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# The evolution and development of the New Patriotic Party in Ghana

Joseph RA Ayee

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South African Institute of International Affairs  
Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand  
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 · Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154  
[www.saiia.org.za](http://www.saiia.org.za) · [info@saiia.org.za](mailto:info@saiia.org.za)

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the emergence and development of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government in the context of a broader examination of the roles of political parties within the Ghanaian political landscape. After describing the political architecture as well as some significant constitutional issues of Ghana's democracy and the roles played by other societal stakeholders, the paper examines the rationale for the formation of the NPP, its manifesto, structure, constituency, power brokers. It then analyses various aspects of the implementation (or not) of the NPP's political and economic objectives since it came to power in 2000 with 'positive change'. The electoral politics of the campaigns against its major opposition, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and issues of regionalism, ethnicity and other factors are considered in detail. The paper concludes with some lessons learned and generic recommendations for emerging African political parties in relatively young democracies.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Joseph RA Ayee has been dean of the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, since April 2002. He obtained his PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was visiting Commonwealth research fellow in the Department of Politics, University of Glasgow, from October 1993 to July 1994. He held the 2001 chair in leadership studies of the UNESCO/UN University Leadership Academy at the University of Jordan, Amman. He won the University of Ghana 2006 Best Teacher Award in the Humanities and was elected fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences in December 2005. His current research interests include the political economy of natural resource management, ministerial reshuffles, managing public toilets in Ghana, taxing the informal sector, the organisational culture of tax officials, the financing of political parties and local conflicts.

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of political parties on the political system goes well beyond the central functions of filling political office and wielding government power by which they are usually defined. Other functions include (a) recruitment and formation of elite groups; (b) articulation, co-ordination and refinement of demands on the political system; (c) political education and socialisation through internal debate and discussion, as well as campaigning and electoral competition; and (d) acting as a communication conduit. Parties transmit information upward from the grassroots and downward from government to the public. They are a major 'information input' channel, allowing citizens' needs and wishes to be heard by government and societies to set collective goals and to ensure that they are met. In seeking power, parties formulate government programmes in order to attract popular support and foster the sustainability of accountable democracy and political contestation.<sup>1</sup>

In short, political parties contribute to democratic consolidation through representation, integration, aggregation, recruitment and training, making government accountable and organising 'responsible opposition to governments'.<sup>2</sup>

The nature of these crucial functions focuses attention on the question of power dynamics within Ghana's political parties. Their organisation and structure provide vital clues about the distribution of power within society. Are they democratic bodies that broaden participation and access to power, or do they simply entrench the dominance of leaders and elites?<sup>3</sup> Against that background this chapter examines the evolution and development of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government in Ghana. Specifically, it examines the rationale behind the formation of the NPP, its manifesto, internal structure, constituency, its power brokers, how it won the 2000 and 2004 elections, its relationship with parties within and outside Ghana, and its achievements as a government since it took power in 2001. Before examining the case of the NPP in particular, however, it is pertinent to venture into the political architecture within which the party operates.

## THE EVOLUTION OF GHANA'S POLITICAL ARCHITECTURE

### **The political landscape**

Political parties have had a chequered history in Ghana due to the instability that has plagued the country's politics since its independence from Britain in 1957. Following the 1966 overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, its first president, Ghana experienced long periods of military rule, respectively in 1966–69, 1972–79 and 1981–92. This instability has created a sense of incapacity among political parties in effectively performing their rôles in critical areas: representation, integration, aggregation, recruitment and training, promoting government accountability and organising opposition. With multiparty elections in 1992, 1996 and 2000 and 2004, however, have come some indications that the parties have tried as best they can to perform those functions.<sup>4</sup>

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which had held power since December 1981, relinquished office in January 1993 under a civilian constitution approved by referendum in April 1992. A ban on political associations imposed in 1982 was lifted

in May 1992. Presidential and legislative elections were held in November and December 1992 respectively, as a prelude to the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in January 1993. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who had first come to power by coup d'état in December 1981, was elected president with more than 58% of votes cast while his National Democratic Congress (NDC) won an overwhelming victory in the simultaneous elections for the legislature, which were boycotted by the opposition parties.<sup>5</sup>

In December 1996 Rawlings was re-elected president with 57% of the vote and the NDC won 133 of the 200 parliamentary seats in the same month's legislative elections. Having served two four-year terms, Rawlings was ineligible to stand in the December 2000 presidential election, which was won by John Kufuor of the NPP with 57% in the second round, the NDC candidate, Vice-president John Atta Mills, winning 43%. The NPP took 100 seats<sup>6</sup> in the December 2000 legislative elections as against 92 for the NDC; of the remaining seats, three were won by the People's National Convention (PNC), one by the Convention People's Party (CPP) and four by independents.<sup>7</sup>

### **Constitutional questions**

The separation of powers enshrined in Ghana's 1992 constitution is supposed to promote checks and balances. The supremacy of the constitution and entrenchment of the rule of law are the foundations of all the institutions of governance, the private sector and civil society. The constitution contains ample provisions to entrench the rule of law, affirm constitutionalism, and constrain the abuse of power and discretionary authority of those in governance. The judiciary has asserted both its independent powers of review and a willingness to declare unconstitutional, certain acts or behaviour of the executive branch. The constitution also contains provisions to promote and protect the independence of parliament, particularly from actions of the executive. Article 71 specifically protects parliament from executive influence and control by making the internal parliamentary expenses (including the salaries of members and of the Speaker and other officers) a charge on the state consolidated fund.

These provisions notwithstanding, the separation of power is undermined by the fusion of the executive and legislature in so far as the constitution stipulates that a majority of ministers of state must be sitting members of parliament. This has reduced the independence of parliament and its effectiveness in enforcing 'horizontal' accountability: ministers have been more mindful of the interests and agenda of the executive than of their legislative duties, contrary to the principle of collective and ministerial responsibility.<sup>8</sup> Judicial independence is also compromised because there is no upper limit to the number of justices that can be appointed to the Supreme Court.<sup>9</sup> An inter-party advisory committee (IPAC) made up of the general secretaries and chairmen of the various political parties, provides a mechanism for ensuring active involvement and constructive engagement by the parties in the design and implementation of the programmes of the electoral commission.

Six parties, the NPP, the NDC, the CPP, the PNC, Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE) and the Democratic People's Party (DPP), contested the 2004 parliamentary elections. The Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP), the National Reform Party (NRP) and the United Ghana Movement (UGