National Grid to the region in 1995 enabled the company to expand its operations.

Ghana, 2005: 30). The number was higher for females (73.9%) than for males (65.1%). For persons who had never attended formal school at the constituency level, Wa Central recorded 68.4 per cent (63.5% males and 73.1% females), and Lawra-Nandom recorded the lowest proportion (65.1%) of the population without formal education (60.3% for males and 69.3% for females). The levels of educational attainment in the constituencies are due not only to general poverty and to some cultural practices that value male children over female, but also to the lateness of the introduction of higher education into northern Ghana (see Bening, 1990).

On literacy, the census reported that Lawra-Nandom had the highest functional level (28.3%), with males at 34.2 per cent and females at 23.7 per cent, followed by Wa Central at 27.5 per cent (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 34-35). The data on literacy are not entirely satisfactory. Most are based on methods that usually under report. Further, by the Ghanaian definition, formal education means only those who have been through the formal school system (classroom based, public or private). Non-Formal Education (known as Night School) is popular among the residents of Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom; the available census data do not, however, include the proportion of the population that acquired education through non-formal avenues.

According to the 2008 *Ghana Demographic and Health Survey* (2008: 42), nationally, one-third of women (30%) and two-fifths (41%) of men are employed in the agricultural sector. At the constituency level, agriculture is pre-eminent. Traditionally, the Wala and Dagara communities practised a gender-based division of labour: the male tilled the land, and the female sowed. Nevertheless, the categorization of agriculture as the largest employer in Ghana creates confusion. Citizens without the so-called white collar jobs are simply grouped under the agricultural label and termed farmers, even if they do not own a hectare of farmland or are just occasional farm labourers (locally called “by day”). By this categorization, the 2000 *Census*

enumerators recorded that the agricultural sector was the major employer, followed by production and transport equipment work. Trading (both retail and wholesale) was listed as the third most popular occupation in both areas. Trading in village markets follows a six-day cycle, and Wa market day is the most patronized (Taabazuing and Siekpe, 2001: 49). The proportion of the population engaged in professional and technical work was ranked fourth (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 40).

In the Wa Central, 69.8 per cent of the male population was engaged in agriculture, while the corresponding female percentage was 63.4. In Lawra-Nandom 76.0 per cent of males and 58.7 per cent of females were identified as engaged in agriculture. There are implications for the large proportion of citizens involved in agricultural activities. Citizens have a seasonal job that sometimes lasts for four months, and thereafter many able bodied men and women are idle. The youth among the seasonally underemployed “farmers” have to seek other livelihood sources (see Abdul-Korah, 2008; 2006). The second popular occupation in both constituencies was the production and transport sector. In the Wa Central, a total of 24.0 per cent of the population (9.4% for males and 14.6% for females) was engaged in the production and transport equipment sector. Lawra-Nandom recorded 7.9 per cent for males and 23.8 per cent for females (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 41). Trading (retail and wholesale) was listed as the third most important occupation in both constituencies.

By gender basis, retail was the predominant occupation among females in Wa Central (11.2%), while in Lawra-Nandom it accounted for 5.6%. Few males were engaged in sales in Wa Central (5.8%) and Lawra-Nandom (3.2%). The statistics for inhabitants who listed an occupation in the professional group (administrative or managerial) did not indicate any major disparity between the two constituencies: Wa Central recorded 6.5 per cent for males and 3.6 per

cent for females, and Lawra-Nandom 6.5 per cent for males and 4.4 per cent for females (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 41).

Another important characteristic of the economically active population is their employment status and institutional sector of employment. The employment status of the economically active population aged 15 years or older for the two constituencies is as follows: in Wa Central 55.2 per cent of the economically active population are self-employed. The corresponding proportion is 60.9 per cent for Lawra-Nandom (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 43). Unpaid family workers constituted the next highest group of employment in both constituencies, with proportions ranging from 28.7 per cent in Wa Central to 25.1 per cent in Lawra-Nandom (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 43). The proportion of unpaid family workers corresponds to those who claimed agriculture as their main occupation. It stands to reason that in the rural parts of the constituencies the family is the production unit, with members of the family as the main source of labour (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 43).

Of the most economically active proportion of the population of Wa Central, 6.8 per cent are employed in the public sector (including semi-public and parastatals), 8.7 per cent males and 4.9 per cent females. Public sector employment in Lawra-Nandom constituted 5.9 per cent (7.7 % males and 4.3 females). The private formal sector also employs a relatively large segment of the population in both constituencies. It, however, varies from about 18.3 per cent in Wa Central to 19.8 per cent in Lawra-Nandom (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 44-5). Many people are employed in the private informal sector: 74.0 per cent in Wa Central, and 72.9 per cent in Lawra-Nandom. The distribution of employees by institutional sector and by gender indicates that the private informal sector remained the largest employer of the working population for both males and females in both constituencies (Republic of Ghana, 2005: 44-5).

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

As the chapter has shown, there is not much difference between the physical environments of the constituencies in terms of size and physical features. Regarding socio-economic characteristics, the politicization of ethnicity and cultural festivals were emphasized. Ethnicity has been instrumentalized by politicians to win votes. Education correlates very closely with political participation, yet the mass of the inhabitants in both constituencies have no access to formal education. Finally, industrial manufacturing is very basic, and limited to agro-based industries, which are widespread. It is suggested here that the lack of sustainable employment in both constituencies compels the politically active to engage in party activism, the rewards of which are instant, and can be life changing.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

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#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter uses the twin concepts of the party system and party institutionalization to measure the two Ghanaian cases examined in this study. Since the introduction of plural politics in the early 1990s, the NDC and the NPP have dominated national politics. The study argues that political parties have been crucial to the emergence of Ghana's unique two-party system, which is well institutionalized (cf. Whitfield, 2009). The activities of the parties within a neo-liberal or free market environment are discussed.

Neo-liberalism is noted for promoting "austerity measures" in countries where the political system is liberal democracy. Economic growth with no substantial transformation has consequently become the central concern for the NDC and NPP governments. Nonetheless, the success of one regime or the other is measured by the number of hospitals, clinics, schools, and roads they provide to citizens. How do the parties negotiate the many constraints imposed by their pursuit of free market policies? The chapter also revisits the Ghanaian concept of political party tradition, emphasizing that a historical analysis is vital to our understanding of the two dominant political traditions. Next, the origins and ideological leanings of the NDC and the NPP are discussed. The essence of this analysis is showing how party ideology might be an incentive to political activism in the parties. The final section analyses the legal regulation of parties. Here I echo Saffu's (2007) argument that parties are "unregulated" with regard to funding.

## 5.2 Party Systems and Party Institutionalization

The development within a polity of political parties that are unrestricted in terms of representation and governability constitutes the party system. It must nevertheless be pointed out that this only happens in democratic systems, where political pluralism is guaranteed by law. In any political system, “real” political parties usually compete in elections to seek the mandate of the voting public to form a government and exercise executive powers. These processes constitute the party system (Wolinetz, 2006: 51). According to IDEA (2007: 26), “[a] genuine party system is marked by the existence of two or more independent political parties actively engaged in the competition for political power and with a meaningful presence in terms of electoral results.” Formally, Ghana operates a multi-party system. In practice, however, it is a two-party system. Almost all classifications of party systems make distinctions on the basis of number.<sup>27</sup> The grounds for this classification are linked to those parties winning seats in Parliament (Wolinetz, 2006: 53). In the December 2008 Ghana elections, for example, a total of five parties ran candidates for both the presidency and Parliament. Of these, four won seats in Parliament, with the overwhelming share of the votes divided between the NDC (114) and NPP (107).

Arguably, on the basis of numbers and parliamentary representation, one could justifiably call the Ghanaian party system a multi-party system. Nonetheless, some party scholars point out that some parties can be excluded on the basis of “relative strength and size” (Blondel, 1968) or “standards of relevance” (Sartori, 1976). Indeed, Sartori (1976) argues that the relevance of a political party should be assessed according to “coalition potential” and “blackmail potential.” In other words, smaller parties matter in electoral contestation only if their seats in Parliament are

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<sup>27</sup>. Political parties can also be classified on other bases: e.g., between “mass-based” and “elite-based” parties; see Gunther and Diamond (2003) and Duverger (1954) referred to in Chapter 1.



needed to form coalitions, or if they have sufficient seats to block the formation of coalitions (Sartori, 1976). Blondel arrives at his typology by looking at the average share of the vote won by the two largest parties in a particular political system, and then considering the ratio of the first party's share to those of the second and third parties. If we apply the Sartori and Blondel models to the present analysis, we find that Ghana operates a two-party system. By winning less than six per cent<sup>28</sup> in elections since 1992, the other opposition parties have failed miserably to affect government formation.<sup>29</sup>

In the typically highly personalized politics of African countries, the NDC's defeat in the 2000 election resulted in an outpouring of partisan "obituaries." The social commentators and politicians who celebrated the defeat of the NDC in 2000 did it on the back of political party institutionalization, which they claimed the party lacked. Nevertheless, the once dominant NDC did not disintegrate in opposition: it offered the incumbent NPP competitive politics.

Party system institutionalization is frequently used as a criterion to measure democratic consolidation. Indeed, a well-functioning democratic state requires the institutionalization of the party system. In one of the most important studies on democratization processes from a Third World perspective, Mainwaring (1998: 68) defined an institutionalized party system as one where "there is stability in who the main parties are and in how they behave. Change, while not completely precluded, is limited." Mainwaring and Scully (1995) listed four elements required for party system institutionalization. These include "stability in interparty competition," "the existence of parties that have somewhat stable roots in society," "acceptance of parties and

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<sup>28</sup>. That is the combined votes of all parties, excluding the NDC and NPP.

<sup>29</sup>. In 2001 Kufuor appointed the PNC's Moses Dani Baah and Mallam Yusuf Issah and CPP's Paa Kwesi Nduom to cabinet positions. This was consistent with the all-inclusive government the party advocated and other electoral alliances. The NPP could have formed a government without appointing minority MPs.

elections as the legitimate institutions that determine who governs,” and “party organizations with reasonably stable rules and structures” (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995: 1). The work of one scholar, in particular, has illuminated our understanding of party institutionalization. The late American political scientist Samuel Huntington is regarded by many as the originator of the concept, which was the central thesis of his *Political Order in Changing Societies*. For Huntington (1968: 12), “[i]nstitutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability.”

Similarly, Randall and Sv s and (2002) have suggested that party system institutionalization comprises two dimensions: “internal and external,” consisting of “structural and attitudinal elements.” With regard to the internal component, Randall and Sv s and (2002) note that “a party system refers to the relationship between parties themselves.” The structural component is observed in a competitive party system that is institutionalized. In such a system, there is “legitimacy in the parties and continuity among party alternatives.” Evidence of the legitimacy of the NDC and NPP is found in the finding of an Afrobarometer survey (CDD-Ghana, 1999: 20; see also Abdulai and Crawford, 2010; Whitfield, 2009). Five consecutive times, moreover, when Ghanaians approached an election the voting public knew that the main choice facing them was the one between the NDC and the NPP (see Whitfield, 2009). The electoral contest is open to all political parties, including independents; in practice, however, the contest is usually a straight battle between the two main political organizations.

The attitudinal counterpart is that the parties respect and accept each other as legitimate competitors. Two important developments must be emphasized in the Ghanaian context: respecting the constitutional term limits and accepting election results are evidence that the NDC and NPP respect and accept each other as legitimate competitors. How a party system is

institutionalized should be determined not only by the relationship between individual party components, but also by the “party system’s external relationships with other components of the state” (Randall and Sv sand, 2002). The external environment is crucial to how a political party interacts with other state apparatuses.

Another precondition for competitive party system institutionalization is a “certain degree of autonomy from the state” (Randall and Sv sand, 2002). Nonetheless, because their activities affect the public directly, in all political systems parties are subject to some regulation and to varying degrees of state support. (This point is discussed further below.) Central government assistance to political parties also aids in the party system institutionalization (Randall and Sv sand, 2002). Public support to political parties comes in various forms. The 1992 Constitution, for example, provides the legal framework for parties to exist. Article 21 (3) of the 1992 Constitution (p. 24), together with the Political Parties Act (Act 574) of 2000, guarantee the right to form political parties. Article 55 (3) further grants the right to political parties to fully participate in shaping the political will of the people (p. 47). Political parties are thus permitted to operate freely as long as their activities are in consonance with the constitution. Furthermore, parties are granted access to state media in their electioneering campaigns, and the state also provides vehicles to the parties in those campaigns (p. 49).

### **5.3 Liberal Democracy and Political Parties**

Liberal democracy is the political system in vogue. Brown (2003) sees the current spread of free market capitalism in developing countries as the “flag of American democracy being planted everywhere it finds or creates soft ground.” For Plattner (2010; 1998) liberalism and democracy are inseparable; they almost always appear in tandem. In today’s globalized world,

wherever one finds free market capitalism, it exists alongside democracy. Indeed, such is the widespread resurgence of liberal democracies in the world that its promoters call it “liberal triumphalism.” Nonetheless, as Kotzian (2010) notes, public support for the operations of a free market economy is based on the economic performance of the liberal democratic political system.

Theoretically, liberal democracy, or free market capitalism, emerged from liberal thinking. As a political doctrine, liberalism is a body of ideas that began to gain intellectual and political currency in different parts of Western Europe in the seventeenth century. It is essentially a doctrine devoted to protecting the rights of the individual to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness (Heywood, 2003; Parekh, 1992). John Locke (1632-1704), one key thinker of early liberalism, suggested that individuals were invested with a set of God-given, natural, rights, which he defined as “life, liberty and property.”

The goal of liberalism, therefore, is to create opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential. While classical liberalism wanted government to interfere as little as possible in the lives of its citizens, modern liberalism believes that government should provide for the welfare of their citizens (Heywood, 2003). Indeed, Hayek (1960) has argued that “economic freedom is an essential guarantee of political liberty.” He claimed that a “liberal democratic political system and respect for civil liberties can only develop in the context of a capitalist economic order.”

The twentieth century was, arguably, the liberal century. A rival political creed that emerged in the mid nineteenth century was socialism. Socialism was the “radical movement” that emerged in 1850 (Berman, 2006; 1998). It was the movement envisaged to complete the “revolution started by the bourgeoisie by wresting from it social power” (Przeworski, 1986: 7).

Marxist parties that formed in the late nineteenth century “often styled themselves as social democratic parties” (Heywood, 2003: 139). Social democratic values can be traced to the core principles of the French Revolution: “liberty, equality and fraternity” (Merkel *et al.*, 2008). Social democracy’s interpretation of liberty, equality, and fraternity requires that the state tame market forces, and protect citizens from the vagaries of the market.

The mid-twentieth century witnessed substantial modifications in the ideology of the social democrats. According to Marquand (1999), “social democrats have always been revisionists.” They continuously modify their doctrines to withstand an endlessly mutating capitalism (*ibid.*). Social democrats no longer seek to abolish capitalism but, rather, to reform it or give it a human face (Marlière, 2010). It has therefore come to stand for a “broad balance between the market economy, on the one hand, and state intervention” on the other (Heywood, 2003: 140).

Neo-liberalism has become the dominant political order embraced by political parties of the centre-right and, lately, the centre-left.<sup>30</sup> The programmes or the policy goals pursued by political parties with leanings towards these ideologies represent the interests of upper and middle-class citizens, wealthy investors, and multinational corporations. According to Chomsky (1999: 19), neo-liberalism “suggests a system of principles that is both new and based on classical liberal ideas.” In its operations individuals, usually the minority of private interests, are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit. Neo-liberal operations are characterized by market rationality. That is, investments are targeted at areas where the maximum profit can be made. Practically, it turns citizens into consumers and,

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<sup>30</sup>. The British Labour Party, traditionally a party of the left, moved to the centre under the reign of Tony Blair in the mid-1990s.

instead of communities, it produces glassy or steel plated shopping malls. The net result is an “atomized society of disengaged individuals who feel demoralized and society powerless” (McChesney, 1998: 11). Critics further argue that free market democracy policies lead to ethnic tension and political instability, and they also increase social and economic inequalities in developing countries (Chua, 2003, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002; Kiely, 1998; Songsore, 1992). Neo-liberal ideologues counter this claim by arguing that the spoils of the good life will eventually trickle down to the suffering masses. The “restructuring” component of the free market doctrine has affected every aspect of the existence of African states, including political institutions and social formations (see Harvey, 2007; Larmer, 2005; Harrison, 2005; Clarke, 2004).

Indeed, what Gyimah-Boadi (1998) terms the “rebirth of African liberalism” should appropriately be called the consolidation of free market democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana, one of the star pupils of the Bank and Fund, attained full liberal democracy status in 2000. The 2008 Freedom House survey ranked it second out of 48 African states on its index. To be sure, the liberal democratic experiment in Ghana began in the pre-independence and early post-independence eras, but was truncated in 1964 with the declaration of the Republic as a one-party state. The Second and Third Republics, which embraced liberalism, were overthrown by military juntas (see Saffu, 2007). The general elections of 2000 and 2008 gave legitimacy to liberal democracy as the most desirable political system that can guarantee an “orderly alternation of power” in the Fourth Republic (Ninsin, 2007; Bofo-Arthur, 2007). Nevertheless, Ninsin (2007: 87) describes the current democratic dispensation as “democratic elitism,” in which democracy means “periodic elections and the enjoyment of negative rights.” What is the nature of the Ghanaian economy under free market capitalism?



The management of the Ghanaian economy was not unproblematic during the first three decades of independence. The economy reached its crises period in the 1970s, and by the early 1980s the survival of the state was seriously in doubt (see Herbst, 1993). The country's enduring relationship with the World Bank and IMF was cemented during the 1980s when the nearly collapsed Ghanaian economy was resuscitated by the funds provided by the two organizations. Indeed, the *Africa Confidential* (22 December 2000: 7) has described Ghana's relationship with the two funding agencies as "an economy which has been on a World Bank and International Monetary Fund drip-feed for much of the past two decades and still shows no sign of self-sustaining economic growth." The gradual disintegration of the national economy was only halted with the adoption of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983. Jerry Rawlings, in the words of Oelbaum (2002: 287), was "the world's, and certainly Africa's, first neo-liberal populist"; and the PNDC and, much later, the NDC would seek some U.S. \$5 billion from the IFIs to address the country's economic crises (*Africa Confidential*, 5 April 2002: 5; see also Herbst, 1993; Gyimah-Boadi, 1990). External funding to Ghana increased in the 1980s, as "bilateral and multilateral donors sought to support a successful story of economic reform in Africa" (Whitfield and Jones, 2009: 186). Scholars have observed some measure of economic growth, but nothing has changed in terms of the structure of the economy (see Whitfield, 2011; Aryeetey *et al.*, 2009; Tsikata, 2007; Aryeetey and Tarp, 2000).

The workings of free market capitalism necessitate a change in the role of the state: from "owner and regulator of economic activity to a facilitator through infrastructural investment and institutional changes" (ISSER, 1994). The state's regulation of economic activities has not produced the desired results. As a result, Aryeetey *et al.* (2009: 3) conclude, the government's choices for regional development policies and strategies are not well defined, particularly with



the current “economic orthodoxy of market liberation and globalization.” Similarly, Whitfield (2011) has observed that a high degree of vulnerability in office, attributable to the competitive nature of the political system, has led the governing coalitions to pursue and implement programmes that have “a short horizon” and “do not significantly shift the allocation of resources towards building productive sectors.” The usurpation of the state’s role in creating and stimulating economic development also means limited job opportunities in the formal sector of the economy.

With the return to constitutional rule in the early 1990s the new NDC administration produced the policy document, “Ghana-Vision 2020, The First Step: 1996-2000,” which was intended to lift the economy to upper-middle-income level by the year 2020. The reforms of the political economy were given a further boost in 2001 when President J. A. Kufuor declared his term in office the “Golden Age of Business.” The NPP government rejected Vision 2020 as not “ambitious enough.” The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I: 2003–2005) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II: 2006–2009) guided the NPP’s economic policy direction (see Whitfield and Jones, 2009). The two policy documents had two goals. The first involved the bloated public work force and underperforming public industries, which were to be downsized and privatized (Republic of Ghana, 2007: 40-41). These measures have become the key ingredients in the Bank and Fund policy of the “rolling back of the state.” Second, laying off the public workforce and dismantling state properties were meant to stimulate private interest in the management of the national economy. As a result, the policy was intended to introduce private sector competitive market norms into what remains of the public sector. Public sector reforms saw the injection of Western business norms into government agencies, and the creation of “client service units,” among other things (NDPC, 2006 Annual Progress Report, 128).

The overall agenda of the Bank and Fund is for the Ghanaian state to relinquish the management of the national economy to the small domestic capitalist class. The role of the state in this arrangement is basically to create the enabling environment in which private interests will triumph. The necessary safeguards, such as “good” investment laws and access to factors of production, ostensibly will stimulate local capitalists to lead economic development. To be sure, some of the Bank and Fund engineered reforms have registered some improvements, as characterized by a relatively stable macro-economic environment that has generated growth rates of around five per cent (ISSER, 2010: 188). Nonetheless, Whitfield (2011) notes that growth without any major substantial economic transformation cannot bring about development. Aryeetey *et al.* (2009) came to a similar conclusion when they argued that the “economic gains have been unequally distributed between people and places in Ghana.” Additionally, “the markets tend to increase rather than decrease regional inequalities” (Aryeetey *et al.*, 2009). The regional disparities, in particular, between relatively deprived northern Ghana and the more affluent southern Ghana are striking (Aryeetey *et al.*, 2009).

The private sector, touted as the “engine of growth,” is expected to create opportunities for gainful employment. The expected employment creation from the private sector, however, following the withdrawal of the state from direct production, has not materialized (ISSER, 2010). The result is limited employment opportunities in the formal sector. Indeed, the first unemployment census conducted by the NPP administration, in December 2001, registered close to a million job seekers. It is generally agreed that unemployment and underemployment are caused by inadequate and inappropriate training for the job market (ISSER, 2010).

The inability of the domestic capitalist to absorb the teeming numbers of job seekers has stimulated the growth of the informal sector, which caters to the needs of many citizens (see

Bob-Milliar and Obeng-Odoom, 2011). It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of Ghanaians work there (ISSER, 2010). The lack of permanent sources of livelihoods in the formal sector in Ghana makes patronage politics very lucrative. It appears that many citizens in the informal sector usually channel their energies into party activism, expecting to be rewarded with a more lucrative and permanent livelihood.

#### **5.4 Party Political Traditions in Ghana Revisited**

There are two dominant political traditions Ghanaians refer to in everyday political discourse: the Nkrumahist and the Danquah-Busia (see Chapter 3). After a decade of military rule, the longest in the history of the Ghanaian state, in 1991 the military, for the third time, reluctantly accepted the Justice D. F. Annan-led National Commission for Democracy (NCD, 1991) report (see Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010). Despite Rawlings initial blunt “hand over to whom?” rhetoric, the military initiated the move to return the country to multi-party democracy.

During the period of military rule all civilian party activities were outlawed. Informal associations consequently organized secretly, and promoted the principles and values of the two dominant political traditions. In the early 1990s, as the country moved towards political pluralism, these “underground” associations thus emerged from their hiding places throughout the country, and served as the poles for political mobilization. Similar to earlier trends, the Ghanaian political elites regrouped under old, familiar labels, such as the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society, the Heritage Club, the National Coordinating Committee of Nkrumahists, and the Danquah-Busia Memorial Club (see Nugent, 1996). The third group of clubs included the

EAGLE Club,<sup>31</sup> the New Nation Club, the Development Union, the Front, and the Rawlings Fan Club, among others (*Uhuru*, 1992: 10; see also Oquaye, 2004). The first political associations all traced their heritage to the pre-independence era political traditions (discussed in Chapter 3). The last group of clubs represented a hybrid tradition, arguably the third tradition to emerge in Ghanaian politics since 1949. The Rawlingsists, populist and progressive, have come to represent the third political tradition.

By 1992 it was again obvious that the political elites of the 1950s were still very much in charge. Politicians such as K. A. Gbedemah and Kojo Botsio, aged 79 and 76 respectively, were the rallying points for the Nkrumahists. The presence of 58-year-old former President Dr. Hilla Limann, however, created problems for the Nkrumahist front. As was not the case with the transitions of 1969 and 1979, deposed former President Limann wanted to lead the new Nkrumahist party (*Uhuru*, 1992: 10). The discussion and analysis presented in Chapter 3 suggest that prior to 1992, any time the military disengaged from politics, political parties emerged around the “founding mythologies” of the Danquah-Busia and Nkrumah blocs (cf. Whitfield, 2009). The question on the minds of many was whether Jerry Rawlings, who came to power after ousting the government of the People’s National Party (PNP), led by Dr. Limann, would resign and join the Nkrumahist camp or the Danquah-Busia camp. The latter might have been too extreme, considering that the PNDC espoused socialism, and had launched what Rawlings termed the “peoples’ revolution” on 31 December 1981 (see Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010; Nugent, 1996).

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<sup>31</sup> The EAGLE acronym stands for Every Accountable Ghanaian Living Everywhere. It was founded by Captain (Rtd) Felix Nii Okai. Other members included Michael Soussodis, first cousin of Rawlings, Dr. Kugblenu, Dr. Farouk, and all functionaries of the PNDC.

Socialism was jettisoned in April 1983, a process Zaya Yeebo described as one “of the most dramatic ‘U-turns’ of any government in all post-independent African history.” Within a year in power -- that is, by December 1982 -- the regime had changed its face. Of the seven original members, only Rawlings and Adjei Boadi remained on the Council (Nugent, 1996). The PNDC “turned its back on its origins, initial objectives, and social base, and invalidated all possibilities of a genuine revolutionary transformation” (Yeebo, 1985: 64). The policy change alienated the “ultra-leftists” and the progressives (see Oquaye, 2004; Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Nugent, 1996; Ninsin, 1987). The reconstituted PNDC included persons from a broad political spectrum, such as former United National Convention (UNC) members, including Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu (a running mate of Paa Willie), Dr. Obed Asamoah (General Secretary of UNC and Parliamentary candidate for Biakoye), and Harry Sawyer (National Treasurer and Parliamentary candidate for Osu Klottey). Some Nkrumahists were also included in the reconstituted PNDC; among them K. B. Asante, a former diplomat, and Susanna Alhassan, a Minister of Social Welfare in the CPP regime.

Upon the lifting of the ban on party activity, these political associations metamorphosed into the NPP and the NDC, among other entities. The issue of political tradition has dominated political discourse in the Fourth Republic. The scholarly perspective of Jonah (1998: 75-6) is significant for understanding political traditions in Ghana. He writes:

Unlike the party, the party political tradition is a body of symbols, myths, ideas, ideals, ideologies, philosophies and concrete political achievements associated with a national political hero and a political party in the history of the country. The party political tradition is characterized by personification, indivisibility, indissolubility and invariable leadership.

Jonah (1998: 76) argues that reference to a past political party and leadership “serves two principal purposes. It is a source of legitimation for political parties and party leadership and the

basis of socialization and recruitment.” This kind of legitimacy was crucial for attempts at mobilizing or re-launching a successful political party every time competitive politics were allowed in Ghana, because “parties not attached to any distinct political tradition were ultimately doomed to political extinction or disintegration” (p. 84). Reference to the two dominant traditions enables parties to “freeze an established pattern of conflict and competition” (Carbone, 2003: 9).

### **5.5 Origins and Ideological Leanings of the NDC and NPP**

When the NDC launched in the early 1990s, the key architects behind its formation were surrounded in secrecy.<sup>32</sup> What is not in dispute is that the NDC grew out of the ruling PNDC. As already argued, the PNDC administration comprised persons from the two strands of Ghana’s political traditions and the military. The military bloc led by Rawlings was “unattached, and definitely non-ideological” (Bob-Milliar, 2012b: 584; Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010). Indeed, Rawlings has never professed any ideology, although his persona, platform antics, and rhetoric suggest populism and socialism. It has nonetheless been alleged that Rawlings acquired the intellectual content of the successful 1981 coup by associating with Marxist intellectuals, including Chris Atim, Johnny Hansen, Zaya Yeebo, Akata-Pore, and the Tsikata and Ahwoi brothers.<sup>33</sup> The early years of the revolution had a Marxist aspect, and in subsequent years the PNDC’s populism seemed inclined to the left (Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010). The rapid return of the country to constitutional rule brought to the fore old divisions within the ruling junta. Members

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<sup>32</sup>. Justice Annan’s biography, authored by two key PNDC insiders, revealed for the first time the circumstances of, and the debates that accompanied, the formation of the NDC. See Dadzie and Ahwoi (2010).

<sup>33</sup>. Rawlings was frequently seen in the company of University of Ghana Marxist intellectuals, including Tsatsu Tsikata. Many believe the coup was plotted on the university campus. Personal Communication with Prof. A. Essuman-Johnson, Legon, 27 September 2010.



and activists of the PNDC disagreed on three fronts: some members preferred a return to their various political traditions, and a second group favoured the breaking up of the Council, and allowing members to join parties of their choice; a third group, however, favoured the synchronization of the principles of the 4 June 1979 uprising and the 31 December 1981 Revolution into a new political party (Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010). A political committee, including Chairman Rawlings, Justice Annan, Kojo Tsikata, Obed Asamoah, Mahama Iddrisu, P. V. Obeng, and several other key members of the PNDC administration, held meetings at the Castle<sup>34</sup> Chapel. The “Chapel Group,” as it would later be known, debated and collated information from the grassroots on the electability of Rawlings and the party he would lead.

The PNDC regime, though disliked by the domestic capitalist class and many middle class Ghanaians, was very popular at the grassroots level. In the process of searching for a suitable name the decision was made to drop the “P” for “Provisional,” and maintain the “NDC.” The acronym would, however, stand for National Democratic Congress (Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010: 89). Choosing an emblem for the party was more daunting. The concept of the “umbrella” sponsored by the 31 December Women’s Movement (31 DWM) won the hearts of many committee members (p. 90). The emblem, known in the Akan language as *Akatamanso*, shows a traditional state umbrella, signifying unity and protection, with a bird on top, signifying vigilance (*People’s Daily Graphic*, 11 June 1992). The party borrowed its colours, black, red, and white, from the 4 June Movement. Green was added to signify “a fresh beginning and the wealth of our nation in the soil of our people” (Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010: 90). The NDC was launched on 10 June 1992 at the Centre for National Culture, and legalized on 28 July 1992 when it received a certificate of registration from the Electoral Commission (EC). Its motto is “unity, stability and

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<sup>34</sup>. Castle is the seat of government.



development” (NDC, 2002). A third political strand, the PNDC-Rawlings tradition, was initially non-ideological and pragmatic, and would compete with the two other established political traditions for power.

Ideologically, the NDC started professing social democracy as recently as 2002. Its defeat in December 2000 necessitated an in-depth evaluation of the party’s performance in government and the functions of party structures at the grassroots (see Bob-Milliar, 2012b). In the first NDC administration, it embraced political populism. Indeed, Vincent Asiseh, a former Press Secretary, would later claim that the NDC was “not a real political party but part of the machinery established by the erstwhile PNDC to win elections every four years”<sup>35</sup> (*Chronicle*, 17 July 2001:1 and 8). Nevertheless, the NDC published a major policy document, titled “A Social Democratic Agenda for Ghana” (2002). In it the NDC defined, for its 10 years of existence, its ideological basis as a political organization. The policy document proposed the adoption of “social democracy as the ideological and philosophical framework for the party’s programmes and activities.” In 2003 the NDC was formally accepted as member of the Socialist International<sup>36</sup> at a meeting held at Sao Paolo, Brazil (NDC, 2004: 1). The NDC operationalized its social democracy to mean:

a belief in the equality and egalitarian treatment of all persons with respect to their political, economic, social, cultural and religious relations in a multi-party, multi ethnic environment and a commitment to progressive politics and the protection of the under-privileged and the upliftment of the socially disadvantaged (NDC, 2002: 1; 2004: 1).

According to the NDC, “basic to modern social democracy is that government is good, and good governance is even better” (NDC, 2004: xiv). In addition, the party believes in free market

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<sup>35</sup> Vincent Asiseh was speaking on a Joy FM programme on Monday, 16 July 2001. The story appeared as “NDC is not a political party -- Vincent Asiseh declares” in the *Chronicle*, 17 July 2001:1 and 8.

<sup>36</sup>. The Socialist International is the worldwide organization of social democratic, socialist and labour parties.

capitalism. Thus, the NDC's brand of social democracy seeks to "marry the efficiency of the market and private initiative with the compassion of state intervention to protect the disadvantaged and the marginalized and to ensure optimum production and distributive justice" (NDC, 2004: xiv). In short, the party aims to incorporate social democratic values in its programmes and activities to improve the welfare of citizens. As a political party, it fits in the centre-left spectrum.

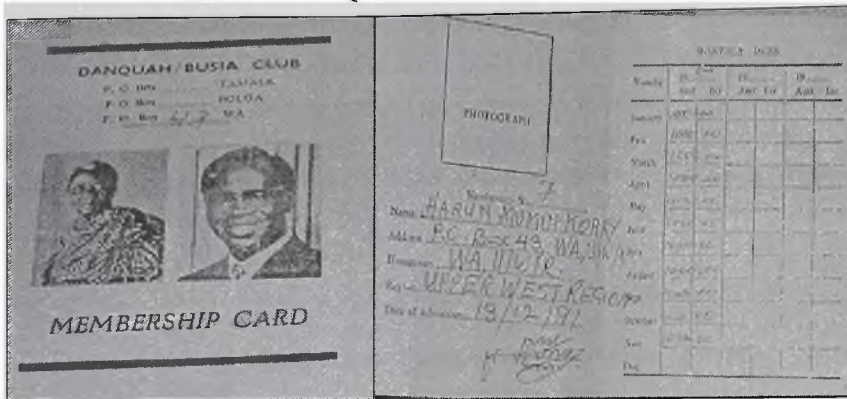
The party claims among its central aims and objectives the following: "(a) to promote participatory democracy and responsible government in Ghana; (b) attain political power through democratic and constitutional means for the purpose of creating conditions conducive to ensuring national development; (c) ensure the attainment of equality and fraternity of all men and women under the law without regards to ethnicity, race, religious belief, ideology, culture, social or economic status; (d) secure the right of each member of society to participate in decision-making in an open and democratic manner but deferring to the majority interest without sacrificing minority rights; (e) ensure the establishment of the rule of law and the right of every citizen of Ghana to pursue his/her affairs without unlawful interference and the right of all persons to easy access and equal recourse to the court; (f) seek provision of free and compulsory basic education, and within the means available, provide appropriate further/higher education for all Ghanaians who may wish for and can benefit from it; (g) ensure the provision within the shortest possible time, to all communities in Ghana, of basic human needs, namely adequate food, affordable housing, clothing, water, health care, schools, accessible roads, electricity and telecommunication facilities" (NDC, 2002: 2). Social democracy is also consistent with the policies of the PNDC, and fits the character of the NDC.

The NPP is the same age as the NDC; it nonetheless claims a political tradition that is more than half a century old. Again, while the latter's origins are associated with undemocratic regimes, the former claims a political genealogy that is "democratic" in nature, and dates from the 1940s (see Chapter 3). The NPP traces its origins to the UGCC (1947-1954). The NPP rightly claims the conservative tradition of its two famous Akan leaders, J. B. Danquah and K. A. Busia (Appiah-Menka, 2010; NPP, 2008b: 5).

The NPP was launched by B. J. da Rocha on 22 May 1992 in Accra (*People's Daily Graphic*, 1992). It was legalized on 28 July 1992, when the EC issued to its officers a certificate of registration. The NPP flag, which is rectangular, has a horizontal tricolour, comprising, from top to bottom, equal bands of red, white, and blue, with the elephant as its emblem. "Development in freedom" is the party's motto (NPP, 2009). Official party accounts of the origins of the NPP contain inconsistencies. The first "official" version appeared in the party sponsored publication, "The Stolen Verdict" (NPP, 1993). This account claimed that the NPP grew out of the "Danquah-Busia Memorial Club, which was founded on the initiative of Attakora Gyimah," a columnist of the *Ashanti Pioneer*. The Kumasi based club "provided a platform around which the supporters of the United Party/Progress Party idea could mobilize and spread their message in the changed domestic and external circumstances of the early 90s" (NPP, 1993: 4). The second "official" version on the genesis of the NPP appeared in *Statesman* (16 August 2007). It debunked the first version, and traced the foundation of the party to the residence of Stephen Krakue, where meetings were held by a "Progress Party group." It claimed that "the Progress Party group constituted the main route to the ultimate formation of the NPP."

What is empirically verifiable is that the Danquah-Busia club issued membership cards, and its membership cuts across the country, as illustrated by the Figure 5.1.<sup>37</sup>

FIGURE 5.1 DANQUAH-BUSIA CLUB MEMBERSHIP CARD



Reproduced by permission of Harun Mumin Koray.

The Accra group was an extension of the Kumasi based club (Appiah-Menka, 2010: 321-324). It consisted of former senior politicians of that tradition. It thus involved few people, and its very secretive activities revolved around the houses of Stephen Krakue in central Accra and Hackman Owusu-Agyeman at Shiashie. While the Accra group could be said to be the intellectual hub tasked with drafting a constitution, coining a name, designing an emblem, and selecting attractive colours, the Kumasi group inspired awareness on the part of sympathizers with the tradition (Appiah-Menka, 2010). Nevertheless, it appears the current leadership is indulging in the type of personalized factionalism that caused the defeat of that political tradition in the 1979 elections (see Chapter 3). The two different accounts indicate factions within the party, and the party's history being rewritten to suit certain interest groups. To check this

<sup>37</sup> In my interviews with NPP activists, not one mentioned the PP group.

polarizing phenomenon, party members from the three Northern regions of Ghana are campaigning for the immortalization of Dombo's name as one of the founding fathers of the liberal tradition in Ghana. In the words of a Wala NPP activist:

Our forefathers, Dombo, B.K. [Adama], Lawra Naa [Karbo] founded the original NPP [Northern Peoples Party], and resisted Nkrumah's overtures to join the CPP. In fact, the CPP was bitterly opposed in this area till the government fell ... When Busia fled into exile in 1959 it was Dombo who led the UP group in Parliament. As far as we know Dombo was a leader with the same standing as Danquah and Busia, why limit the tradition to the two Akans? Our opponents [NDC members] constantly tell us that the NPP is an Akan party, and that we are wasting our energies in a party that is dominated by Akans. Dombo's name must be added to the liberal tradition (Interview, Wa, 18 September 2008).

Ideologically, the NPP belongs to the centre-right political spectrum. It practices a brand of moderate conservatism it calls "property-owning democracy." Dr. J. B. Danquah is credited with coining the terminology. He envisaged the party's policy in the following terms:

[Our Party's] policy is to liberate the energies of the people for the growth of a property-owning democracy in this land, with right to life, freedom and justice, as the principles to which the Government and laws should be dedicated, in order, specifically, to enrich life, property and liberty, of each and every citizen (NPP, 2004: 1).

The NPP's "property-owning democracy" is anchored in the fundamental belief that the individual must be enabled to develop in freedom to attain the highest level his or her talents permit (NPP, 2000: vii). The NPP thus operates under a liberal democratic ideology tempered with some social democratic values.

The NPP has among its aims and objectives the following: "(a) to participate in shaping the political will of the people by disseminating information on political ideas, social and economic programmes of the party; (b) to win political power through democratic means in order to pursue the party's agenda as provided for in the party's manifesto for a general election; (c) to

bring together like-minded citizens of the country so that they may strive for freedom and justice by the appreciation and protection of human rights and the rule of law through the practice of true democracy; (d) to manage the economy of the country with efficiency and prudence, guided by the consideration of the national interest; (e) to promote a vibrant, free-market economy and encourage vigorous participation by citizens in economic activities; (f) to create a climate in which private enterprise will thrive and citizens and foreigners alike may invest without fear and without unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions and impediments, in order to create wealth and prosperity for the citizens and people of this country; (g) to provide a good system of education, both public and private, at all levels which responds to the developmental needs of the country as well as the need for quality education and; (h) to solve the grave problem of massive unemployment and to provide for all who are capable, the opportunity and means of earning a living, either by way of self-employment or as employees in various undertakings” (NPP, 2009: 1-4).

Despite the apparent differences in the ideological orientations of the two main parties, a critical review of the programmes pursued in their respective two terms in office has proved that they have both been largely influenced by free market policies championed by the Bank and Fund (see Ninsin, 2006). There is little ideology in their policy initiatives, and they have pursued virtually the same programmes. (See Chapter 6 for an analysis of campaign manifestos.)

## **5.6 Legal Regulation**

The call for transparency and “good governance” in the conduct of partisan politics has seen many democracies adopting regulatory mechanisms to monitor the conduct of politics (IDEA, 2003). In many advanced democracies, there are laws on the limits of donations from



individuals and groups, and disclosure laws force parties to make public their contributions (Nassmacher, 2003a, 2003b; Ferdinand, 2003). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana mandates the EC to regulate the behaviour of political parties. Over the years the EC has performed this statutory function (p. 48). The EC's monitoring and the regulation of the behaviour of political parties and of political financing is nonetheless woefully inadequate. As Saffu (2003: 21) notes more generally, political financing is not properly regulated in Africa. In this context, Saffu states emphatically that "the raising of funds by parties and candidates is a matter of unregulated self-help." The enforcement of the rules on political financing remains a challenge in Ghana. In this context, the 2004 *Global Integrity* report is significant. Regarding political parties, the report finding alleged corruption because of the lack of transparency on how political parties are funded.

Nassmacher (2006: 448) notes that nearly all (Western) liberal democracies have introduced direct public funding of political parties. Africa is miles behind when it comes to public funding provisions (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009b; Öhman, 1999). According to Saffu (2003: 25), the absence of such provisions in the new constitutions shows the extent of authoritarian manipulation of the transition process. These regimes had access to several sources of funds at the time of the transition and, therefore, did not see anything wrong with starving the opposition parties of public funds. In the specific case of Ghana, the first NDC administration (1993-2001) opposed a bill to authorize public funding of political parties (*Ghanaian Chronicle*, 3 December 1999). The NPP, then in opposition, was a strong advocate of public funding of political parties; however, its eight years in government rather disappointed advocates of public funding of parties because it failed to promote the cause. As Cowen and Laasko (1997: 736) have correctly observed, "the strategies of many African governing regimes have been directed precisely at



making opposition parties as institutionally weak as possible.” Clearly, an incumbent NDC government would not want to prop up an NPP opposition party with public funds.

According to van Biezen (2003), the phrase “legal framework of party financing” describes all legislation and legal instruments related to the funding and financial operations of political parties (p.14). Specifically, the “legal framework of party financing” includes constitutional provisions, laws on political parties, and laws on the financing of political parties and election campaigns, as enshrined in Article 55 (14) of the 1992 Constitution and the Political Parties Act (Act 547) of 2000. In this context, Sections 23 and 24 of the political parties law are significant. Article 55 (14) of the 1992 Constitution requires political parties (a) “to *declare to the public* their revenues and assets and the sources of those revenues and assets and, (b) to *publish to the public* annually their audited accounts” (p. 49 emphasis added). Section 21 of the Political Parties Act states: “A political party shall, within six months from 31<sup>st</sup> December of each year, *file with the commission* (a) a return in the form specified by the Commission indicating (i) the state of its accounts (ii) the sources of its funds (iii) membership dues paid (iv) contributions or donations in cash or kind (v) the properties of the party and the time of acquisition (vi) any other particulars reasonably required by the Commission and (b) the audited accounts of the party for the year” (emphasis mine).

The defects in the two Acts mean that both instruments leave political financing completely unregulated, and there are no limits to candidate or party spending on election campaigns. Indeed, by most estimates, the then-ruling NPP expenditure for elections 2004 and 2008 far exceeded expectations. The party spent some \$30 million and \$100 million<sup>38</sup> on advertisement and organization, respectively (*Africa Confidential*, 17 December 2004: 5). Alan

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<sup>38</sup> The total spent on the elections could be more than \$100 million. Interview with a senior party executive, Accra, 16 July 2010.

Kyerematen, an NPP candidate for the December 2007 presidential contest, not only raised GH¢13 million (or \$15 million) in one night; he also spent lavishly on his presidential campaign (*Chronicle*, 9 October 2007:1 and 15). While the then opposition NDC was demanding an investigation into the sources of funds for the NPP presidential nomination contest, former President Rawlings had earlier raised GH¢630,000 (or \$700,000) in similar settings at a fundraising event organized by the North American Coordinating Council of the NDC in the U.S. state of Texas (*Chronicle*, 17, 15 August 2007:1 and 15). At the national level there is a requirement for annual submissions of audited accounts, including assets and liabilities.

The two main parties have never published their accounts in any public forum (*Daily Graphic*, 14 September 2011). According to the EC, the NDC and NPP filed their records up to 2006.<sup>39</sup> These records are not, however, available to the public. The traditional source of internal party financing is the regular membership fees. This is generally regarded as the most “democratic and legitimate form of party financing” (Saffu, 2003: 22; van Biezen, 2003). In the Ghanaian environment of excruciating poverty, however, characterized by low levels of income, illiteracy and a preponderantly rural population, many party members do not pay annual dues. A party executive acknowledges this problem.

Over 90 per cent of members in the region do not pay annual dues. Many party members even struggle to pay the initial subscription fee. Membership comes with certain obligations but we cannot force members to pay their dues. The only time members pay up is when a member wants to run for elective office, the eligibility requirements of which include that one must be in good standing. And our party constitution does not allow us to expel members not in good standing, yet the party structures and programs must run in the constituency (Interview, Wa, 21 September, 2008).

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<sup>39</sup>. My attempt to access the records from both parties and the EC was unsuccessful.

According to Gyimah-Boadi (2009b), political parties in Ghana have generally resorted to four principal sources to generate revenue: seed money provided by the founding members of the party (more so with the NPP), membership dues, individual donations by party members and well-wishers, and local fund-raising by party activists (pp. 2-3). Additionally, the completely undemocratic source of income for the NDC and NPP is the so-called “10%” kickbacks from recipients of government contracts. It is as yet unclear whether profits from the sale of campaign paraphernalia belong to individuals, or are ploughed back into party coffers for the elections (Daddieh, 2011).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

In the democratic transition literature, scholars have pointed out the benefits of party systems and party institutionalization. Indeed, Whitfield (2009) has argued that Ghana has achieved both criteria for democratic consolidation. This chapter foregrounded the discussion of the party system and party institutionalization within a broader theoretical discussion of the origins of liberalism, liberal democracy, social democracy and neo-liberalism or free market capitalism. The NDC is a party of the centre-left, and the NPP is right of centre. Notwithstanding the different ideological posturing, both parties have embraced the market orthodoxy championed by the IFIs. The state has divested itself of production, and the private sector is supposed to lead development. Nonetheless, the inability of the domestic capitalist class to create livelihood sources for citizens able and willing to work has given rise to the growth of the informal sector, which caters to some 80 per cent of citizens. It appears that the inability of many citizens to enjoy “positive rights” (i.e., sustainable welfare programmes) in the neo-liberal era has made activism within party structures attractive.

## CHAPTER SIX

### POLITICAL PARTIES AS CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS

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#### 6.1 Introduction

In Ghana parliamentary campaigns are absorbed into presidential campaigns. The nature of campaigning has changed. First, presidential election campaigns attract more popular interest than all others. The national election campaign, which is organized from party headquarters, centres on the party's presidential nominee. Second, party grassroots organize and coordinate their campaigns, which are sometimes supported by party headquarters or wealthy patrons. Finally, charismatic individuals' members organize their own campaigns in support of a particular candidate and the party.

Which issues dominate election campaigns, and how are activists involved in them? Here, I argue that even though election campaigns were mostly devoid of key policy issues, it is the platform where party activism is most visible. This chapter is arranged in four sections. After offering an insight into the organizational dynamics of election campaigns, an analysis of the programmes of the parties, as contained in party manifestos, will be given. That will be followed by an analysis of the author's observation of the 2008 election campaign.

#### 6.2 "Organizational Dynamics of Changes in Campaign Styles"

Modern political parties have come to epitomize organizations motivated primarily by the desire for electoral success. In Ghana, there is no "official" period dedicated to campaigning, whether parliamentary or presidential; political parties can begin their election campaigns at any

time (see IDEA, 2003). Political campaigns are, however, regulated by party constitutions. While incumbency imposes certain restrictions on the time to begin an election campaign, opposition parties usually start their election campaign once the party's presidential candidates have been selected. The work of Tweneboah-Koduah *et al.* (2010) has shown how important political marketing is to election campaigns. Central to these political marketing strategies is emphasis on individual candidates and the candidate's campaign organization. Equally vital is the role of campaign specialists (see Farrell, 2006). This organization of election campaigns has been described as "Americanization" (Farrell, 1998). Indeed, Swanson and Mancini (1996: 4) suggested that "campaigning in democracies around the world is becoming more and more Americanized as candidates, political parties, and news media take cues from their counterparts in the United States." It is certainly true that U.S. campaign practices have had some influence on the campaign styles of parties in Ghana. Presidential Debates<sup>40</sup> were instituted in the 2000 elections, and this saw the presidential candidates of the opposition parties debate each other in a public forum. Again, though underdeveloped, opinion polls are also used by political parties to gauge voter preferences.

The research literature has shown how electioneering by parties and candidates has changed in terms of "technology, technicians and techniques" (Farrell, 2006). Parties are using improved technologies and running sleek election campaigns. The World Wide Web and mobile phones are some of the latest technologies parties are using to raise money and mobilize their

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<sup>40</sup> The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), an independent governance think tank based in Accra, organized Presidential Debates in 2000 and 2004, but these suffered from the non-participation in 2000 of the sitting Vice-President, John Evans Atta Mills, and, in 2004, from the refusal of the sitting President, John Agyekum Kufuor, to debate the other candidates. In 2008, however, all four presidential candidates with parliamentary representation -- NDC (Mills), NPP (Akufo-Addo), PNC (Mahama) and CPP (Nduom) -- participated. In 2008 two debates were organized in Accra and Tamale, and were covered live on radio and television.

supporters.<sup>41</sup> In advanced democracies, election campaigns are centrally coordinated, and run by hired professionals. This practice is gradually creeping into the party campaigning in Ghana. Here, campaign specialists and brand agencies have assumed a prominent role in election campaigns (see Tweneboah-Koduah *et al.*, 2010). The parties have utilized the expertise of political strategists and consultants. For example, Larry Gibson, an American law professor, was recruited to advise the NPP campaign team in the 2008 elections (Kennedy, 2009: 80), while the South African-based *Brand Leadership Group* was engaged by the NDC.<sup>42</sup>

### 6.3 Parties' Campaign Communication Strategies

The NDC and NPP have always made full use of effective and easily remembered slogans that “indicate the principal objective and subjective factors that define them” (Oelbaum, 2004). The NDC’s slogan says it is “Always For People, Always For Development.” By contrast, the NPP stands for “Development in Freedom.” While such slogans may mean little to the grassroots voters, they nevertheless indicate partisan distinctions between the parties (Oelbaum, 2004).

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<sup>41</sup> For example, on 7 December 2008, the NPP campaign team caused text messages to be sent to customers of mobile telephony companies (e.g. MTN, Tigo, and Vodafone). This was a novelty, and an ingenious way to continue the political campaign on polling day itself.

<sup>42</sup> Brand Leadership was engaged by the NDC from March 2008 through to the run-off on 28 December 2008. Blending the principles of marketing, branding, and political campaigning, the company developed a strategy anchored on a winning “four-phase political branding” campaign that encompassed: (i) setting the election agenda; (ii) mapping out the case or manifesto for change; (iii) nation building; and (iv) voter mobilization -- designed to reassure committed voters, win swing voters and re-establish the NDC and Mills as the best custodians of Ghana's values, ambitions and prosperity. See <http://www.brandleadership.com/> (accessed 12 January 2009).

In saliency theory, Budge and Farlie (1983) argue that certain types of parties “owned” certain types of policies around which their campaign messages are woven. The political strategists seek the issues of concern to the citizens, and these are then packaged and sold to the electorate (Farrell, 2006: 129). The increasing parity in electoral competition seen in the two main parties in Ghana has necessitated changes in campaign communication strategies. The NDC Constitution makes room for a national propaganda secretary (see Article 35). The propaganda secretary strategizes the party campaign communication. By contrast, the NPP has a Communication Director, who is tasked with directing the party campaign communication machinery.

#### **6.4 Party Manifestos**

The policy goals or programmes that parties hope to pursue when elected to office are usually packaged in documents known as party manifestos. The issues the manifestos capture have many sources. First, both the NDC and the NPP depend on experts’ knowledge for direction on pertinent issues in the national economy. The party manifesto committees are thus headed by highly qualified and respected academics. (For details, see Kennedy, 2009.) Second, the parties also source ideas from minority or specialized interest groups. Of relevance here is *The Women’s Manifesto of Ghana*. Developed by a coalition of NGOs, it is a political document that sets out critical issues of concern to Ghanaian women, with clear guidelines for addressing them. With regard to women in politics and decision-making, the manifesto (2004: 31-2) states:

In spite of the pivotal role Ghanaian women play within the family, community and society at large, they do not occupy key decision-making positions in any of the sectors of economic, political and social life. They are relegated to the background as far as public decision-making is concerned. This is because no concrete policy measures are in place to ensure that the structural



inequalities between women and men are taken into account in promoting participation in policy decisions.

The document suggested solutions to the marginalization of women in Ghanaian society. Two of these are significant for our discussion: “That political parties ensure that by the year 2008, there is at least 50% representation of women in party executive and other decision-making structures”; and, “That by the year 2008 at least 50% of appointees to public offices, such as boards of corporations and institutions and the higher echelons of the bureaucracies are women” (Women’s Manifesto, 2004: 34). Other interest groups have also succeeded in influencing critical policy issues from a gender perspective. Gender and women’s rights concerns were included in the parties’ manifestos, and also figured in the election campaigns. The NPP presidential candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo, appeared on “Mmaa Nkomo”<sup>43</sup> before a female audience, and answered questions of interest to women. Think tanks (e.g., IDEG, CDD-Ghana, and IEA) have also advocated policies that have been adopted by the parties. Furthermore, the political parties have their own research departments to help them research key issues. The Accra-based Danquah Institute is the NPP research arm (see Kennedy, 2009: 86). Similarly, the NDC’s research committee was headed by two veteran politicians, Professor Kwamena Ahwoi and Dr. Tony Aidoo (Interview, Accra, 26 January, 2009).

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<sup>43</sup>. *Mmaa Nkomo* with Nana Akufo-Addo monitored on GTV at 8:00 pm and TV Africa at 9:00 pm, 18 November 2008.

## 6.5 Elections Campaigns in Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom Constituencies

### 6.5.1 “Continuity” versus “Change”

The NDC launched its election campaign in 1992 without a manifesto. The policies the party intended to pursue when elected into office were nevertheless contained in its campaign theme of “continuity.” Continuity was a coded message to party activists and supporters. The theme appears to have resonated well with people of the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies. The NDC’s foot-soldiers concentrated the party’s campaign effort in rural communities. Rural voters were told that continuity meant continuing and improving social services, improving the livelihoods of rural dwellers, and continuity in office for the key personnel of the PNDC. An NDC activist explained what continuity meant.

We benefited from some of the development programs of the PNDC. So the new message of continuity was welcomed by all people in the region [Upper West] who were familiar with the work of Chairman Rawlings. I think the Chairman identified with our deprived situation when he gave us a region in 1983. Continuity in development programs was therefore consistent with our development aspirations. We could not tell what would have happened to some of the on-going development projects if we changed the leadership of the country (Interview, Wa, 16 January 2008).

By contrast, the NPP issued a campaign manifesto. Its main theme was “change,” graphically illustrated in a full-page advertisement (see Figure 6.1 below). Among other things, the manifesto sets out the party’s intention to create a viable democracy by ensuring the rule of law, decentralizing the power of the state, and promoting fundamental human rights (NPP, 1992). For the NPP the time was ripe for change and for “economic revitalization.” The transition election witnessed the re-emergence of the factionalism that has characterized the Nkrumah and Danquah-Busia traditions. One of the small Nkrumahist parties partnered with the NDC. The NDC propaganda machine used its partnership with the National Convention Party (NCP) as an

excuse to draw parallels between its presidential candidate, Rawlings, and Dr. Nkrumah. The portrayal of Rawlings as Nkrumah's reincarnation was published in the state-owned *Ghanaian Times* (see Figure 6.2 below). Additionally, the party emphasized the Nkrumahist origin of some of the politicians it had assimilated into the PNDC leadership in the 1980s. The PNDC's decentralization policies were said to have politically and economically empowered the ordinary man and woman at the grassroots. While exploiting Nkrumah's image and heritage for electoral purposes, the NDC never claimed Nkrumahism as its political doctrine. Instead, its followers claimed that the PNDC represented a new, and paradigm-shifting, direction in Ghanaian politics (see Oelbaum, 2004).

Exploiting the advantages of incumbency, the NDC campaigned on the record of the PNDC, and promised more development. The rural areas of the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies thus became fertile grounds for the extension of state patronage and the exposition of populist themes. The dreaded cadres of the PNDC revolution, now NDC activists, campaigned extensively in the rural areas, and liberally dispensed patronage to local chiefs and community elders (Interview, Wa, 16 January 2008). The NPP concentrated its campaign efforts on attacking the personality of Rawlings in the private press (see Figure 6.1). As Buchanan (1996) notes, when politics becomes personalized in this media age, the most effective way of attracting votes is to discredit competitors. The NDC propaganda machine not only discredited leading opponents; it also sought to play up the failures and prejudices of the UP tradition and its successors (Interview, Lawra, 16 November, 2008). One remarkable feature of the NDC's campaign in the Upper West Region was that it was a non-issue-based campaign. Election campaign rallies in 1992 took the form of enormous jamborees, and NDC activists and

supporters acted more like football spectators, cheering wildly and clapping to the populist rhetoric of the main speakers.

In the elections of 1992, even though the NDC parliamentary candidate, Kenneth Kunfah, was less popular in the Lawra-Nandom constituency, he managed to defeat the NPP candidate, because he enjoyed the massive support of the Nandom *Naa*, Puoure Puobe Chiir VII, an NDC sympathizer (see Lentz, 2002). Nevertheless, such royal endorsement does not always guarantee electoral victory: Lawra *Naa*, Abayifaa Karbo II, who had always supported the UP tradition, failed to garner votes for the NPP candidates he supported in the parliamentary election (see Lentz, 2006). The endorsement of traditional authorities is only one factor among several that determines the outcome of an election in the constituency. Additionally, the growing number of educated people in the constituency with independent political aspirations and different sets of political beliefs, along with the development needs of interest groups, also determined the nature of the activism. Yet, at election time, as is the case in other parts of Ghana, many local political actors still seek the endorsement of traditional leaders. There are also good reasons why the Nandom *Naa*, Lawra *Naa*, or the Birifu *Naa* would throw their weight behind a particular candidate or party. By allying themselves with a political party, they receive from it material benefits and personal support (development) for their leadership (Lentz, 2002).

#### **6.6 The “Progressive Alliance” versus the “Great Alliance” campaigns**

The NDC formally began its drive to renew its mandate with the nomination and subsequent acclamation of President Rawlings at a party congress in Sunyani (see *Daily Graphic*, 6 September, 1996). Meanwhile, factions had emerged in the NDC-led Progressive Alliance, which won the controversial polls of 1992 (see Oquaye, 2004; Nugent, 1996; NPP,

1993). Some members of National Convention Party (NCP), including its leader and incumbent Vice-President, K. N. Arkaah, abandoned it. The EGLE party and the Democratic People's Party (DPP) remained in the Alliance, together with another faction aligned to the NCP. According to President Rawlings, those members of the NCP who joined the NDC affirmed that "the only logical expression of the ideals and vision of the founder of the nation Dr. Kwame Nkrumah are in the progressive policies of the NDC" (NDC, 1996). The NDC and its Progressive Alliance partners launched its national campaign at Wa on 21 September 1996. The date and venue were both significant. The former coincided with the birthday of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and Wa was chosen because of the popularity of the NDC in the region. A critical reading of the stage managed event would reveal an attempt at rehabilitation of Nkrumah's memory after years of attempts to destroy him<sup>44</sup> and, possibly, to woo voters inclined to voting for the Nkrumahist parties into the camp of the so-called Progressive Alliance.

In response to what some members and supporters described as the "strange arrangement," the Nkrumahist-leaning Peoples Convention Party (PCP) and the NPP also joined forces to form the Great Alliance to contest the elections against the ruling NDC. The conjoining of traditional political rivals, that had been opposed rather than separate, appeared to indicate that political ideologies matter less in Ghanaian politics. In the NDC manifesto for 1996, the party showed, sector by sector, what the governing party had done to fulfill the pledges it made four years earlier. In furtherance of job creation, the NDC promised intensified efforts to attract investments to rehabilitate existing enterprises. Education was a concern to both parties.

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<sup>44</sup> The subtle exploitation of Nkrumahism began on 1 July 1992, on the occasion of the thirty-second anniversary of Ghana's Republic Day. Nkrumah's body was reinterred in a mausoleum on the site of the Old Polo grounds. The University of Science and Technology was re-named the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. For details see June Milne (1999).

According to the NPP, the country's education system had "failed millions" of Ghanaians. It identified the lack of teacher motivation as part of the problem, and promised to motivate and incentivize teachers with improved pay packages, and to retrain teachers to better prepare them to deliver quality education (NPP, 1996).

The parties differed on their health policies. While they agreed that an affordable health system was needed, they disagreed on the modalities for bringing it about. The NPP manifesto promised to abolish the unpopular "cash and carry" system, and replace it with an efficient National Health Insurance system. On the issue of economic development, Rawlings' response to the opposition NPP was very clear:

I want our friends in the opposition parties to listen well. I said we build the *roads*, so that they can have more comfortable rides around the country to tell the people we have done nothing for this nation. We will continue to extend *electricity* because they too need it when they visit their home towns. We will continue to provide good *drinking water* for our people in the rural areas so that as the opposition activists go round to lie to the people, they will have good drinking water to quench their thirst (NDC, 1996 emphasis mine).


The various alliances formed to campaign before the elections were not without problems. The articulation of policies became problematic. Campaigning was consequently of the spectators type, where party activists mounted platforms and hurled invectives at their opponents. There was little engagement between the NDC and NPP alliances on issues that mattered to the rural electorate.




FIGURE 6.1: AN NPP CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENT

## THE COUNT DOWN TO FREEDOM


Who are the Politicians that are being called  
"Liars and Thieves?"




Prof. Adu Boahen



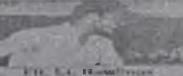
Mr. Fosu



Mr. Ofori



Dr. Ofori



H. H. Baidoo

Internationally renowned Professor of History  
Courageous in defiance of Dictatorship.

True career officer, General Head of UN  
peacekeeping forces, who believes in the  
ballot box.

Successful Businessman

Diplomat, Democratically elected President  
With clean record and no need for indemnity


Politician Head of State, 1979, 1981 - 1992  
Total years in power & Politics = 11 years  
With need for Indemnity

Who is the Politician? So who is the Liar and Thief?  
**DO NOT WASTE YOUR VOTE**  
**VOTE FOR THE ONLY MAN WHO CAN DEFEAT THIS POLITICIAN**


**VOTE FOR PROF. ADU BOAHEN**

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## TIME FOR CHANGE



In the Beginning




11 Years Later

**I have stayed 11 years now, I must go**  
Why couldn't this man say these words to free **China**?  
**WELL, POWER CORRUPTS, AND ABSOLUTE POWER  
CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY**

**HELP THIS MAN!**  
**VOTE HIM OUT!!**

**VOTE FEARLESSLY FOR NPP !!!**



Source: *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 2-8 November, 1992: 8 and 19-25 October, 1992: 11.



FIGURE 6.2: AN NDC PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ADVERT: RAWLINGS AS THE NEW NKURUMAH

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS  
(NDC)**

"Africa needs a new type of man  
who submerges self in service  
to his Nation and Mankind"

■ Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

**This is the Man  
J. J. Rawlings**

**Vote — J. J. Rawlings**  
**Vote — Akatamanso**  
**Vote — Sustainable  
Development**

Source: *Ghanaian Times*, 3 November, 1992: 5.

TABLE 6.1  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS, 1992-2008

Year	Constituency	Party	Candidates	Registered voters	Votes obtained	Percent
1992	Wa Central	NDC	J. J. Rawlings	55,056	16,461	56.0
		NPP	A. A. Boahen		3,741	23.1
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	J. J. Rawlings	49,098	12,346	63.3
		NPP	A. A. Boahen		6,897	16.7
1996	Wa Central	NDC	J. J. Rawlings	57,427	30,377	70.1
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		8,098	18.7
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	J. J. Rawlings	52,012	26,599	81.5
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		2,199	6.7
2000	Wa Central	NDC	J. E. Mills	65,983	21,852	56.5
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		11,056	28.6
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	J. E. Mills	55,278	22,207	73.7
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		3,109	10.3
2004	Wa Central	NDC	J. E. Mills	50,537	22,686	55.3
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		14,307	34.9
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	J. E. Mills	40,375	20,162	65.0
		NPP	J. A. Kufuor		9,474	31.0
2008	Wa Central	NDC	J. E. Mills	62,896	25,214	57.0
		NPP	Nana A. Addo		17,343	39.0
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	J. E. Mills	48,036	15,830	53.0
		NPP	Nana A. Addo		12,948	42.0

Source: Research & Monitoring Department, Electoral Commission (Accra), 2009.

## 6.7 “Better Ghana” versus “Agenda for Positive Change”

By 2000 the health of the national economy under the management of the NDC administration was precarious. Prices of consumer goods skyrocketed as a result of increases in the cost of petroleum products (see Daddieh, 2011; ISSER, 2001). The price increases thus became a very controversial campaign issue, with the NPP promising to reduce prices at the pump (Agyeman-Duah, 2006). The issues of change and continuity once more dominated the campaign of 2000. The NDC, however, had painted itself into a corner with its “Change in Continuity” slogan. It not only confused the electorate; it made it difficult for party activists to sell the party message against the much more popular NPP slogan of “Positive Change.”

The 2000 election campaign was an open-seat poll because President Rawlings was constitutionally barred from seeking a third term (see Daddieh, 2011). The NDC selected Vice-President Professor John Evans Atta Mills to succeed Rawlings. This new Head of State would

signify “change,” according to NDC activists, but there would be the “continuity” of an NDC administration. The NPP, on the other hand, correctly sensed the mood of the country, and wanted nothing short of a “Positive Change”:

*A change that will be reflected in a lowering of the intolerably high cost of living and a reduction in the depressingly high rate of unemployment, a change that will bring jobs and a living wage for the majority of our people and which will instill in the government and people of this nation respect for the rule of law, for fundamental human rights and freedoms, for the independence of the judiciary, and a belief in the ingenuity, hard work and enterprise of the individual Ghanaian (NPP, 2000: vi emphasis mine).*

In other words, a sound defeat of the NDC at the polls would signify “Positive Change.” The NPP’s manifesto was titled “Agenda for Positive Change,” against the NDC’s “Ghana: Spreading the Benefits of Development.” The three main campaign issues at the national level were the economy, change and development and improving democratic governance (see Ayee, 2002). Similarly, the three most important development issues in the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies were the development of physical infrastructure, including the provision of drinking water and feeder roads, and educational facilities (Interview, Nandom, 20 November, 2008). The NDC projected itself as the party of ordinary men and women, and one interested in bringing about balanced and equitable development across the nation. It claimed it had consolidated the gains, and now wanted to “spread the benefits,” of its eight-year rule.

While both parties claimed to have divergent policies, their manifestos for the election were fundamentally similar, with little to differentiate them in terms of policy goals. Both proposed to continue pursuing a free market capitalist programme, but with varying degrees of differences as to how it should be implemented. Important issues such as good governance, health, education, transport, unemployment, and agriculture were identified by both parties as areas of the national economy that needed greater attention (see NDC, 2000; NPP, 2000). On

health, for instance, the parties proposed replacing the “cash and carry” system with a national health insurance scheme. They differed with regard to women’s empowerment and media freedom. While the NDC promised to empower marginalized groups, especially women, by making it easy for them to access credit facilities and other job opportunities, the NPP proposed the creation of a “Ministry of Women and Children Affairs” to address their marginalization in society. On media freedom, the NPP proposed to repeal the criminal libel law, which, it argued, was inconsistent with the spirit of the 1992 Constitution. The NDC was silent on the libel law.

In spite of the similarities of their programmatic agendas, the parties also differed over how their campaign messages were packaged and delivered. The activists in both camps engaged in negative campaigning to discredit programmes outlined in the various manifestos. Negative campaigning is a common feature of Ghanaian elections. According to Buchanan (1996: 95; see also Ansolabehere *et al.*, 1995; 1994), candidates and their campaign strategists believe that negative campaigning serves them “most often by reducing turnout among the opponent’s supporters.”

Negative campaigns that incorporate such methods as personality attacks, intimidating co-partisans, and discrediting the opponent’s programmes are common on the NDC and NPP platforms. The tool usually employed in northern Ghana is to simply remind the voters of historic Asante prejudices against people of northern descent. The NDC characterizes the NPP as a vehicle for Asante hegemony, and as anti-northern, anti-Muslim and anti-migrant (Interview, Wa, 20 September, 2008). The Wa zongo and the towns of Lawra and Nandom are homes to large migrant populations of Mossi, Wangara, and Hausa from neighbouring West African countries. Activists of the NDC were able to generate considerable fear among migrants that votes for the NPP would seriously jeopardize their status, and lead to them being dispossessed of

their properties (Interview, Wa, 20 September, 2008). They were quick to recall the history of the Busia administration compulsory expulsion of West African migrants from Ghana in the 1970s. Consequently, it was said that the NPP would implement its own version of the “Aliens Compliance Order.”<sup>45</sup> Memories of this incident remain strong in zongo communities across the country.

The NPP tried very hard to cultivate a positive image, and distanced itself from the record of its predecessor. The NDC negative campaigns of fear were countered on two levels. First, the NPP touted its northern “origins” by referring to the role northern giants, such as B. K. Adam, were playing in the party. The party also promoted the formation of the *Nasara* clubs in zongo communities. Second, the party recruited Alhaji Aliu Mahama, a northern Muslim with Nigerian ancestry, as its vice-presidential candidate to convince zongo communities throughout the country that the NDC’s characterization of the NPP as anti-northern was inaccurate. In return, the NPP interpreted the NDC’s campaign slogan of “continuity” as the continuation of its “culture of violence, intimidation and of exclusion.”

## **6.8 “A Better Ghana” versus “Positive Change Chapter Two”**

The 2004 election was remarkable in several respects: both parties proposed workable policies for the country’s complex economic and social problems – issues informed some of the campaign debates; for the first time, the NDC activists would campaign without the vast state resources that they used in the past when the party ruled the country -- its campaign rallies would now be dwarfed by the NPP’s; incumbency with its vast networks of support would be exploited by the NPP activists for electoral advantage; both parties’ presidential candidates had held high

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<sup>45</sup>. The compliance order implemented by the Busia regime mainly affected zongo communities as 200,000 ‘aliens’ left Ghana in the two months following the order (for details see Owusu, 1972).



office, and thus had records to defend; and the campaigns, to a large extent, focused on issues of public interest. Furthermore, both parties had Muslim Vice-Presidential candidates from the Northern region. President Kufuor was seconded by Vice-President Alhaji Aliu Mahama. The NDC's Professor Mills was partnered by Alhaji Mohamed Mumuni (see Daddieh, 2011).

The opposition NDC was the first party to launch its campaign manifesto. The NDC sought to make symbolic capital out of the unveiling of the party's manifesto in the stronghold of the NPP. On 31 July 2004, "A Better Ghana," a 104-page manifesto, was launched at the historic Prempeh Assembly Hall in Kumasi. In contrast, the NPP's manifesto was a mere 44-page document, titled "Positive Change Chapter Two," and with the sub-title "SO FAR SO GOOD." It was launched at the heart of Ga mashie, at the forecourt of the James Town Mantse's Palace in Accra. The 2004 campaign was the first election to be contested since the NDC revamped the party structures and adopted a formal guiding philosophy. The NDC's adoption of social democracy as the party's "guiding ideology and philosophy" would figure largely in the manifesto. Meanwhile, the NPP dedicated the first page of the party's manifesto to Dr. J. B. Danquah's conceptualization of liberalism, which underpins the NPP's ideology of "property-owning democracy" (see Chapter 5). It appears that both parties wanted their programmes and policies to be informed by their ideological leanings. Indeed, Volkens and Klingemann (2002) note that a political party without an ideology will have no basis for existence, and could not perform any task in the political realm, since ideologies in this context represent the "core identities of parties and provide blueprints of alternative solutions for societal problems."

In his official response to the manifesto launch, the NDC presidential candidate signalled a paradigm shift in Ghanaian politics: from spectator type to issues-based politics. The NDC proposed to base its election campaign on issues of public interest. Candidate Mills was very

bold in his defence of the party's "Better Ghana" agenda. To convince voters of a reformed NDC, Mills, who had refused an invitation four years earlier to debate then candidate J. A. Kufuor of the NPP, declared an open invitation to the ruling NPP.

My team and I are ready to debate, issue by issue, what needs to be done, so that the electorate can make well-informed choices. I personally hope for the opportunity to debate with President Kufuor face to face, in front of national television (NDC, 2004).

The NDC, as, according to its manifesto, a social democratic party, would work towards the attainment of "A Better Ghana." By "A Better Ghana," the NDC was "promising qualitative change." The operationalization of the concept of "qualitative change" in the "A Better Ghana" framework was explained in the following terms:

"A Better Ghana" means more jobs -- jobs. "A Better Ghana" means existing businesses will survive, with new and bigger ones springing up. "A Better Ghana" means reducing the cost of living. "A Better Ghana" means investing more in the education of Ghanaians. "A Better Ghana" means improved infrastructure. "A Better Ghana" means reduced crime rate. "A Better Ghana" means an efficient health care delivery system. "A Better Ghana" means greater emphasis on issues concerning women, children and the physically challenged. "A Better Ghana" means using our rich resources responsibly and effectively to benefit all our people now and in the future (NDC, 2004).

By contrast, the ruling NPP simply asked Ghanaians to renew the party's mandate to enable it to lead the nation into what it called "THE NEXT PHASE OF POSITIVE CHANGE." It claimed the party's programme was designed to "achieve a radical acceleration of Ghana's capacity to create wealth and thereby to supply the means for a much higher standard of welfare for everybody." The creation of a "superior human resource" base was at the heart of the new strategy of national development the NPP was offering to the Ghanaian electorate (NPP, 2004: 6-9).



Nevertheless, the NPP's economic policies did not differ much from the NDC's. The NDC proposed a lean and cost-effective governmental machinery; private sector-led growth buttressed by public-private sector partnerships; a sustainable rural agricultural policy; and quality education and health care, among other things (NDC, 2004: xv-xvi). The NPP, on the other hand, consistent with their ideological leanings, was equally committed to promoting the small domestic capitalist class to lead the way in raising the nation's production levels. On education and health, the party's focus was to enhance access at all levels and raise quality. It promised to construct a new regional hospital in Wa (NPP, 2004: 33). Some of the pledges in both manifestos, however, seemed unachievable. The NDC claimed a "social democratic" stance, but some of its promises seem unattainable, like returning to the issue of state farms to solve unemployment among the youth. The NPP's promise to establish 10 modern public employment centres in the regional capitals to help connect job seekers with job offerings was equally unrealistic as long as the systemic causes of unemployment remained unaddressed.

The NDC's choice of campaign slogan -- *Sankofa* (Twi, meaning "Go back and fetch it!") -- gave the NPP a chance to remind the electorate of the human rights abuses that characterized the eight years of NDC rule, and the earlier 11 years of military rule (see Daddieh, 2011). The NPP assured the electorates that "when you reject their invitation to *sankofa*, be assured that the NPP government has put in place full security arrangements to sustain your democratic choice" (NPP, 2004). More successfully, NDC activists attacked President Kufuor for failing to tackle corruption (see Daddieh, 2011). The activists of both parties debated issues of national interest. The NPP campaigned on its management of the macro-economy, the stabilization of the *cedi*, and increased cocoa prizes and GDP growth rates.

## 6.9 “A Better Ghana” versus “Moving Ghana Forward”

For the fifth consecutive time since Ghana embraced constitutionalism, elections to the 230-member Parliament and the presidency passed off peacefully in December 2008. The elections marked a watershed in the nation’s history. President Kufuor had served out his two constitutionally permitted terms of office, and the NPP had selected Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as its presidential candidate. The 2008 election was similar to that of 2000, in that both were open-seat polls, and a run-off decided the outcome of the polls in favour of the opposition NDC. Also relevant were the parallels between the administrations of the parties. Each had served two full terms. Still in the running for the presidency for the third time was the NDC’s Professor John Evans Atta Mills. Popular interest and participation were high. The campaigns went beyond the negative to address some important policy and governance issues of public interest; the national economy, health, education, and rural development dominated. Specific regional interests (e.g., northern backwardness) were promised attention in both campaign manifestos. For the first time, the presidential and vice-presidential nominees of the main parties debated in public.<sup>46</sup>

The NDC campaign manifesto, a brightly coloured, 97-page, document launched with much fanfare, was titled “A Better Ghana. Investing in People, Jobs and the Economy.” Four themes<sup>47</sup> drove its message home. The NDC claimed the themes captured reflected the complaints that were persistent in the country. On governance, for instance, the NDC promised to rationalize government ministries, and form a government based on “expertise and

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<sup>46</sup> The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) organized two Presidential Debates on 29 October 2008 (Southern Sector), hosted in Accra, and 14 November 2008 (Northern Sector), hosted at Tamale. For the first time, the presidential debates included a debate between the vice-presidential running-mates of the four leading parties in Cape Coast on 20 November 2008.

<sup>47</sup>. (i) Governance, (ii) economy, (iii) investing in people and (iv) infrastructure.

competence – not party or family interests.” It further promised to respect the Constitution by ensuring equality among all Ghanaians: economic and social development, agriculture and industrial programs must benefit all regions of Ghana (NDC, 2008: 3).

On the economic front, the NDC promised to turn the Ghanaian state into an “activist and enabling state” (p. 47). An NDC activists’ state would promote economic growth and development by facilitating and pushing the process of growth, “without regard to politics or family.” The party courted the business community in order to shed its anti-business image. It promised to work with business associations, and to support informal and formal private businesses (see NDC, 2008). The issues of poverty and regional inequalities in development were captured in the manifesto. The NDC “proposed the establishment of the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) to confront the historical and contemporary development gap between north and south Ghana” (pp. 76-77). Among the areas targeted was the ecological savannah belt, including northern Brong-Ahafo and Volta Regions.

In parallel, the NPP campaign promises were contained in a 64-page manifesto titled “Moving Ghana Forward: Building A Modern Ghana.” The cover page graphically displayed the party’s achievements of the past eight years. It featured school children enjoying a meal; a METRO bus; a doctor examining a patient; a newly built stadium; an oil rig; the Bui Dam under construction; and new roads and water for a community (see NPP, 2008). The NPP re-emphasized its ideological leanings by claiming that it was committed to building an open society where respect for human rights, the rule of law, and free markets would reign supreme. It promised to strengthen Ghana’s democracy by promoting good governance and deepening political decentralization at the grassroots. “Development of the northern sector of the country will be a central point to our decentralization programme.” Consequently, the NPP’s manifesto

proposed the Northern Development Authority as a tool for the transformation of the Savannah zone (p. 20).

The NPP's manifesto also promised to modernize Ghanaian society. Its policies in education, health, housing infrastructure, science and technology, promoting gender equality, and caring for the aged and persons with disabilities were intended to modernize Ghana. On health care, it promised to continue with free medical service for minors and maternity cases under the NHIS, and increase private sector participation in health delivery by giving tax incentives for private institutions to train health professionals, among other things (NPP, 2008: 53). The NPP's major commitments included providing free education from kindergarten to senior secondary school, and extending the school feeding programme to every primary school.

During field work in the months of March, October, and November of 2008, the researcher observed six campaign rallies in the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies, and also joined the campaign teams of some parliamentary aspirants when they rallied for their parties. Additionally, the researcher monitored panelists' discussions on community based radio stations throughout the period. The analyses in this section are based on speeches that were given during the campaign rallies. The communication strategy adopted at the grassroots by both parties to reach out to voters was a two-pronged attack. Platform activists, fluent in both English and the local dialects, were deployed to local FM stations for the morning newspapers reviews segment. The party activists ran commentaries on the major issues appearing in the dailies by giving a political slant to issues such as corruption. A second group of activists, armed with mobile phones, provided the backup for the radio panellists; they would phone in while the discussions were in progress to "clarify the party's position." In the Wa-Central constituency,

*Radio Progress*<sup>48</sup> and *Radio Upper West*<sup>49</sup> hosted shows in which activists outlined their party's programmes and defended key government policies. *Radio FREED*<sup>50</sup> in Nandom provided a platform for party activists to discuss local development issues.

During the weeks of their campaign, the NDC and NPP candidates held rallies in town and village squares throughout the two constituencies. Parliamentary candidates were accompanied by scores of foot-soldiers and platform activists, and they engaged in door-to-door campaigning and made whistle stops at village market centres. The candidates of both parties boasted of the important developments achieved in their constituencies during their tenure, such as the construction of new schools, clinics, markets, and kilometres of paved roads. The rallies were social events or small scale jamborees, as they offered free food and drink (*pito* and *akpeteshie*) and other party paraphernalia to the many attendees. The Lawra-Nandom constituency witnessed one of its most keenly contested elections since the Fourth Republic began in 1992. The seat was an NDC stronghold until it was captured by the NPP's candidate. The NPP victory in the parliamentary election was not unexpected, but the margin of victory confounded many. Ambrose Dery, a native of Nandom Kokolgu, contested the 2004 elections on the NPP's ticket, but lost to the NDC's Benjamin Kunbuor (see Table 6.2).

The researcher's observations of the NDC and NPP campaign rallies in the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies revealed that campaign manifestos did not exist at the grassroots level. Different promises were made at every town and village. Candidates promised drinking water and electricity throughout, however. At an NDC campaign rally in Nandom, a

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<sup>48</sup>. It is owned by the Catholic Diocese, and in 1997 it became the first community based radio station to be established in the region.

<sup>49</sup>. Radio Upper West is a subsidiary of the state owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).

<sup>50</sup>. The Foundation for Rural Education, Empowerment and Development (FREED), a United Kingdom-based NGO, established the community radio station in Nandom town to help educate the people on a wide range of issues.

tarred road (the Babile-Lawra-Nandom road) and a school building were promised to the people at Eremon. To many attendees, the platform promises were abstract things or collective goods. An important strategy in winning votes for both the NDC and NPP was distribution of material benefits to potential voters during the campaigns. These material benefits ranged from party branded T-shirts to money and the paying of school fees and medical bills. Presidential rallies were most popular, and attracted many activists and supporters. As an NPP party chairman noted: “Big campaign rallies show the strength of the party and its representation on TV sent out strong signals to our competitors that the party has a large following in the region”.

TABLE 6.2  
PARLIAMENTARY RESULTS, 1992-2008

Year	Constituency	Party	Candidate	Registered voters	Votes obtained	Percent
1992	Wa Central	NDC	M.A. Seidu	55,056	15,413	89.8
		NPP	boycotted		—	—
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	K. Kunfah	50,098	43,321	76.2
		NPP	boycotted		—	—
1996	Wa Central	NDC	M.A. Seidu	57,427	25,718	59.1
		NPP	C. Eledi		11,657	26.8
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	A. Bondong	52,012	22,441	67.8
		NPP	N. Guomil		2,192	6.6
2000	Wa Central	NDC	M.A. Seidu	65,983	20,648	53.1
		NPP	C. Eledi		13,005	33.4
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	B. Kumbuor	55,278	22,347	74.4
		NPP	S. Engmen		3,487	11.6
2004	Wa Central	NDC	R. Pelpuo	50,537	21,272	51.3
		NPP	A. Kpegla		7,249	17.5
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	B. Kunbuor	40,375	19,306	62.0
		NPP	A. Dery		10,549	33.9
2008	Wa Central	NDC	R. Pelpuo	62,896	25,214	58.4
		NPP	C. Eledi		17,343	40.2
	Lawra-Nandom	NDC	B. Kunbuor	48,036	15,016	46.0
		NPP	A. Dery		16,556	50.8

Source: Research & Monitoring Department, Electoral Commission (Accra, 2009).



On 7 March 2008 the NDC presidential campaign team paid a two-day visit to the Upper West Region. The party faithful welcomed the presidential candidate and his team at the outskirts of the Wa Township. A long convoy of foot-soldiers, activists, and sympathizers led the campaign team to the township. The campaign team was led through the principal streets of the town to the Upper West regional office of the NDC. The regional party chairman welcomed the campaign team, and appealed to the supporters to vote for the NDC in the elections. He said:

The NPP government has neglected us. How many schools, clinics, and roads have they constructed in their eight years in power? They tell us their party's ideology is property-owning democracy, how many of you own properties? Can you pay your children's school fees? Can you buy kerosene? Can you pay your electricity bills? In Wa here, it is only people connected with the NPP who have accumulated properties. Is this the party that should be retained? The crowds chanted no, no, no, vote for the NDC and we shall confine this rampaging elephant to the Mole Game Reserve for good (Field notes, 7 March 2008).

Addressing followers of the NDC, Professor Mills appealed to them to close their ranks and work hard for the party to be returned to the Castle. The presidential nominee told his audience that an NDC government would share the country's resources equally for the benefit of all citizens of the land. Professor Mills pledged to reactivate all abandoned projects, including factories in the northern part of the country, to create jobs for the youth. The crowds chanted NDC slogans and dispersed afterwards. Many activists interviewed afterwards claimed the massive turnout was to demonstrate to the NPP that Wa Central was still loyal to the opposition NDC. "Can't you smell victory in the air? The big welcome party here is to tell our opponents that Wa is truly an NDC stronghold and our loyalty cannot be doubted, and that defeat awaits them in December," an activist commented (Field notes, 7 March, 2008).

The coming of the NPP presidential campaign team to Wa Township on 18 November 2008 was similar to the NDC's. Perhaps the difference came in the size of the convoy of SUVs



(Sport Utility Vehicles) that accompanied Nana Akufo-Addo to Wa. The rally in Wa was invariably preceded by courtesy calls on the traditional leaders and other regional powerbrokers. Led by the regional party executives, visits were made to the powerbrokers in the spiritual section of the town, Limanyiri where the Wala Liman (see Chapter 3) and the elders at Nayiri reside. Concurrently, the Tendamba Park was being prepared for the next day's big rally. The stage was decorated with NPP colours. On the morning of the rally, busloads of supporters wearing new NPP T-shirts arrived from all the surrounding villages. The presidential candidate recounted the leading roles played in the past by prominent politicians from the region in the affairs of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition (see Chapter 3), and urged the people to "come back home and take your rightful position in the affairs of the NPP because this is where you belong."

## **6.10 Conclusion**

Parliamentary elections campaigns are folded into presidential campaigns. The election manifestos of both parties are written by committees dominated by technocrats and experts, with little input from grassroots activists. Even though campaign manifestos of the parties appear to vary in many aspects, on closer inspection there is little that differentiates the parties on promised policies outlined in the various manifestos. The influences of the American campaign style have required the NDC and NPP to adapt their organizational dynamics, as well as their communication strategies. Political campaign activities are in the domain of foot-soldiers and platform activists. The NDC and NPP dedicate many resources to presidential campaigning, because they hoped that the support of the public, or segments of it, would help them win and promote their political causes (cf. IDEA, 2003).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

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#### 7.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with how the political parties conduct their internal party affairs. A political party cannot give to the larger society what it does not have within its own internal posture (cf. Afari-Gyan, 2010). Internal democracy must be displayed in intra-party leadership recruitment, in the nomination of candidates for Parliament and in the decision-making process. What are the organizational structures of the parties? What procedures do they follow in appointing their executive leadership? How is party leadership accountability towards the grassroots members defined?

The chapter argues that the parties have moderately democratized their internal affairs. Party activities at the grassroots level, however, are characterized by a high degree of informalization, and are also highly personalized. The degree of organization of political parties is defined as “the extent of regularized procedures for mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of party supporters in executing the party’s strategy and tactics” (Janda, 1970: 106). The empirical account of the internal democracy of the NDC and the NPP is analysed in four sections. The first section focuses on the internal legal regulation of the parties. It also considers the organs of the parties at the constituency level. Next, the chapter analyses the functions of the parties, focusing on the decision-making process, leadership, and membership recruitment. The final section concludes the chapter.

## **7.2 Internal Legal Regulation of Political Parties**

Political parties are enjoined to internalize democracy within their organizations. In this context, Article 55 (5) of the 1992 Constitution states, “the internal organization of a political party shall conform to democratic principles and its actions and purposes shall not contravene or be inconsistent with this Constitution or any other law” (p. 47). Similarly, Section 9 (a) of the Political Parties Act (Act 574) of 2000 mandates the Electoral Commission (EC) not to register a political party unless “the internal organization of the party conforms with democratic principles and its actions and purposes are not contrary to or inconsistent with the Constitution.” Political parties mostly do not conform to legal codes of internal democracy, whether at the level of electoral regulations or at that of their own internal party rules. Party primaries, for example, are characterized by a lack of internal democratic conduct.

## **7.3 Party Membership: Formal and Informal**

The NDC and NPP are organized along the “mass-based party” model: each of them combines several thousand formal members with informal supporters (Ninsin, 2006). Reliable and updated membership records of the NDC and NPP are not easily accessible. The NDC’s Constitution (2002) does not define who a party member is, but on party membership, Article 8 (1) states that membership of the party shall be open to every citizen of Ghana, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, place of birth, social or economic status. On the requirements for membership, NDC’s Article 8 (2) states that a citizen of Ghana may be registered as a member of the party provided that he or she has attained the age of 18 years, accepts the constitution, and is accepted for membership by a branch of the party, among other requirements. Formally, an individual wishing to join the NDC would have to apply to a branch by filling out a membership

form, and the branch executive decides at a meeting either to accept or turn down the application. The successful applicant will then be issued with a membership card by the branch Constituency Executive Committee. Members are supposed to pay subscriptions and annual dues subject to review by the National Congress. A member may resign his or her membership by writing formally to notify the branch of which he or she is a member (NDC, 2002: 4).

Similarly, the NPP's Constitution does not define who a party member is. Article 3 of the NPP constitution (2009: 5) contains membership specifications, which are as follows: membership of the party shall be open to all citizens of voting age without regard to gender, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, or status, and any citizen may join the party by declaration, in a prescribed form, of his or her intention to become a member and to abide by this constitution.

The parties differ greatly when it comes to membership categories, however. The NDC does not categorize its membership; upon registration every member is issued with a constituency membership card. Depending on the member's socio-economic status, though, one can "buy into" any of the following membership categories: Platinum, Gold, Diamond and Silver.<sup>51</sup> By contrast, formally there are three membership categories in the NPP: "Founding Members," "Patrons," and "Members" (NPP, 2009: 5-6). Party loyalty and monetary considerations are significant in all three categories of membership. "Founding Members are those persons who took active part in bringing the party into being and paid the prescribed fee." "Patrons are members who undertake to contribute to the national fund of the party for the support of the party's organization such extra levies as the party may impose from time to time." The levies paid by the "Founding Members" and "Patrons" are in addition to whatever

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<sup>51</sup> When the NDC won political power in 2008, the various types of membership cards sold at: Platinum (GH¢500.00), Gold (GH¢200.00), Silver (GH¢100.00), and Bronze (GH¢50.00), and the ordinary constituency card (GH¢2.00).

membership dues they may pay in the branch in which they are registered as members. The third category of membership is simply known as “Members,” and these are persons who join the party, and are neither Founding Members nor Patrons. They are the rank and file members at the grassroots (NPP, 2009: 5-6).

The common thread in all three categories of NPP membership is the equal entitlement to rights and duties. Political rights go with duties and, in this context, both parties expect their members to protect and promote the good name of their party. Party members are also expected to participate fully in the activities of the party, and to contribute to the functioning of local organs.

In practice, however, many activists were issued membership cards in the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies without going through the formal process. Across both parties, parliamentary aspirants and DCEs who engaged foot-soldiers in their electioneering campaigns secured membership cards to enable them to serve as polling station agents (Interview, Wa, 16 March, 2009). Again, members of the 31 DWM were also issued NDC membership cards when the organization affiliated itself with the NDC. In this context, many citizens became party members by default. For the Wala and Dagara, formal membership of a political party is an act of political faith and loyalty. Membership of the NDC and NPP does not involve strict obligations (NPP, 2009; NDC 2002). Those members who demonstrate commitment and contribute to the sustenance of the party, however, expect the party to reward them. It would seem to be the expectation of most members of the NDC and NPP who fall into foot-soldiers category.

#### **7.4 Party Structures at the Constituency Level**

The constitutions of the NDC and NPP make provisions for how the parties are to be organized internally at the constituency level. Power is distributed among several overlapping offices. The internal structure of a political party consists of arrangement of offices according to well defined functions. The party structure is essential for the flow of information from the grassroots to the national level and vice versa. Article 11 of the NDC Constitution, on organizational structure of the party, states that “the party shall be organized at branch, ward (polling division), constituency, district (where appropriate), regional and national levels” (NDC, 2002: 7). The branch, according to the NDC’s constitution, is the basic unit of the party, and consists of members residing at a polling station. By contrast, Article 5 of the NPP’s constitution makes provision for the structure and organization of the party. Regarding organization, it states that “the party shall be based on Constituency, Regional, Overseas and National Organizations” (NPP, 2009: 13). The basic unit of organization in the case of the NPP is the Polling Station area.

The most powerful organ of both parties at the constituency level is the Constituency Executive Committee (hereafter CEC). In this respect, the CEC is responsible for keeping a close watch on party activities in the constituency through the branch or polling station Executive Committees. It supervises the work of the branch and polling station committees (NDC, Article 17 (5), 11-12). Furthermore, it implements the decisions reached by the Constituency Conference, and decisions from other, higher, organs. While NDC CEC members hold office for a term of two years, and are eligible for re-election, the NPP’s members of the CEC hold office for four years, and are also eligible for re-election, but for a second term only. Differences exist in the membership composition of the two CECs. The NPP CEC consists of 17 members, whereas the NDC CEC is made up of 29 members. Besides the NDC’s CEC chairman, secretary,



and other officers whose roles are specified, it makes room for a further vaguely defined “eight other members” and “five other co-opted members chosen by the CEC in consultation with the Regional Executive Committee.” Whereas the CEC of the NPP has a chairperson and two vice-chairpersons who are elected by the Constituency Conference, the NDC has a chairman and one vice-chairman. Furthermore, the CECs of the NDC and NPP are both staffed by a secretary, an organizer, a youth organizer, and a women organizer as members. All these offices have deputies. Again, whereas the NDC has a propaganda secretary and a deputy, the NPP constitution makes room for a constituency communication officer. All parties have constituency treasurers; the NDC has an assistant treasurer, whereas the NPP treasurer has no assistant. Again, each party makes room for its DCEs and MPs who hail from the constituency to sit on the CEC (NPP, 2009: NDC, 2002).

The NDC and NPP have their offices vertically arranged. The constituency office is the lowest, but within it are wards, branches or zones. Article 7(1) of the NPP constitution makes the constituency chairperson the executive head. The administrative work of the constituency, however, is handled by the secretary. The NDC organizes the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies into branches. Each branch has its executives, and they are answerable to the Constituency Executives. Even though Article 15 makes room for a ward committee, there is no such structure in either constituency. In contrast, the NPP divide each constituency into Polling Station Areas. Each NDC branch is headed by a Chairman, who is assisted by a Secretary, an Organizer, a Treasurer and five other members. The NPP’s Polling Station Areas are headed by a Chairman, who is assisted by a Secretary, Organizer, Women Organizer, and Treasurer (NPP, 2009: NDC, 2002).



#### 7.4.1 Party Branches and Informal Politics

Party structures are organized informally to suit the socio-cultural norms of the members. The informalization of party politics is more pronounced in the Wa Central constituency. It is divided into sections, which are based on historical identities as well as religious allegiances (see Wilks, 1989). The NDC and NPP informally organized their branch and polling station offices on the basis of the sectional clubs.<sup>52</sup> These clubs are scattered across the constituency. A sample is illustrated in Figures 7.3 and 7.4 below. The “Taliban Group”<sup>53</sup> is the foremost of the NPP clubs in Wa, and it is located at Kabanye. Its aggressive activism has earned it notoriety in the constituency.<sup>54</sup> The “Young Elephants” is another NPP club in the Limamyiri and Jejeidayiri sections. Another is “Abata Mwmini Ebu,” located at Nakori. The NDC cadres also have clubs, such as the “Ban beu Youth Club,” at Nayiri. Nakori is home to the “Mwmini Binbu” club, and the “Sikiri numbo” club, located at Tagrayiri, is along the road leading to the central Orthodox mosque at Nayiri. Others include the NDC Working Committee of the Youth, at Wa-Zongo, and in some sheds in the Central Lorry Park. These clubs are not offices, but ordinary all-purpose buildings and sheds. For example, the “Taliban Group” and the “Ban beu” club use sheds in the forecourt of a mosque. Other places are motorbike and bicycle repair shops, tailoring shops, and warehouses. The buildings and sheds are branded in party colours and with the images of presidential and Parliamentary candidates (see Figures 7.3 and 7.4). They served both political

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<sup>52</sup> The study refers to sectional clubs rather than youth clubs because some of the clubs adopted the name of the section of the Wa Township where they are situated. In addition, the membership is not strictly limited to youth, as elderly men are also members.

<sup>53</sup> It has no links to the Afghanistan group; the name is based on its Islamic origins.

<sup>54</sup> In 2001 members of the group attacked and destroyed party properties (Interview with Mohammed, Wa, 20 January 2010).

and social functions. Leadership at the club level is informal. In both parties the club leader is either the owner of the premises or an influential community leader.

Paradoxically, the clubs are more active than the formal party constituency offices. They are active throughout the year, and engage in non-electoral activities, including meetings, recruitment drives, and other self-help community related activities. Party activists maintain a presence in the vicinity of these structures, and discuss information coming from the national level. It is at these clubs that budding MPs, Assembly members, MCEs and DCEs learn the rudiments of political organization and, eventually, plot their political careers. Furthermore, business deals are negotiated at the club levels by the many political entrepreneurs (Author's observation, Wa-Nakori, 14 March, 2010). It is here, too, that "party coups" are plotted. The sectional clubs further served as "show rooms" where the *nouveaux riche*<sup>55</sup> who owe their success in their various professions to their affiliation with political parties go to display their rewards and distribute money to the less privileged activists. At the club level gossip is equally rife as to which leader has accumulated properties since coming into office, and about how, generally, political patronage is distributed. Even though the clubs are informal structures, the constituencies, as well as the regional and national leaders, recognize their vital role on their various platforms. This is tacitly acknowledged by local and visiting politicians; courtesies are extended to some of the clubs, especially on festive occasions (Author's observation, Wa-Nakori, 14 March, 2010).

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<sup>55</sup>. An expression used by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999: 43) and Paul Nugent (1996: 204). It refers to people whose wealth has been acquired over a matter of years, rather than decades; in the present context it also means they have not cut themselves off from their original community.

The sectional clubs have become a permanent feature on the political landscape in Wa Central, and both parties' leaders have attested to their mobilizing power. Nevertheless, some among the official leadership in the constituency have objected to their activities. Leading politicians have used members of some clubs to either settle petty quarrels or intimidate opponents at party primaries. Furthermore, the clubs are breeding grounds for factions. The author observed that they were aligned with the 17 candidates in the NPP presidential primary of 2007. Some have also gained notoriety for shielding miscreants, and for their occasional disruption of party activities in the constituency. The NPP "Taliban Group," which claimed to be the most loyal, is also the most feared. There is intra- and inter-party rivalry at Wa Central between these clubs. The strongest political sections are Nayiri, Limamyiri, Tagarayiri, and Gumbilimumi. The most eminent princely section is Nayiri, which extends into the Yijihi section. The *Wa Naa* (paramount Chief of the Wala) and *nabihi* (princes or children of the chief) are found in this politically important section. Limamyiri and Tagarayiri are two Orthodox Muslim sections, and the chief Imam resides in the former (see Wilks, 1989). The Sokpariyiri section is where the *Tengdaaba* (landowners) reside. These sections are heavily courted by all politicians because of their symbolic significance. The support of any one section could improve one's electoral fortunes.

The epicentre of political activities is the central market lorry station, where the loyalty of members of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) to the NDC is very strong. A unique feature of club politics is that the clubs are male-dominated. Almost all regulars at these clubs are either unemployed or self-employed male Wala Muslims.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> . Wala are predominantly Muslim.

FIGURE 7.3: A PRIVATE STRUCTURES USED BY THE PARTIES IN NAKORI (WA CENTRAL)

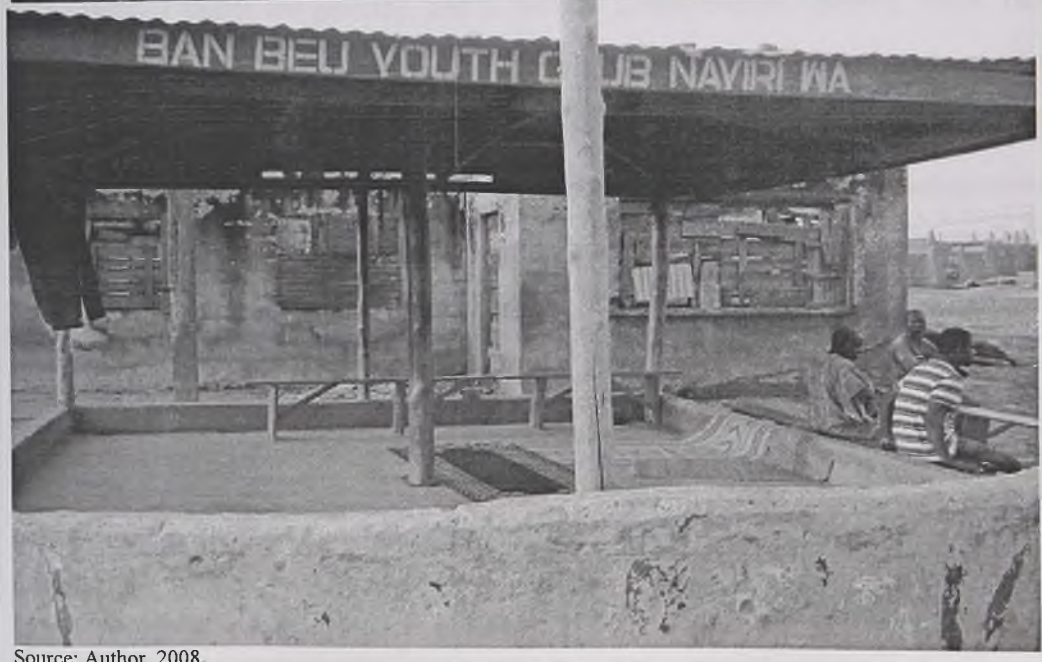


Source: Author, 2008.

- 1: "Mwini Binbu" (Waale meaning "God appoints leaders"), building used by NDC in Nakori in Wa Central
- 2: "Abata Mwini Ebu" (Waale meaning "It is not beyond God"), building used by NPP in Nakori in Wa Central



FIGURE 7.4: PRIVATE STRUCTURES USED BY THE PARTIES IN WA TOWN



Source: Author, 2008

- 1: "*Sikiri Numbo*" (Waale meaning "love"), building used by the NDC in the Tagrayiri section, Wa Central
- 2: "*Ban Beu*" (Waale meaning "we know tomorrow"), shed used by the NDC in the Nayiri section of Wa Central

The Dagara inhabitants within the constituency tend to discuss politics at the many *pito*<sup>57</sup> and other drinking spots in the town. Many Dagara respondents see sectional club politics as a “Wala thing.” “We [Dagara] don’t do our politics openly like the Wala man does, but that does not mean that we do not support candidates and their parties. We are equally actively involved in party politics, and we discuss what is good for our regional development” (Interview, Wa, 23 January, 2010). Even though both parties have a women’s organizer as part of their leadership structure, women do not participate in the activities of these sectional clubs, probably as a consequence of the Islamic culture of the majority of the Wala community. Nevertheless, some women’s groups engage in petty trading at the central market, and support one party or the other.

## **7.5 Functions of the Parties at the Grassroots**

Political parties are generally said to perform certain distinct functions, which may include serving as channels of communication for the populace from the grassroots to the national level and vice versa. Additionally, parties ensure interest aggregation on the basis of the core values of members (Wright, 1992: 29). The NDC and NPP perform similar functions at the grassroots: grooming leaders, recruitment, winning elections, and forming governments at the local level.<sup>58</sup>

### *7.5.1 Decision-making and Policy-making at the Grassroots*

Political parties are composed of diverse interest groups. Diversity can be important in party composition; it can also, however, be the basis of party factionalism when opinions on a

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<sup>57</sup> A popular local beer made from guinea corn or sorghum.

<sup>58</sup> Formally, the local government system operates on the basis of non-partisanship; nonetheless, most assembly members are affiliated with political parties.

policy goal become polarized. In its operational meaning, a political party is a consensus building organization where decisions are arrived at by the generality of the members agreeing on an issue. Nevertheless, decision-making at the grassroots is informal and arbitrary, and party structures are run like fiefdoms by the constituency executives. The informalization of the decision-making process is characterized by a few party leaders dominating party activities. The parties in Wa Central tend to recruit as party chairmen wealthy Wala men who have not enjoyed formal education. The influences of such people have ensured that the NDC and the NPP can expect a sizable following in both constituencies.

Incumbency allowed the NDC's chairman to maintain a firm grip on the party for the first eight years of the Fourth Republic. Its organs at the regional office consequently functioned well, to the great detriment of constituency offices. The NPP, on the other hand, was disadvantaged. Even though the popular perception of the NPP is that of an elitist party, for the greater part of the period we are studying its chairmen in both constituencies were men with little formal education. Nevertheless, the party's regional office succeeded in maintaining an organizational base, even though it suffered from an extreme lack of resources, and meetings were irregular. In the absence of regular polling station meetings, it was mainly through individual networks that the NPP functioned.

The low degree of formalization of politics in both parties is evident in the absence of offices in the rural areas of both constituencies. Lack of resources and the presence of certain cultural norms (e.g., respect for the elderly) have combined to hamper effective decision-making in the leadership of both parties. First, the wealthy party chairmen who use their resources to fund party work in the constituencies feel a sense of entitlement. They frequently claim that without their financial support the parties' work would have been hampered. As a result of their



perceived “investment” in their parties, they tended to dominate the decision-making process, and exerted their influence forcefully. In the 2004 NPP Wa Central Parliamentary primary, for example, the national executives were accused of having endorsed the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Clement Eledi, as the party’s Parliamentary candidate. The regional leadership rejected the endorsement, and insisted on a primary in which Eledi lost to the Chairman’s protégé. Second, certain cultural norms make it difficult to challenge the decision of an elder in the community. Since 1992, for example, the regional chairmanship of the NDC has remained with Malik Issahaque,<sup>59</sup> and nobody challenges his legitimacy. Decision-making is, therefore, limited to a select few, and it is entirely dominated by men. Political education is also absent in the decision-making process. Party activists do not discuss or debate the appropriateness of party policies and programmes for the region. The chairmen consult a few local “experts,” and submit whatever information such experts think is best for the region to the national organs. Dalton and Wattenberg (2002) identify policy-making as one of the crucial functions of political parties. There is, nonetheless, not only a paucity of hard data on policy formation in the NDC and NPP at the national level; there also appears to be little involvement of grassroots structures in the formulation of party policies.

### 7.5.2 Party Leadership: Recruitment and Grooming

Most political parties usually nominate or elect members to occupy various party offices. How inclusive are the parties when it comes to deciding who their leaders will be? The first

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<sup>59</sup> In November 2009 Mathew Sung-Aabo declared his intention of challenging the incumbent Regional Chairman, Malik Issahaque, who had been in office for the previous 17 years. Sung-Aabo’s opposition was seen as a step to changing the status quo. He was persuaded to withdraw his candidacy, and Issahaque ran unopposed in December 2009. See also ‘Uneasy Calm in Upper West NDC’ *Daily Graphic*, 16 December 2009.

political activists from the Upper West Region were either chiefs or blood relations of the ruling houses (see Chapter 3). This early association of party politics with chieftaincy had, and still has, repercussions for politics in both constituencies. Bin Salih (2001: 412) has asserted that “politics for Wala as a human institution has been very controversial probably due to the distrust among the ethnic and religious groupings that inhabit Wa.” Leadership recruitment, as well as political activism in the Wa Central, is based on sectional and ethnic politics: princes (*nabihi*) versus landowners (*Tendaana*), Ahmadiyya Muslims versus Orthodox Muslims, and Wala versus Dagara. Consequently, political loyalties can easily be linked to the various sections of Wa Township (see Wilks, 1989; Fikry, 1969).

In the past Wala Ahmadi Muslims participated in political activities not only as their civic responsibility, but also to ensure the survival of their faith in the Wala state (Salih, 2001). Consistent with their desire to protect their religion and business interest, the Ahmadis formed the core of the leadership of the NDC and, to a large extent, that of the NPP in the Wa Central. Indeed, the first Eagle Club<sup>60</sup> at Wa was inaugurated at the Jejeidayiri (or Dzudzedayiri) section in the house of Yahaya Adam (Interview, Wa, 23 October, 2008). Prominent Ahmadi NDC activists and patrons include Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu, Alhaji Isshaque Mwengu, Seidu Braimah,<sup>61</sup> Khalid Mahmud, Madam Ajara Foroko, and Malik Issahaque, who funded the party activities in the region. Such is the dominance of the Ahmadis in the leadership of the NDC that they have been branded an Ahmadi party in Wa. The main Ahmadiyya sections, namely, Dondoli, Limamyiri Vuori, and Limampalayiri, continue to support the NDC.

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<sup>60</sup> . Socio-political clubs were formed by some organs of the PNDC prior to the official lifting of the ban on political activities. These clubs, which numbered 59 in Wa, became the nucleus of the NDC in Wa.

<sup>61</sup> . He later became the Wa District coordinator of the Peoples Defence Committee (PDC), a District Secretary and, later, District Chief Executive of Wa. Currently he is the Goli-*Naa*, chief of Goli.

Strategically, many Ahmadis also dominate the leadership of the NPP in Wa Central. Alhaji Abudulai Isshaque and Sahanun Mogtari became Regional Chairman and General Secretary respectively. Consequently, the Orthodox Muslim sections, such as Nayiri, Limamyiri, Tagarayiri, Fongo and Sokpariyiri, tend to split their loyalty between the NDC and NPP. The division remains significant in party primaries and other political appointments in the constituency. A case in point was the appointment of PNDC/NDC veteran, Khalid Mahmud.<sup>62</sup> After the 1996 elections the party Regional Executives proposed him for an appointment as the Upper West Regional Minister. When the proposal reached Accra, however, the Castle had already settled on Amidu Sulemana. The Regional Executives successfully lobbied for the Deputy Minister's position for Mahmud, and he went through Parliamentary vetting only to be informed at the scheduled swearing-in ceremony at the Castle that it had been re-scheduled (Interview, Wa-Nayiri, 24 September, 2008). The incumbent Deputy Minister, Bede Ziedeng, who is from Eremon (Lawra District), was retained, and Khalid Mahmud quietly went back to his teaching position. It was alleged that two groups sabotaged Mahmud's political ambition. The first protest that emanated from Lawra had ethnic undertones. The Dagara community of the Lawra-Nandom constituency remonstrated against the replacement of their son with a Wala man. The second opposition to Mahmud's appointment came from within the Wala Orthodox community. They alleged that there were "too many Ahmadis occupying all the important political positions in the constituency" (Interviews, Lawra, 23 October, 2008; Wa, 26 October, 2008).

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<sup>62</sup>. After the 31 December 1981 "revolution," while still at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), he had joined the movement, becoming Wa District coordinator of the Students and Youth Task Force. Later he became the first Regional Secretary of the movement and, in 1990, was sent to study at the Moscow Institute of Social Science. In 1992, when the PNDC metamorphosed into the NDC, Mahmud joined others in forming the UCC's branch, and was elected President in 1994.

Prior to the re-demarcation, Wa Central covered what is now Wa West, parts of Nadowli West, and parts of Wa East constituencies; and these areas are occupied by the Dagaaba, a non-Muslim community. The 2004 re-demarcation brought the religious and ethnic dimensions of politics into sharp focus. M. A. Seidu, the incumbent MP, was persuaded to stand down; and in the NDC parliamentary primary an Orthodox Muslim, Abdul Rashid Pelpuo,<sup>63</sup> was chosen to replace him as candidate. Even though M. A. Seidu claimed he stepped aside because he was “tired of Parliamentary work and wanted to retire,” many respondents pointed to the religious and ethnic dynamics at play in view of the fact that the constituency has the largest number of Orthodox Muslims and Wala population. M. A. Seidu, who is from Dorimon, a predominantly Dagaaba community,<sup>64</sup> converted to the Ahmadiyya faith at age 17. Critically evaluated, the odds were against the Ahmadi community. They accepted the party position, but tried in vain to have a “friendly orthodox” selected as a candidate.<sup>65</sup>

In 2004 the NPP leadership successfully recruited one of the sons of a veteran of the UP tradition. Adama Kpegla, a son of B. K. Adama (see Chapter 3), was virtually unknown, but was thrust onto the political platform because, according to him, no Wala candidate of the NPP can “campaign successfully without mentioning the name of B. K. Adama.”<sup>66</sup> Moreover, he has links to the Wala skin (the elders at his hometown of Busa are kingmakers), and is an Orthodox

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<sup>63</sup>. He is deeply connected with Wala royalty. His grandfather is the famous Wala *Naa*, Pelpuo III (1920-1935), and his father is Kpongua Naa, Asani Pelpuo. For further details, see Wilks (1989): 161-174; Bin Saïh (2008): 212-13.

<sup>64</sup>. Notwithstanding his conversion to Islam and his membership in the Muslim community, he remains a “dagao,” a term that has several meanings; generally, it is applied to the ethnicity of the non-Muslim community. From the Muslim community perspective, a dagao is a non-believer or an unenlightened person.

<sup>65</sup>. From the perspective of the Wala Ahmadis, a “friendly orthodox” is a person who respects their faith, and will not antagonize them on religious grounds.

<sup>66</sup>. Personal Communication, Mohammed Adama Kpegla, Wa-GWCL Office, 12 April 2010.

Muslim and a Wala man. In the considered view of the NPP leaders, he fitted the bill perfectly, and could “match the NDC’s Pelpuo boot for boot.” By contrast, leadership recruitment in Lawra-Nandom appears to revolve around old school mates and clan members. The divisions that are observed in Wa Central are not, however, pronounced in this rural constituency. The traditional rivalry (see Lentz, 2006) between the two paramountcies of Lawra and Nandom is also evident in the leadership recruitment.

### *7.5.3 Nomination and Selection of Candidates for Parliament*

How do the political parties choose candidates to run on their tickets? Are they appointed, or popularly elected by the party delegates? Who is eligible to be nominated to run for a Parliamentary seat? My analysis of the candidate-selection process in the NDC and NPP will be based on the models outlined by Best and Cotta (2000) and Hazan and Rahat (2006), and guided by Bille’s (2001: 365) assertion that “the greater the role of the individual party member, the more democratically the parties conduct their internal affairs.”

Indeed, Rahat (2007: 157) singles out “candidate-selection methods” as crucial for a number of reasons. First, the composition of Parliament and the subsequent behaviour of members are determined by the method used to nominate them. Second, in representative democracies, candidate selection methods determine who plays the delegation role. Third, power distribution within a political party is also determined by the processes or method by which the executives assume office. Fourth, candidate selection methods are also important because of their links: hence the phrase “candidate-centered politics.” Rahat (2007) further categorized the candidate-selection methods into “highly institutionalized,” “formalized” and “informal.” Hazan

and Rahat (2006: 110) suggest that the variable for analysing any candidate selection method should ideally be a “single party in a particular country at a specific time.”

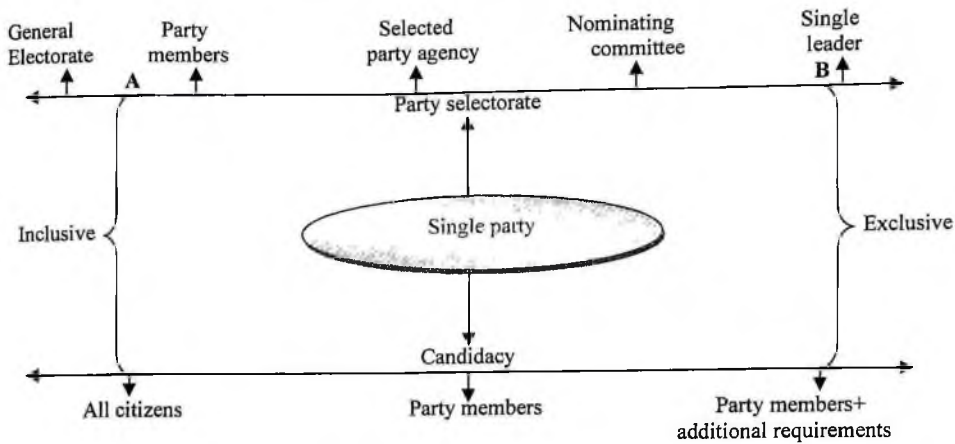
How are candidates for office in political organizations selected? The possible answers are presented in Figure 7.5 on a continuum that stretches from a highly exclusive pole to a highly inclusive one. Hazan and Rahat (2006) classified candidate-selection methods based on four criteria: “selectorate”; “candidacy”; “decentralization”; and “voting versus appointment.” The selectorate of any political party can vary from an individual to several thousands of members or the entire membership within a region or constituency. Its composition is classified based on the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness. The illustration in Figure 7.5 indicates the point (A) at which the selectorate is the most inclusive: that is, the entire electorate that has the right to vote in general elections. On the opposite side (point B), the most exclusive selectorate is a single party leader. A nominating committee of a small group of leaders is the next-most exclusive selectorate. It may be a power bloc, or a faction within the party, or certain influential notables (Hazan and Rahat, 2006). In the middle of the continuum, the authors indicate the selection to be done by the members of “selected party agencies,” and selection by delegates specially chosen to pick nominees for legislative seats. Next on the continuum are party members. Under the U.S. primary system,<sup>67</sup> for example, party members select nominees. “Members” usually means all those who have registered under the party’s name, and have paid a modest fee to the party (Rahat, 2007; Hazan and Rahat, 2006).

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<sup>67</sup> The application of the concept in Ghana greatly differs from the popular U.S. version. See, among many other studies, Alan Ware (2002); Peter F. Galderisi et al., (2001).



FIGURE 7.5 PARTY SELECTORATE (INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE CONTINUUM)



Source: modified from Hazan and Rahat, 2006: 110–112.

According to Rahat (2007: 161), some party rules, such as “a minimum term of membership,” may apply before members are allowed to cast their ballot in a party primary. The most inclusive candidate selection method, however, is the one that allows the electorate to vote. In short, the most suitable type of party primary is one where the votes of all party members alone decide the composition and rank of the candidates (Rahat, 2007: 161). The less desirable type only enfranchises some “party members to select the party candidates from a shortlist determined either by party agencies or by a nominating committee.” “Candidacy” refers to the individual party member who can present himself or herself as the nominee of a particular party. At point (A), the inclusive pole, every voter is eligible to stand as a party’s candidate. On the exclusive point (B), candidates must satisfy certain requirements (e.g., members in good standing, monetary deposits, and familiarity with party policies) before their candidacy can be considered (Hazan and Rahat, 2006: 110–112).



Related to the issue of inclusiveness in the candidate selection process is the equally significant question of the degree of “centralization” or “decentralization” of the selectorate. Who selects candidates at the national level? Are these processes dispersed among regional or local branches of the party? Rahat points out that some parties have centralized candidate selection at the national level, thus making the process exclusive. The U.S. system represents full decentralization. For example, “when Democratic Party primary voters in the state of Connecticut rejected long-serving senator Joseph Lieberman as their nominee in 2006, the national Democratic Party had no choice but to accept this verdict and embrace the primary winner as its nominee” (Rahat, 2007: 162).

Parties are conceived of as “organized political groups whose aim is to place and retain representatives in legislative and executive positions” (Janda, 1970: 83). In this context, the primary election is the most important election at the constituency level; the primary contest stimulates political activism, and allows activists the opportunity to select the individual they want to represent the party at the grassroots. The holding of primaries thus enhances internal party democracy. Who is eligible to stand for nomination for Parliament in the NDC and NPP? Candidates seeking nomination to represent the NDC and NPP on their tickets formally go through a ratification process (see Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012). The ratification process involves the legal requirements that aspirants must satisfy before they can pursue candidacies for the office of MP. Generally, the parties have been legally free to choose their candidates as they please,<sup>68</sup> though their adopted procedures have been shaped by what Czudnowski (1975: 220) labelled the “institutional infrastructure of politics and government.” A key factor in this

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<sup>68</sup> The few that do have such legislation include the United States, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, and Finland. See Gideon Rahat (2007).

infrastructure is the system of electoral laws. In Ghana, for example, the first-past-the-post system is used in the election of the national legislature, and one candidate is selected to stand as a party's candidate in a single-member electoral district. Further, the electoral laws shape party selection rules by defining who is eligible. Electoral laws that oblige parties to guarantee a minimal share of their candidate slots to women or other minority groups<sup>69</sup> do not, however, currently apply in Ghana.

Prior to 2002 the NDC's procedure for nominating Parliamentary candidates was said to be "undemocratic" (Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012: 205). The party's selection method could best be located near the exclusive end of the selectorate continuum. Indeed, the pioneers of NDC Parliamentary membership enjoyed an unobstructed path to the first Parliament of the Fourth Republic. They faced neither any real internal contest nor opposition from the other parties' candidates.<sup>70</sup> The NDC's procedure of selecting candidates for Parliament, and also for the presidency, was based on "consensus" (NDC, 2002: 43). The party leaders and activists claimed that selection by consensus was consistent with "our traditional norms of selecting leaders." Nonetheless, the National Executive Committee (NEC) determined which incumbent MPs would face primaries, and which constituencies would have nominees imposed by the party leaders (see Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012; Ichino and Nathan, 2010). The consensus method by which the NDC candidates were selected influenced their behaviour as parliamentarians. Because the MPs were selected by small party elite (NEC), their behaviour demonstrated high levels of party cohesion and discipline. They were more answerable to the party than to constituents, and this

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<sup>69</sup>. Argentina was the first country to take this leap in 1991, when it passed a law mandating that each sex had to receive at least 30 per cent of the positions on each party's candidate lists at both the national and local levels. See Mala Htun (2004a, 2004b), and Mala Htun and Mark Jones (2002).

<sup>70</sup> After the disputed presidential elections in November 1992, the losing parties boycotted the Parliamentary elections. For more details see NPP (1993).

contributed to party stability in both constituencies in the period between 1992 and 1995 (cf. Ichino and Nathan, 2010).

In 1996 a selection process that was more inclusive and that was based on constituency congresses was used by the NDC. This initial attempt at democratizing candidate selection threatened party unity, and it was quickly abandoned (Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012: 211). In the Wa Central constituency, for example, it was alleged that the incumbent MP and the party chairman bought off potential rivals with promises to give them contracts (Interview, Wa, 16 April, 2010). In the Lawra-Nandom constituency, the incumbent MP was persuaded not to seek re-nomination by party leaders with a job offer in a state organization (Interview, Lawra, 23 April, 2010). Nominees for Parliament were acclaimed at the grassroots, and endorsed by the NEC with press releases, one of which read: “In line with the provisions of the constitution of the National Democratic Congress, the National Executive Committee (NEC) has reviewed and endorsed the nominations of the following candidates for election Parliament” [*sic*] (for a sample, see *Daily Graphic*, 3 September, 1996: 4).

Primaries have become common in recent years (Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012: 211; Ichino and Nathan, 2010). The NDC, which did not select its Parliamentary candidates by the primary system, was inevitably confronted with the decision of whether or not to democratize the selection process. Constitutional amendments in 2002 saw the NDC adopting a formal selection procedure that mirrored that of the NPP. Article 42 (1-10) of the NDC constitution regulates the selection of candidates for Parliament and the holding of Parliamentary primaries. The NDC’s constitution sets out the following guidelines. A party member is deemed qualified to contest primaries for any Parliamentary seat if he or she: is not disqualified under national electoral laws; is an active member of the party at the constituency level for the two years immediately

preceding the date of filing nomination; and is not disqualified from party membership as explained in Article 8 of the NDC's constitution. Only after ratification by the NEC can Parliamentary primaries be organized in a constituency, and when the primary election is held, any candidate who wins a simple majority of votes cast is duly elected as the party's Parliamentary candidate (NDC, 2002: 38-39).

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is the party organ mandated to send word to all Constituency Executive Committees (CECs) of the time to open nominations for the conduct of Parliamentary primaries. Nonetheless, the CEC activities shall not hinder the national programmes of the party. A constituency conference constituted as an Electoral College considers all Parliamentary contenders, and nominates the candidate by secret ballot (NDC, 2002: 38-9). Few members of the NDC at the constituency level, however, have voting rights. The size of the selectorate is significant in the candidate selection methods in the Hazan and Rahat model. The formal rules of the NDC enfranchise less than 120 people to vote at constituency conferences. The selectorate consists of the following members: two delegates from each branch, the MP or the party Parliamentary candidate from the constituency; members of the NEC from the constituency; members of the Regional Executive Committee from the constituency; and members of the CEC. In practice, about 100 selectors each are eligible to vote in Wa-Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies.

By contrast, the NPP's constitution contains a formal procedure. Parliamentary candidates are elected at constituency primaries by party members. The NPP held primary elections in Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies consistently from 1992 onwards (Daddieh and Bob-Milliar, 2012: 212). Article 11(1-6) of the NPP constitution governs the selection of Parliamentary candidates. On the issue of eligibility, the party's constitution states that no

member shall be nominated or endorsed as the official candidate in any Parliamentary election unless the member has been selected in accordance with the provisions of Article (11). An advertisement for nominations shall be caused to be published throughout the constituencies 18 months before the date of the national elections. Parliamentary candidates must also be elected one year before the date scheduled for the general elections. In the conduct of the elections, however, the NEC must determine separate dates for constituencies with sitting MPs (NPP, 2009: 52-4).

The constitution of the NPP sets out the following conditions for Parliamentary aspirants: “[A]ny member of the party may submit an application for nomination as the party’s parliamentary candidate”; and “no member shall be entitled to apply for nomination as the party’s parliamentary candidate for any constituency unless he or she has been a known and active member for at least two years and has paid the prescribed fees for a parliamentary candidate by the deadline set by the NEC,” among other requirements (see NPP, 2009). A party member seeking nomination shall satisfy the conditions set out by the organizational structures as stipulated in Article 11 (4). Parliamentary candidates are nominated by an Electoral College made up of the polling station executives in each constituency, totaling about 100 members.<sup>71</sup> The existence of formal procedures did not, however, prevent manipulation by party leaders and other interested agencies. The quality of the participation, in which candidates and other powerful actors manipulate the process, undermines internal democracy. The conduct of the 2004 NPP primary election in Wa Central was not unproblematic (see Chapter 1).

The conditions set out in both parties’ constitutions governing Parliamentary candidate nomination are fairly universal. It is important, however, to identify a number of differences.

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<sup>71</sup>. The NPP made amendments to its constitution in 2009 to increase the electorate.

First, the NDC's CEC leadership determines the timing of Parliamentary primaries. Second, the CEC has no fixed dates for the holding of primaries. By contrast, the NPP notifies its membership by running advertisements 18 months before the general elections. Second, all Parliamentary primaries must be finished one month ahead of the national elections. The common thread running through both parties is the duration of membership. To be considered a Parliamentary aspirant in the NDC and NPP, a candidate must have been a registered member for at least two years before the filling nominations.

The NDC and NPP follow candidate selection procedures that can be defined as moderately inclusive, sometimes more so at the local than at the national level. The parties' selection system is also decentralized. The local level dominates candidate selection in the single-member constituency. The candidate selection in both parties is highly decentralized and, at the same time, highly exclusive, because of the size of the selectorate. One cannot get more decentralized, after all, than by having a set of individual local strongmen each handpick the candidate or candidates in their constituency. Decentralization often enhances a certain kind of representation, and makes it more difficult to ensure other kinds. For example, it is harder to ensure minimal representation for women.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

Academics and social commentators have bemoaned the lack of internal democracy in the two main parties. Formal rules about the organizational structures of the parties in the constituencies are quite explicit. A combination of factors, including the lack of resources, poor decision-making, and ineffective offices, make it, however, difficult for the parties to function optimally. Yet they perform several functions at the grassroots, including recruiting political



leadership and seeking public offices, training political elites, and articulating and aggregating political interests. These statutory functions are carried out against great odds.

In the past, NDC members had no role (beyond rubber-stamping) in the selection process dominated by the party's NEC. Both the NDC and the NPP have adopted more inclusive candidate-selection methods in recent decades, giving the ranks of ordinary party members a significant role in candidate selection. Yet the NDC and NPP have also been careful to ensure that their respective NEC retains some control over the process. The general trend in candidate selection has been toward less centralism and greater inclusiveness. In the two constituencies examined, candidates for the single-member constituencies of Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom were selected by party members in a highly decentralized and inclusive system. Nevertheless, the candidate selection procedures of the NDC and NPP can be defined as moderately inclusive. The parties have heeded the call to internalize democracy in the conduct of their internal affairs.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 8.1 Introduction

This final chapter deals with the findings, final analysis, conclusions and implication of the study of political party activism in the NDC and NPP in the period between 1992 and 2008. As explained in Chapter 1, respondents for the study were selected from the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies. A survey questionnaire and interview guide was developed to investigate party activism, following the theoretical frameworks of Civic Voluntarism Model/Incentives systems/General-Incentive (see Verba, 1995; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002) as a guide to the areas of questioning. The questionnaire covered socio-demographic indicators, political participation and internal party democracy. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews with key informants to supplement the survey data.

The findings, along with the discussion, are presented in the first section, which covers broadly the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and political participation at the constituency level. The final part of this section deals with the internal functioning of the parties. The second section concludes the study. The third section of the chapter briefly reviews the central issues of the study that were stated at the outset, and relates them to the research findings at both the empirical and policy levels, and suggests areas needing further research.

## 8.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4 report the findings on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The relationship between gender and party activism is suggested in Table 8.1. As expected, the relationships between the genders are not particularly strong or dramatic. That is to say, as many other studies have found, men remain more likely to be active in political parties than women. The distribution of the respondents by gender is 71.2 per cent males and 28.8 per cent females. The variations in the two main parties are significant: about seven in 10 male respondents are NDC, while NPP male respondents represented 223 (72.9%). By contrast, the NDC female respondents were 104 (30.2%), while those of the NPP female respondents were 83 (27.1%). As the work of Norris (2002) shows, sex and age are commonly associated with conventional modes of participation.

Similarly, studies by Seyd and Whiteley (2004) and Cross and Young (2004), among others, demonstrate that political party membership is generally unrepresentative of the electorate in terms of gender mix, age, SES, and education. The distribution of the respondents by gender is consistent with the literature suggesting that women are more inclined to participate in “non-political organizations” (see Young and Everitt, 2004; Schlozman *et al.* 1994). In Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, politics remains a male domain. Women have long been underrepresented as party members and in party leadership (Abdulai and Crawford, 2010). Nevertheless, the NDC has more female members than the NPP does. In the specific case of the NDC, the 31 December Women Movement (31 DWM), established in the 1980s, was aligned with the NDC when civilian politics returned in 1992. The rebirth of party politics in 1992 saw the integration of all organs of the PNDC into the NDC structures. Gender differences are also observed in the pattern of employment. While male respondents were engaged in teaching, and

in the construction and transport business, female respondents were engaged in petty trading. Invariably it is the market queens who are active in party activities (see Clark, 2010).

TABLE 8.1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Parties		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Male	463	240	223	71.2
Female	187	104	83	28.8
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009

The distribution of the respondents by age is presented in Table 8.2. The age profile shows that there is a “slight curvilinear pattern” (see Seyd and Whiteley, 1992), with the highest membership portion going to the middle aged. It appears that party activism is not a youthful phenomenon, as the works of Gyampo (2008) and Asante (2006) show. Activism has no age barrier as long as there are incentives to attract citizens into political activity.

TABLE 8.2: AGES OF RESPONDENTS

Age Groups	Frequency	Parties		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
18-30	145	77	68	22.3
31-50	302	169	133	46.5
51-70	172	92	80	26.5
71-90	31	6	25	4.8
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009

Another important social characteristic that might have an influence on party activism is education. A large share of party activists -- nearly 24 per cent – are illiterate, and have never attended formal school (see Table 8.3). Nearly 11 per cent have attended Junior High School (JHS) (formerly Junior Secondary School), but most of them dropped out at different stages of their schooling. About 13.8 per cent attended senior secondary school, and earned Senior High School (SHS) (formerly senior secondary school) leavers’ certificates. While 17.7 per cent of respondents were recipients of Higher National Diplomas (HND), 15.4 per cent were university

graduates. Furthermore, in Table 8.3, 12.8 per cent of respondents acquired technical and practical skills in plumbing, electrical works, carpentry, and masonry; others qualified as auto mechanics. Some respondents were undergoing apprenticeship.

Several studies have found that more educated citizens are more likely to vote in elections and participate in campaigns (see Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Milbrath and Goel, 1977). For some scholars, the reason for this relationship is clear: education gives citizens the skills and resources to participate in politics. For instance, in the CVM (see Chapter 2), Verba and his colleagues (1995) show that education not only empowers citizens, but also gives them the tools necessary to engage with the political system. Citizens engage with it through various means, including voting and joining political parties (see Norris 2004; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Milbrath and Goel, 1977).

The findings from the present study, however, contradict that stance. For a majority of respondents, education played no major role in their decision to join and become active in the NDC or NPP. Inter-party variations are not dramatic. Interestingly, education is a sorting mechanism: educational attainment correlates with the category of party activists. The large army of uneducated and poorly educated fall into the foot-soldiers category of party activists. In theory, they lack the necessary skills to participate in party politics; yet in the empirical data, they dominate the membership of the NDC and NPP. This paradox can best be interpreted within the framework of selective incentives (see Chapter 2). Their lack of formal education can be a hindrance in their attempt to climb the hierarchical ladder of the party structures. Foot-soldier activism, however, is mainly aimed at getting selective and material incentives, rather than collective incentives (Bob-Milliar, 2012a). Respondents with a good education are in the minority, and they fall into the category of platform and patron activists. This finding is

consistent with the argument of Rosenstone and Hansen (1993: 136), which claims that education “imparts the knowledge and skills most essential to a citizen’s task ... Because of their schooling, the well-educated have the skills needed to understand the abstract subject of politics, to follow the political campaign, and to research and evaluate the issues and candidates.”

TABLE 8.3: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESPONDENTS

Educational levels	Frequency	Parties		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
None	152	82	70	23.4
Junior High School	71	40	31	10.9
Senior High School	90	60	30	13.8
Apprenticeship	83	43	40	12.8
Teacher’s certificate	39	20	19	6.0
Higher National Diploma	115	54	61	17.7
Degree and above	100	45	55	15.4
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009

The occupational status of the respondents is presented in Table 8.4. They were mostly involved in a variety of occupations in the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Gender differences are also observed in the pattern of employment. Male respondents are generally involved in labour intensive and high risk jobs, such as farming, loading of goods, and construction. The female respondents are mostly involved in petty trading and other low level civil service work. According to Table 8.4, a majority of respondents are unemployed. Respondents working in the agricultural sector represent 18.8 per cent. A further 10.0 per cent of respondents are involved in petty trading. Another 14.9 per cent of the respondents are involved in the auto industry as mechanics or apprentices. Respondents in the public service represented 14.3 per cent. These include nurses, teachers and civil servants. Finally, 16.0 per cent are employed in the private sector.

While the foot-soldier category of party activists were found to have overpopulated the ranks of the unemployed, and to be mainly in low paid occupations, the platform and patron

activists were in stable and good paying jobs, mainly in the private sector, but also in the public sector. It seems that while an unemployed person has time for partisan activities, people in certain job categories may not be free to go out and serve as foot-soldiers. In the CVM (Verba *et al.*, 1995: 272) political participation is explained in terms of individuals' "resources," "psychological engagement," and "recruitment" channels that expose them to political activity. In light of that discussion, I now apply the resources (i.e. time, money, and civic skills) component of the civic voluntarism model of party activism to the task of explaining variations in activism in the NDC and NPP. A large proportion of patron activists of both parties are businessmen (contractors), and a sizable number are former top civil servants and retired politicians. Resources can be evaluated in terms of money. Patron activists had resources that enabled them to participate in party politics. An NPP patron activist underscored the importance of money in party activism when he boasted:

But for my money, the NPP would have died a slow death in the Upper West Region. Opposition parties are not attractive to the ordinary Ghanaian, let alone a businessman of my caliber. I have supported the party since 1992: I paid the salaries of staff, paid for fuel for our vehicles, accommodation, and printed T-shirts for the party (Interview, Wa, 16 October, 2008).

Platform activists may have some gainful employment, but they do not necessarily have sufficient money. Nevertheless, the civil skills and time that many of them possessed enabled them to participate on the platforms of the NDC and NPP. Ghana is a country characterized by great inequalities, shown in the urban-rural and north-south dichotomy. Indeed, Aryeetey *et al.*, (2009) reported growing income inequality between rural and urban areas, and across Ghana's administrative regions.

TABLE 8.4: OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Frequency	Parties		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Unemployed	169	84	85	26.0
Agric (farmer/farm labourer)	122	66	56	18.8
Petty trade	65	35	30	10.0
Mechanic/fitting shop apprentice	97	50	47	14.9
Public service (teacher/nurse/civil service)	93	59	34	14.3
Private sector	104	50	54	16.0
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.

Despite the much touted claim of a decline in income poverty, gross inequalities persist, with poverty largely concentrated in the three northern regions and among food crop farmers and women (Aryeetey *et al.*, 2009). Poverty, and not money, time, or civil skills, is the reason for many foot-soldiers becoming active on the platforms of the NDC and NPP.

Furthermore, there is little correlation between education and employment. A significant number of graduates from the country's tertiary institutions are unemployed. Reliable data on unemployment, especially among young people, are not available. A Ghana Statistical Service survey (2003) reported that the proportions of the Ghanaian population categorized as unemployed and underemployed are approximately 5.4 per cent and 13.6 per cent, respectively. The formal sector employs about 16.6 per cent.<sup>72</sup> Thus, close to 80.4 per cent survive in the informal sector, or remain unemployed (Republic of Ghana, 2009). Unemployed youth are forced to find alternative livelihoods. Finding work through the formal structures is problematic. Thus, many people have come to rely on informal channels, especially political patronage. Indeed, the best way of finding employment – other than scraping a living in petty trade – is to rely on the networks of reciprocity available in the corridors of power (Bob-Milliar, 2012a). In

<sup>72</sup> The sectors of employment given by the Ghana Statistical Service are as follows: Public sector (5.9%); Semi-public/parastatals (2.9%); Private formal (7.8%); Private informal (80.4%), and others (3.0%).



such circumstances, people's productive time, which is their biggest resource (cf. Verba *et al.*, 1995), is best invested in cultivating the conditions that will sustain the informal networks they depend on.

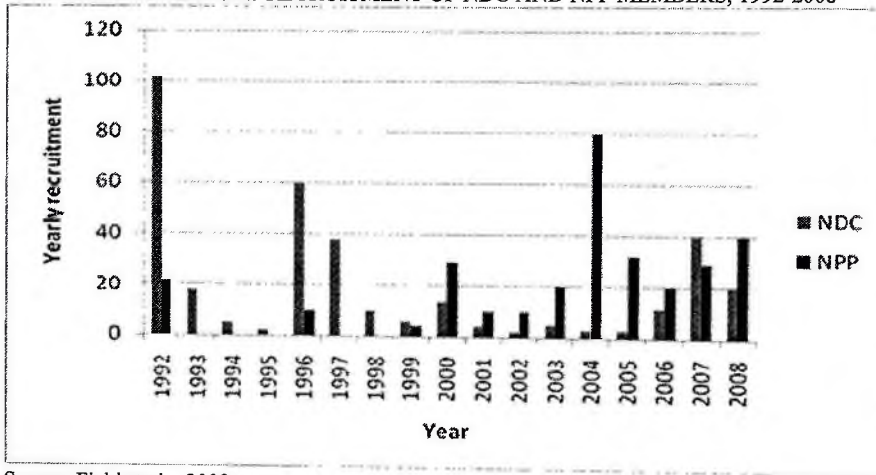
### **8.3 Political Participation at Grassroots Level**

In total 650 individuals self-identified with the two main parties. This finding is important in that it contradicts empirical studies (Norris, 2002) that claim that the highest proportion of activists are found in poorer democracies, while parties in affluent countries usually have fewer activists. The increase in membership, according to societal modernization theories, is because poor democracies such as Ghana are characterized by low levels of literacy and minimal access to newspapers and television. In cases of poor democracies, it said that election campaigns are predominantly traditional. Traditional forms of campaign, moreover, rely heavily on direct personal contact, such as mass rallies and door-to-door campaigning (Norris, 2002). Party leaders would, therefore, need hundreds of volunteers and activists to contact voters and mobilize support through personal and social networks (Norris, 2002). What societal modernization theorists ignore, however, is the fact that in poorer democracies, political parties are able to recruit thousands of activists to party platforms for a variety of other reasons, and not only because parties use traditional forms of campaigning.

Figure 8.1 illustrates party recruitment in the period between 1992 and 2008. In 1992, when the parties were legalized to operate, a total of 124 respondents were recruited to the two platforms. Inter-party variations were important; while the NDC registered 101 members, only 23 claimed they joined the NPP. Between 1993 and 1995, no respondent was recruited to join the NPP. By contrast, in that same period the NDC recruited members totalling 23. In 1996, 60

respondents joined the NDC, while 10 registered with the NPP. Another important finding shown in Figure 8.1 is that in the year 2000 the opposition NPP respondents outnumbered the NDC's. The power alternation in 2000 had implications for recruitment in the NPP. There was, however, consistent recruitment, and these facts indicate a sizable number of respondents joining both parties. In 2004, 80 respondents claimed they joined the incumbent NPP, while only three registered with the opposition NDC. Respondents joined both parties' in-between elections, but in 2008, 20 respondents joined the opposition NDC, and 40 registered with the incumbent NPP. As mass parties, each party claims hundreds, if not thousands, of members. Based on the votes obtained by the NDC's presidential and Parliamentary candidates in the period between 1992 and 2008 (see Chapter 6 Tables 6.1 and 6.2), one can conclude that the NDC has a larger "official" membership than the NPP.

FIGURE 8.1: ANNUAL RECRUITMENT OF NDC AND NPP MEMBERS, 1992-2008



Source: Field study, 2009.

From the findings as illustrated on Figure 8.1, the recruitment patterns of the NDC and NPP change over time. The patterns in the yearly recruitment of members over time confirm this interpretation. The electoral effectiveness of the NDC can be linked to the political infrastructure

its predecessor laid down in the 1980s (Nugent, 1996: 215, 247). The activities of para-party organizations, such as the 31 DWM and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, proved crucial, notably for political mobilization in rural areas (Oquaye, 2004: 297-355; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999: 418; Jeffries, 1998: 200).

Again, it appeared that when the NDC government was in power (1993-2000), collective as well as selective incentives were used as inducements. The policy goals of the NDC could explain the modest increase in its membership during the period it governed the country. Many citizens joined in the election year of 1996. While 60 persons signed up for the NDC membership in 1996, only 10 activists claimed they joined the NPP. Recruitment of members' between elections recorded low rates, as Figure 8.1 illustrates. For example, between 1993 and 1995 the opposition NPP registered no new members. After 2000, however, consistency appeared in recruitment between elections. Similarly, when the NPP was in office (2001-2008), its membership increased, but only marginally. When the NDC went into opposition, it no longer had the resources and necessary funding to sustain auxiliary organizations and interest groups. A decline in the activity of party offices was also manifest at the constituency levels (Author's observation, 2008). Incumbency and its patronage networks are one of the most powerful magnets that attract citizens to join political parties. In the context of mobilization theories (see Chapter 2), individuals joined the incumbent parties in response to the political opportunities in their constituencies. This is particularly true of NDC female members, who indicated they joined the 31 DWM because of the livelihood opportunities the movement offered for marginalized groups.

Juxtaposing these findings with the votes both parties obtained in presidential and parliamentary elections in the period between 1992 and 2008 is quite revealing. For example, the

NPP's presidential candidate polled the party's lowest votes of 3,741 in 1992, and recorded 17,343 votes in the 2008 election. The averages of both polls are far in excess of the people who claimed they joined the party in those years. Clearly, informal members and floating voters are far more numerous than those members who hold formal membership. On the part of the NPP, a long period (i.e., 1992-2000) of limited operation and recruitment, intimidation and harassment by NDC sympathizers, as well as lack of funding, produced a situation where in several villages the NPP did not have fully-fledged branches, but only individual adherents (Interview, Wa, 21 January, 2009).

The 1992 transition was supervised by the PNDC administration, which was itself an interested party in the re-democratization process. Some people were, consequently, deliberately disenfranchised because of the active involvement in the process of the PNDC and its organs (see Gyimah-Boadi, 1994; 1991). Two-thirds of NPP respondents claimed that they were reluctant to register formally with the party until 2001, when the party won power for the first time. The reason given by many NPP activists for their reluctance to hold formal membership with the party, particularly in the period between 1992 and 2000, was the constant harassment and victimization of party activists in the region. The costs of holding formal membership of the NPP far outweighed the benefits, particularly in this case, where the party was in opposition. The response of an NPP patron activist exemplified this period.

In the dark days, holding formal membership of the NPP was tantamount to denying oneself state largess. Individuals suspected of having links with the NPP were subjected to constant harassment at their places of work; if they worked in the public sector, they were either denied promotions or retired prematurely, and for the businessmen their tender applications for government projects were summarily dismissed. Family heads exorcized members who were NPP supporters, and landlords ejected tenants suspected of having links with the NPP (Interview, Wa, 26 September, 2008).

In other words, the costs of formal membership in the opposition NPP were considerably higher than the annual subscription (cf. Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). Rational choice models (see Chapter 2) argue that individuals “calculate the costs and benefits of any course of action before they undertake to do it” (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). It appeared that the costs of formal membership with the opposition NPP played a role in discouraging formal membership in the party in the period between 1992 and 2000. Nevertheless, the NPP is the party that has seen consistent growth since the 1992 elections.

All of the respondents shown in Table 8.5 have participated in at least one of the general elections organized since 1992. The election of 2004 recorded the lowest level of participation. Only a small percentage (14.6%) of respondents indicated that they exercised their franchise in that election. On the whole, however, the national voter turnout was highest in the 2004 election, registering a record 85.1 per cent. In the maiden elections of the Fourth Republic, 17.1 per cent of respondents voted for their party and candidates. The number of respondents voting in the 1996 election increased to 21.8 per cent, and the turnover election of 2000 registered the highest percentage, with 23.7 per cent of respondents exercising their franchise. Finally, the 2008 election witnessed only 22.8 per cent participation.

TABLE 8.5: PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

Election Years	Frequency	Valid Percent
1992	111	17.1
1996	142	21.8
2000	154	23.7
2004	95	14.6
2008	148	22.8
Total	650	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.

#### 8.4 Motivations for Party Activism

Few citizens in Ghana hold formal membership with political parties. Nonetheless, when the Afrobarometer Round 4 survey posed the question, “Do you feel close to any particular

political party?”, 61 per cent of Ghanaian adults answered “Yes” (Round 4 Afrobarometer survey in Ghana, 2009: 46). The question on the specific political or party membership reported the following: 19 per cent claimed NDC membership, while 36 per cent of respondents claimed they held valid NPP membership. The finding is significant when compared with some of the earlier survey results. In the Round 1 survey conducted in 1999, Afrobarometer reported that 38.3 per cent of respondents identified with the then ruling NDC, and 25.2 per cent with the opposition NPP. Clearly, respondents’ responses were influenced by the politics of the ruling party. Above all, though, these figures suggest something of a paradox (cf. Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). Every four years millions of citizens turn up at the polling stations to vote for either the NDC or the NPP to form a government. Why are Ghanaians reluctant to join a political party? Tables 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8 report the survey findings on the motivations of some citizens in joining the NDC and NPP, and the reasons they become active once they have joined.

Table 8.6 reveals responses to the question on ideological leanings as an incentive. In other words, what is the relationship between activism and the ideologies of the NDC and NPP? A majority of respondents (68.6%) indicated that their decision to join had nothing to do with the ideological leanings of the parties. Some 31.4 per cent, however, claimed ideology as their incentive. Members of the NPP are more likely than NDC members to cite the party’s ideology as an incentive.

TABLE 8.6: IDEOLOGY AS AN INCENTIVE

Variable	Party		Frequency	Valid Percent
	NDC	NPP		
Yes	24	180	204	31.4
No	320	126	446	68.6
Total	344	306	650	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.



The argument in support of activism and ideology has been developed in the academic literature, and formalized in the “law of curvilinear disparity” (Granik, 2005; Kitschelt, 1989; May, 1973). This postulation claims that “rank-and-file members of a political party are likely to be more radical than the executive leadership of the party” (see Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). Within the general incentive theoretical model, however, “ideological radicalism” should motivate members of the NDC and NPP to become more involved in the parties, because the “reward for their involvement is the ability to give expression to deeply held beliefs” (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992).

The ideological values that dominate the NDC concern members’ beliefs in egalitarianism and state intervention in the market place to protect the vulnerable. The ideological values of the NPP are principally pro-market. In the interviews, an additional open-ended question asked respondents for more details. The responses suggest that the educational attainment of respondents had a bearing on their understanding of ideology as a concept and, second, their application of that ideology to their party. “The NDC stands for equality, probity, accountability and social justice. Its philosophy is therefore egalitarian” (Interview, Wa, 10 October, 2008). “Ideologically, the NPP is a pro-market, pro-business party and believes in the right of every citizen to have the opportunity to own property. The individual is permitted to pursue private interests, and can accumulate as much profit as the individual wants” (Interview, Lawra, 19 September, 2008).

Consistent with this finding is the fact that the ideological content of most political parties in Ghana is generally low (Ninsin, 2006). The findings in Chapter 6 indicate that many programmes pledged in the manifestos of the political parties are inconsistent with their professed ideological persuasions. The NDC claims a social democratic stand, yet it was the



party that dismantled many of the country's public goods through privatization or diversification. Health services were paid for under the NDC, and public transport was left in the hands of the private sector. By contrast, although the NPP favours pro-market policies, it implemented some of the farthest reaching social welfare programmes that the country has experienced since the days of Nkrumah. It implemented the school feeding programmes and tried to improve public transport, and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme gave cash directly to the extremely poor. In this context, although relevant, political ideology is insignificant as an incentive for political party activism. A patron activist underscored this when he commented:

The behaviour of the political leadership makes ideology irrelevant in both parties. In July 2000 Alhaji Issaka Inusah, campaign manager of the NPP in the 1996 election and a close friend of President Kufuor, defected to the NDC, only to return to the NPP in less than six months. Another founding member of the NPP, Professor Alhassan Wayo-Seini, defected to the NDC, and won the Tamale Central parliamentary seat; he resigned, and went back to the NPP. On what basis are these party members defecting? Political ideologies are dysfunctional because the political parties are only interested in winning and forming governments, while the candidates are motivated by personal interests (Interview, 16 September, 2009).

Table 8.7 contains the other incentives that citizens of Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom craved when they signed up for membership in the NDC and NPP. Altruistic concerns were cited by nearly 47 per cent of respondents. A further 36 per cent claimed selective outcome incentives as their reasons for joining the parties. Another 17 per cent indicated social norms as a motivation for joining the parties.

A motive that is generally representative in both parties is altruism. A sizable number of respondents claimed they wanted to influence the policies of the government, and others wanted to fulfill their civic duties. The respondents see the two political parties as legal avenues to

“participate in shaping the destiny of the country.” Party politics appears to have permeated every facet of Ghanaian life. Hence, for some citizens, the best way to contribute to “key national debates on poverty and underdevelopment of the country” is to join, and operate within the framework of, political parties. In this context, the NDC and NPP are the vehicles for popular participation.

TABLE 8.7: ACTIVISTS STATED REASONS FOR JOINING A PARTY

Reason	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
<b>ALTRUISTIC CONCERNS</b>	306			47.1
To influence policies of government	210	107	103	
To fulfill my civic duty	60	30	30	
Concern for public issues	36	20	16	
<b>SELECTIVE INCENTIVES</b>	235			36.2
To obtain a local or government job	95	55	40	
To help my own political career	40	15	25	
To make business or professional contacts	100	55	45	
<b>SOCIAL NORMS</b>	109			16.7
Strong party loyalty	50	35	15	
Friendships and social contacts in politics.	40	18	22	
Through the influence of parents	19	09	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field study, 2009.

The findings in Table 8.7 indicate that a large share of respondents claimed altruistic concerns as their reason for joining the NDC and NPP. The programmatic agendas and implemented policies of the parties attracted citizens to join. Inter-party variations were important. Some NDC party members were first drawn into politics mainly by the party’s policy goals and programmes: the redistribution of wealth, educational reforms, infrastructural development, rural electrification and, generally, the pro-poor rural development strategy of the Rawlings-led NDC. An NDC respondent in Wa Central constituency succinctly captured this when he claimed:

Until the late 1980s the Upper West, even though territorially part of Ghana, was disparagingly referred to as “overseas,” and when people were travelling down south [Kumasi and Accra], they would say they were going to Ghana, because it was an impoverished village. It lacked motorable roads, had no hospitals, no electricity until the PNDC government came. The PNDC government under Rawlings gave us a region, Akosombo [electricity], roads, built schools.... We feel indebted to him, so when he formed the NDC, we just joined, because he will continue to provide development (Interview, Wa, 20 September, 2007).

The NPP activists, on the other hand, claimed policies, specific programmes, and projects pursued by the NPP government as the incentives for joining the party. The NPP government continued a market-oriented economic policy, and famously declared a golden age of business. Its pro-market policies included the Bank of Ghana Act (Act 612) of January 2002, which overhauled the banking industry. Universal banking opened up the financial sector, and brought banking services to the ordinary Ghanaian. The Central Bank (Bank of Ghana) issued operating licences to 11 new banks. Consequently, many citizens could access credit facilities for investment or consumption.

Another popular policy initiated by the NPP was the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2004, which aimed to provide an affordable health care delivery mechanism. It replaced the unpopular “cash and carry” system, in which recipients of health care in the country’s hospitals and clinics had to pay in advance. The NPP’s solution to the chronic unemployment situation in the country was the launch of a National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) in October 2006. Some foot-soldiers secured employment under the scheme.

Selective incentives motivated a sizable number of respondents to join the parties. These are motives “concerned with achieving certain private goals in the political process” (cf. Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). Some activists have understandably

focused on the desire for power and on office-seeking aims; the personal political ambitions of such activists is consistent with Joseph Schlesinger's oft-cited observation, "Ambition lies at the heart of politics. Politics thrives on the hope for preferment and the drive for office" (1966: 1). Many respondents claimed they harboured leadership ambitions in their constituencies. These included the ambition to become a District Chief Executive (DCE) or Regional Minister. Others wanted the support of the NDC and NPP in the district assembly elections. Party activism in this light is seen as an "investment that must be made if the individual has ambitions to develop a future career in politics" (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992).

Another type of motive indicated by a sizable number of respondents for joining the NDC and NPP is linked to social norms, or based on emotional and affective attachment (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). For respondents who were raised in families that had an active tradition of involvement in UP politics, it appears the norms of participation were very likely passed on, and had an influence on their decision to join the NPP. Similarly, there is evidence to suggest that partisan attachment was handed down from generation to generation (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). In some cases, the family head's party automatically becomes the party of the entire household. Indeed, a finding that confirmed social norms as a motive for joining the NPP is captured in this open-ended response:

We Wala say that a child cannot point his left finger at his father's house. Our fathers suffered persecution<sup>73</sup> for their political beliefs, but we were raised with those beliefs and values, so there is no way we can turn our back on the values our fathers handed to us (Interview, Wa, 13 March, 2008).

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<sup>73</sup>. Most Wala of the UP tradition claimed the CPP government harassed opponents of the regime in the 1950s and 1960s. B. K. Adama went into a self-imposed exile in Burkina Faso.

Additionally, loyalties at the community level have also been influential in attracting people to join the parties. This finding is best expressed by Chabal (2009) as “politics of belonging.” The authority of traditional rulers and community elders is revered in many rural areas. Ruling houses in Wa, Lawra, and Nandom have influenced the choice of party of their subjects. Responses such as, “The NPP is the party of us royals, and failure to join is tantamount to showing disrespect for the family’s name,” and “The NDC is the party of the Dagara man” are grounded in a sense of loyalty and affection for the parties. It confirms social norms as the motive for joining. Such a finding can only make sense, however, if it is interpreted within the appropriate cultural context, because the “cultural environment provides the very framework within which local politics take place” (Chabal and Daloz, 2006; 1999). The cultural approach in this context “explains the meaning of actions” that make sense to the respondents concerned (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Irrespective of the programmes of the parties, some respondents upheld loyalty for traditional authority.

It will be recalled that incentive theory is based on the idea that individuals “calculate the costs and benefits of any course of action before they undertake to do it.” The benefits of collective action are “public goods”<sup>74</sup> (see Samuelson, 1954): which, according Whiteley and Seyd (2002), are defined by their “jointness of supply” and “impossibility of exclusion” (see also Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004: 141; Hardin, 1982). In this context, it means that the programmatic agendas and the goods provided by the administrations of the NDC (1993-2000) and the NPP (2001-2008) could not be restricted to those members whose efforts made it possible for the NDC and NPP to win power. Since, moreover, both parties provide “public goods” that are available to all citizens irrespective of their contribution levels, rational actors

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<sup>74</sup> The theory of public goods was developed in the context of neo-Keynesian economics by the American economist, Paul A. Samuelson, in his 1954 article “The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure.”

would generally not participate in bringing about collective goods (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). The “paradox of participation” thus arises. In the specific case of the main parties, many respondents indicated collective incentives as the motive for signing up for membership. These findings are inconsistent with the Olsonian (1965) model. Granik (2005) suggests that selective incentives hold the key to explaining the “paradox.” In other words, (cf. Granik, 2005) which selective incentives are so valued by members of the NDC and NPP that they would choose to participate in collective goods-producing organizations?

#### 8.4.1 Actual Rewards of Activism

Table 8.8 makes it clear that 63.8 per cent of respondents become active in their parties because of material incentives. Furthermore, 20.0 per cent do so because of “solidary” incentives; and, finally, “purposive” incentives amount to 16.2 per cent.

TABLE 8.8: ACTIVISTS' STATED MOTIVATIONS FOR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Motivational item	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Material Incentives	415	157	258	63.8
Solidary Incentives	130	92	38	20.0
Purposive Incentives	105	95	10	16.2
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field Study, 2009.

Few citizens join the NDC and NPP, and the ones that do are not primarily motivated by a desire to contribute to national development or to promote the policy goals of the parties, as they claim (Bob-Milliar, 2012a). Fundamentally, material incentives are at the heart of party activism in both parties. Inter-party variations were important. Some patrons, platform activists, and foot-soldiers of both parties measure their activism against receiving a personal reward (*ibid.*).

Formal membership of a party does not automatically guarantee access to material incentives. Nonetheless, to be considered for material incentives one must activate one's



membership not only during elections but, what is more important, also between elections. As one respondent claimed, a party member “in good standing” must be seen doing something that serves the interests of party leaders and the party. The respondent commented:

A party membership card is like a credit card. A member in good standing means a healthy membership card which, in turn, can create countless opportunities for the holder. However, one must accumulate some points on the card, and the only way to accumulate points is to be actively involved in the activities of the party, either directly or indirectly, at the constituency or national levels throughout the year and in-between elections. To begin, one must not only pay his or her annual dues up front, but one must protect the good name of the party, and be heard defending the party’s policies on radio and TV, one must attend party meetings and press conferences, when in opposition one must contribute to anti-government protests, one must be seen at the funerals of important community leaders, and one must contribute to the development of your local community either by sponsoring a couple of kids to school or by paying the medical bills of some members (Interview, Wa, 16 March, 2009).

In other words, a party member must not be inactive, but be visible at party programmes at all times and between elections. Patron activists see their activism in the parties as an investment, and it is mainly targeted at the national party leaders, constituency executives and influential party insiders. The SES of a patron activist and the informalization of politics at the grassroots allowed for manipulation of formal party structures. Here a patron activist negotiates for material incentives based on the amount of one’s contribution to the party.

The concept of “nourishing a constituency” is one example of a contribution to the party that is favoured by many patron activists. Some patron activists sponsor candidates for elective party positions and, also, support candidates for election to national offices. They also fund national and constituency campaigns. Others provide office space cost-free; yet others provide logistics, such as vehicles, and sponsor the printing of T-shirts, among other forms of service. In return, the politically active NDC and NPP patron activists will receive material incentives for



their activism. These material incentives are mostly private goods. The words of one foot-soldier aptly describe the utility value of party politics in Ghana.

Politics is everything in Ghana. If you want employment, you can be as qualified as anybody, but only a party membership card would enable you to be short listed; if you are sick, the party will care for you; if you want contract and other business dealings, it is the party; school for your children, the party will help; if you want to go Mecca, the party's protocol list is very important; in bereavement the party's donation is assured; even if you want to marry a woman, party friends will provide funds... I should not do politics in Ghana, and do what? (Interview, Accra, 22 January, 2008).

Activism within the platform activists' category is not static. Most platform activists are graduates of the country's tertiary institutions and are, therefore, career seekers. They consequently seek material incentives for their activism. They see activism within political parties as a way of finding a permanent source of livelihood and, possibly, a career in politics. The fluid nature of activism in this category allows for collaboration with either patron activists or foot-soldiers. The bright and articulate platform activists act as panellists on TV and radio discussion programmes. Activism involves "defending the policies and achievement of the party in government." Platform activists of the governing party "must defend every government programme," and "educate the public on how the programme(s) would inure to their benefit." Those on the opposition side criticize government with the sole aim of making the governing party less popular. Platform activists are also visible in party election campaigns and, sometimes, leading protests.

Without doubt, foot-soldiers are more involved than the other two categories in political mobilization. The nature of their activism is physically exacting. They are involved in preparing and arranging rally grounds; on elections day, they will travel to the remotest parts of the constituency to get out the votes; in the urban centres they do door-to-door campaigning; and

they undertake many other tasks. Foot-soldiers of the governing party are occasionally conveyed to places to swell the number of people witnessing the commissioning of government executed projects in the various communities. The party also mobilizes foot-soldiers to “welcome dignities and give the party and government a good following.”

Nonetheless, many foot-soldiers are either unemployed, or subsist on temporary jobs (also known as “by day jobs”) in the informal private sector. Because many foot-soldiers possess no employable skills, they tend to rely on informal networks. Party activism in the category is characterized by two features: personalization and localization. First, personalization of activism means that foot-soldiers attach themselves to individual politicians. Expressed differently, their activism is tied to the apron strings of “Big Men” (party leaders and candidates for elective office). The gains for activism at this level are short term, but could become long term (at least four years), depending on the success of the campaign of those candidates the foot-soldiers support. “I have no formal education, so I cannot manage any government agency that requires proof of certificate. My party work [activism] enabled me to secure employment as a toll collector at a lorry station.” Second, activism is localized, in the sense that foot-soldiers tend to operate within the constituency in which they are based.

In both parties, material incentives are “offered on a higher bidder basis”; they only accrue to those party members who devoted greater time, money, energy and other resources for the “nourishment” of constituencies and party activities between elections (Bob-Milliar, 2012a). Activists usually direct their activism to areas where it would make the greatest impact. In this context, the three categories of activists target their activism at party leaders on behalf of whom and areas of the party in which they can make the greatest impact.

## 8.5 Measuring Internal Party Democracy

### 8.5.1 Membership dues/contribution

Some formal party rules impose certain obligations on members. They are expected to be “in good standing,” which is demonstrated in monetary terms in the membership dues and other financial contributions toward sustaining party work nationally and at the grassroots. The definition of a member in good standing is elastic, and it is thus subject to abuse by the party leadership. The NPP constitution makes it mandatory for patron members to make substantial financial contributions to the party, “beyond whatever membership dues they may have paid at a particular constituency” (NPP, 2009). Table 8.9 shows that the vast majority of respondents (69.5%) do not make any other financial contributions to their party. Some (11.4%) contribute no more than GH¢5 to their various parties. A further 15.1 per cent constitute respondents who make financial contributions in the GH¢15-30 range. The overwhelming majority of foot-soldiers in both parties do not make any financial contribution towards the sustenance of the party. Many claimed their initial membership subscription dues were paid for them in advance by their party’s parliamentary aspirants, the incumbent MP or the DCE. A tiny portion (4.0%) claimed they make contributions of over GH¢1000 to their parties. This latter category is dominated by the few wealthy patron activists.

TABLE 8.9: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Financial contribution	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
None	452	232	220	69.5
Under GH¢5	74	42	32	11.4
Amount GH¢15-30	98	56	42	15.1
Over GH¢1000	26	14	12	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field study, 2009.

### 8.5.2 Contact with the Party

Contact with the parties has been divided into three broad classes: party meetings, campaigning, and representation (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002: 60-64). Table 8.10 shows contact with the parties, which is measured by how often respondents attend party meetings.

**TABLE 8.10 PARTY MEETINGS ATTENDANCE IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS**

Attendance	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Not at all	378	188	190	58.2
Rarely	83	45	38	12.8
Occasionally	99	46	53	15.2
Frequently	90	65	25	13.8
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.

Table 8.10 contains various indicators of the contact with the parties. It can be seen that different rates of contact were experienced by the party members. These show that a majority (58.2%) of party members did not attend any party meetings over the past five years. Some 12.7 per cent had attended rarely. Another interesting finding in the Table is that 29 per cent of respondents claimed to have occasionally or frequently attended party meetings within the period. Some semblance of effective contact with the party emerges in relation to attending meetings, an important variable frequently employed to measure activism within political parties (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Nevertheless, the figures appear higher than conventional wisdom suggests, which often sees the parties at the grassroots level as dominated by few executives (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002).

Table 8.11 presents responses to a set of questions in the survey designed to measure the overall levels of activism within the parties. This second element of campaigning examines the extent to which respondents are associated with various campaign activities, both intra- and inter-party.

TABLE 8.11 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES UNDER TAKEN IN THE LAST TEN YEARS

Campaigning and representation	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Displayed an election post on a wall	93	43	50	14.3
Held some office within your party	13	8	5	2.0
Delivered party leaflets during an election	180	110	70	27.7
Attended a party rally	96	45	51	14.8
Canvassed voters on behalf of the party	93	45	48	14.3
Stood for office within the party organization	80	40	40	12.3
Stood for elected office in a local or national election	95	53	42	14.6
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.

Respondents were asked about their involvement in seven elements of political activities within the parties over the past 10 years. It can be seen that the activities in Table 8.11 cover the two aspects of campaigning and representation fairly well (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). In interpreting these findings, it is important to make the connection with the patron and foot-soldiers activists' dichotomy in the parties. The third variable in the Table shows that a remarkably high percentage (27.7%) of members claimed to have delivered campaign literature in the past 10 years. Some 14.3 per cent of respondents displayed an election poster, while another 14.8 per cent claimed to have attended campaign rallies organized by their parties. Respondents who canvassed voters on behalf of their parties represented 14.3 per cent.

The third element in Table 8.11 is that of representation, which measured the extent to which respondents represent the parties both by holding office within the parties' organs or on external organs as a party nominee. As Whiteley and Seyd (2002: 62) note, representation is a very important gauge of activism. Holding office internally either through competitive election or nomination constitutes representation. When it comes to representation, significantly fewer party members have stood for office within the parties. Only 26.9 per cent of respondents sought representation on their party's tickets. Only small fractions (2.0%), moreover, of respondents are office holders within the parties or elected representatives in the District Assembly. These

individuals are the patron and platform activists, who are likely to have disproportionate influence over the national officers of both parties. Generally, the findings show that a significant proportion of party members were involved in campaigning activity, and this is true in both parties. Furthermore, it is clear that although Whiteley and Seyd (2002) suggested that participation could be described in terms of three dimensions, empirically the findings suggest that two elements are adequate for understanding different aspects of participation.

### 8.5.3 *Representation at Party Congresses/Conventions*

The holding of constituency and national conferences to elect leaders and adopt policies is enshrined in the constitutions of both parties. It is apparent from Table 8.12 that a sizable proportion of respondents (22.5%) have been delegates to either a constituency conference or a national congress. The respondents attending as delegates are mainly the party leaders in the two constituencies. Because the decision as to who attends a congress rests with executives, they tend to select the same people for both constituency and national congresses. Five consecutive times (1992-2002), the same political elite represented the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies at the NDC national congress. For instance, the leadership justified its monopoly and the exclusion of the others from attending congress outside the region on the excuse that members who have never travelled outside the region lacked traveling experience. "It is cost effective to select people with experience to represent the constituency at the National Delegates congress." Similarly, the patron activists of the NPP made the decision as to who will attend the party conference and congress. Consequently, as Table 8.12 clearly shows, an overwhelming proportion of respondents (77.4%) have never been selected to become party delegates at a constituency or a national congress.



**TABLE 8.12: PARTY DELEGATES AT CONSTITUENCY/NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Variable	Frequency	Party		Valid Percent
		NDC	NPP	
Yes	146	90	56	22.5
No	504	254	250	77.5
Total	650	344	306	100.0

Source: Field study, 2009.

Generally, all political parties require material and human resources to fight elections. Some party members are given the opportunity to select Parliamentary aspirants. Of those party members attending national congresses, very few play an effective function apart from acclaiming party resolutions. Since 1992 the NPP has regularized its leadership election at party congresses. By contrast, the NDC adopted competitive procedures fairly late: it started in 2002 with the popular election of Professor J. E. A. Mills. Very few delegates, however, have the opportunity to participate directly in debates before resolutions are adopted by the party congress, which is the highest decision-making body of the party.

## 8.6 Conclusions

Liberal democracy has come a long way in Ghana since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic on 7 January 1993; and the foundation on which the country's free market democracy thrives is political parties. It was through party competition that power alternations occurred in 2000 and 2008. Indeed, Ghana's record of peaceful elections is the envy of many African states. Undeniably, the story of the activities of the two main parties is not one of unbridled success, but has been characterized by several challenges. Recent studies of the parties have noted that the conduct of their internal affairs leaves much to be desired. Related to this is the failure of the parties in managing the demands of party foot-soldiers. But despite all of this, they still continue



to perform their statutory roles. They are indispensable for making democracy work and deliver (cf. IDEA/CDD-Ghana, 2006).

The research findings were obtained by the application of mixed methods, which have been used consistently throughout this study. In the collection and analysis of the data for this study, qualitative methods were supplemented by quantitative ones. As indicated in the section on research methodology, an extensive literature review was undertaken. Extensive archival research was undertaken at the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Accra office. The results have been analysed in Chapter Three, on the historical origins of political parties in Ghana. Field surveys consisting of closed-ended questionnaires were administered in Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies. The quantitative data have been subjected to critical analysis. To obtain empirical data, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with party leaders, MPs, MCEs, DCEs, and traditional authorities, as well as respected notables who keep regular contact with the parties. Several months of field study, spread over two years, enabled the author to engage in direct observation of the activities of political parties, including visiting constituency offices and observing activities, attending political rallies and sectional club meetings, and day-to-day observation of the activities of political activists in both constituencies.

As explicitly presented in the introductory chapter, this study has undertaken a comprehensive inquiry into the factors that motivate the citizens of the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom constituencies to engage in political party activism. The general aim of the study was to provide an overview of the development of political party activism in Ghana since the Fourth Republic began. In attempting to analyse the motives underpinning political party activism in the NDC and NPP, this study has looked into the interplay of political activities in both parties at

constituency and national levels. The theoretical discussions in Chapter Two relied heavily on the works of Verba *et al.* (1995), Whiteley and Seyd (2002), Chabal and Daloz (2006), and Chabal (2009). The review was limited to the only three of the five mainstream political science accounts of political participation, and the cultural approach to comparative politics. These theoretical discussions have been applied to compare the empirical findings of the research in both constituencies.

Political party activism is understood to be a process of working to further the programmatic agendas of the two main parties. Attitudinal and behavioural traits and the socio-economic status of activists enable us to group party activists into three categories: party foot-soldiers, platform activists, and patron activists. The activism of the three categories is determined by the quantity of “resources” available. Party activism operates in two spheres: the informal and formal structures of both parties. At the informal level – that is, politics that is outside the workings of the party’s constitutional arrangement – the interplay between the physical environment and socio-cultural factors is significant for party activism. The data on both historical development and current practices ineluctably demonstrate that party activism in Wa Central, in particular, is linked to the cultural norms of the Wala ethnic group. As observed in this study, party members have their own perceptions of, and practices for organizing, political activities in both constituencies. It is largely informal, and based on sections. As the findings have shown, most of the formal party structures and organs are not tailored to suit the socio-economic and cultural environment of the Wala and Dagara communities. They have, however, adapted themselves to the socio-economic conditions of the local community. They appear to be democratic, and are structured top-down, with all decisions taken by party leaders in the

constituencies. Activism within this level is seen in more reciprocal terms. Contributors to political activism expect their contributions to be rewarded by both party and candidates.

Elections in Ghana are two-party contests. Political party activism framed within the two political traditions has, to a large extent, given the Fourth Republic parties “founding mythologies” (cf. Whitfield, 2009); although this is truer for the NPP than for the NDC. The Fourth Republic stands out as the only republic where political power has alternated between two political parties of different ideological leanings. It is the evidence that the political parties are well institutionalized. The Ghanaian electoral and party systems make room for a multi-party system. The NDC and the NPP have, however, monopolized the political space, giving Ghana a *de facto* two-party system. The NDC is a party of the centre-left, and the NPP is centre-right. Notwithstanding the different ideological postures, both parties have embraced the market orthodoxy championed by the IFIs and “Development Partners.” The state has consequently freed itself from production, and the private sector is supposed to lead development. Nonetheless, the inability of the private sector to generate livelihood sources for citizens capable and willing to work has given rise to the informal sector, which caters for some 80 per cent of citizens. Empirical research has definitely shown that the inability of many citizens to enjoy “positive rights” (e.g., sustainable or permanent employment) in the neo-liberal era has made activism within party structures attractive.

Political competition between the parties is observed in Parliamentary election campaigns, which are folded into presidential campaigns. The NDC and NPP used similar manifestos with only slight modification in all election cycles. Election manifestos of both parties are written by committees dominated by technocrats and experts, with little input from

grassroots activists. Even though campaign manifestos of the parties appear to vary on many aspects, on closer inspection there is little to distinguish the parties on their outlined policy goals.

Formal rules are quite explicit on the organizational structures of the parties in the constituencies. A combination of factors, however, including the lack of resources, poor decision-making and non-functioning offices, makes it difficult for the parties to function optimally. Yet the parties perform several functions at the grassroots, including recruiting political leadership and seeking public offices, and training political elites, among others. Both the NDC and NPP have adopted more inclusive candidate-selection methods in recent decades, giving the ranks of ordinary party members a significant influence in candidate selection. Yet both parties have also been careful to ensure that their respective NECs retain some control over the process. Candidates for the single-member constituencies of the Wa Central and Lawra-Nandom were selected by party members in a highly decentralized and inclusive system. Nevertheless, the candidate selection procedures of the NDC and NPP can be defined as moderately inclusive.

The key to understanding why citizens join political parties in Ghana and become active in them is in a multiplicity of factors. Altruistic, collective, and selective incentives and social norms are the main reasons Ghanaians joined the NDC and NPP. Citizens who become active in the NDC and NPP understand the possible benefits of their activism and the ways of achieving such goals. Political party activism is a negotiated concept in Ghana. Party activists have realized that their resources (time, money, and civic skills; see Verba *et al.*, 1995) are valuable, and that they can negotiate for material incentives. Indeed, material incentives stand out strongly as the motive for becoming active in the parties. While collective incentives are available to all, selective incentives are earned by foot-soldiers, and platform and patron activists.

## **8.7 Implications of the Findings**

### *8.7.1 Implications at a Theoretical Level*

The study findings have implications for a theoretical understanding of political participation, especially “high intensity participation” (cf. Whiteley and Seyd, 2002), and, indeed, for different paradigms in political party research in a non-Western environment. The first implication is for rational choice theories of participation. What do the study findings have to say about political participation viewed principally from the angle of “costs and benefits”? Rational choice theories have “narrowed the definition of rationality to that of maximization of individual preferences” (Chabal, 2009). The variables associated with rational choice theory consequently play an important but a narrow role in explaining political party activism. In this context, variables such as selective incentives and ideological incentives are relevant. The study findings suggest that the private goals are significant factors in explaining political party activism in the two main parties. Second, what is rational in the study’s context is likely to appear “irrational” in the theory. In other words, citizens are not being rational if they ground their permutations of costs and benefits at the level of the group or community. In many ways, the study’s findings do not agree with rational choice explanations of political participation.

Third, the Civic Voluntarism Model cannot offer a convincing explanation for political party activism. The findings suggest that the theoretical criticisms of the model set out in Chapter Two are supported by the empirical findings. The civic voluntarism model is inadequate as an explanatory model for political party activism. The study findings revealed that a majority of citizens who did not enjoy formal education participated actively in party politics. This finding, however, is surprising, as rising education levels in most advanced Western democracies have

not produced higher rates of participation, and not that many highly educated individuals participate in politics.

### 8.7.2 *Implications at a Policy Level*

The study findings also have implications at a policy level. It suggests a coordination of political activities between the national, regional, and constituencies offices of the political parties.

*Formalization of the party structures at the grassroots:* The findings reveals that political party structures are weak, and they operate informally at the grassroots. This informality has a great bearing on the type of leadership the parties groom at the grassroots. Between elections, the party offices go into hibernation, or are manned by a skeleton staff who are not party executive officials. Policies regulating informal activities of the parties need to be formulated in order to regulate these informal political activities, and make them formal. In addition, the decision-making process must be widened to include the opinions and contributions of all party members in good standing at the various constituencies and branches.

Ideology is the heart of party politics. Political education should be a central tenet of party mobilization at the grassroots. Before potential members are registered and issued party membership cards, they must be made to undergo some basic political education on the political ideology of the party and the core functions of political parties. Political education that emphasizes party ideology away from the materialist conception of politics will benefit the parties in terms of formulation and implementation of policies. The parties' constitutions could be translated into the various local dialects to enable those members who have not enjoyed formal education to know their rights and duties. Relatedly, some mechanism for recruitment of



members should be fashioned to give prospective members some form of political education and orientation before they are issued formal membership cards.

*Gender Representation:* the findings reveal that the two main parties have been reluctant to recruit and select women as candidates at the constituency level. Women who want to contest elections must, like their male counterparts, contest party primaries. Adopting a quota system would ensure a more equitable representation of men and women in the party structures. Furthermore, despite constitutional provisions that aim at preventing parties being based on region or ethnicity, the leadership of the parties is overwhelmingly Wala in Wa Central and Dagara in Lawra-Nandom constituencies. In demographic terms, none of the regions is ethnically monolithic. The current practice, in which ethnicity predominates, alienates other ethnic groups. The parties should aim at ethnically diverse leadership at the constituency levels. Furthermore, the parties could attract more active members by expanding the number of elective and appointive party offices that will reward activists' contribution to party work at the grassroots. Delegates with voting rights at party conferences or congresses must be enlarged to include many more activists. This will greatly enhance the internal democracy of the parties.

*Improving clarity in policy goals:* the research findings revealed that the two main parties have advocated policy positions on the major issues facing the country that are often embodied in their respective manifestos. While there are provisions in the constitutions of the two political parties to develop their party platforms through consultations with party members and by democratic vote, the programmes are generally imposed from the top.



## **8.8 The Need for Future Research**

First and foremost, there were several reasons to choose this topic for research; the NDC and NPP are not well researched at the grassroots. Research on party membership is, therefore, part of a broad effort to understand individual level motivations for participation. Sustained empirical research is required to improve our understanding of the individual party member, and the institution of party membership and the effects it has on political processes. Most important, research on political parties has a European bias. The same bias applies to most research on party members. More worrying, and thus demanding of further research, is the issue of material incentives as the motive for citizens becoming active in political parties.

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**(ii) Newspapers and Magazines**

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- Africa* (London)
- Africa Diary* (London)
- African Morning Post* (Accra)
- Africawatch* (New York)
- Chronicle* (Accra)
- Daily Echo* (Accra)
- Daily Graphic* (Accra)
- Enquirer* (Accra)



*Ghana Evening News* (Accra)  
*Ghana News Agency* (Accra)  
*Ghanaian Chronicle* (Accra)  
*Ghanaian Times* (Accra)  
*Gold Coast Observer* (Cape Coast)  
*People's Daily Graphic* (Accra)  
*Pioneer* (Kumasi)  
*Statesman* (Accra)  
*Uhuru* (Accra)  
*West Africa* (London)

## APPENDICES

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27.3.3 (iii) The Candidate may submit, as subsidiary matter in support of his or her candidature, any printed contributions to the advancement of his/her subject, which he or she may have published independently or jointly, or any other supporting material. In the event of a candidate present material from joint work, he or she shall be required to state fully his or her own contribution (Graduate Handbook, Volume 1, July 2010 edition).

The following journal articles resulted from the author's research for this study.

- 1) With G. K. Bob-Milliar, (June, 2010). 'The Economy and Intra-Party Competition: Presidential Primaries in the New Patriotic Party of Ghana', *African Review of Economics & Finance*, 1(2): 51-71[Candidate's contribution 60 percent].
- 2) Bob-Milliar, G. M. (March, 2011a). 'Political Polarisation in Ghana: Reflections on the 2008 General Elections.' *The African Students' Journal*, (1): 5-9.
- 3) Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2011b). "'Te nyɔgeyeng gbengbeng!' ('We are holding the umbrella very tight'): Explaining the Popularity of the NDC in the Upper West Region of Ghana.' *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 81(3): 455-73.
- 4) Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2012). 'Political Party Activism in Ghana: Factors Influencing the Decision of the Politically Active to Join a Political Party.' *Democratization*, 19 (4): 668-689.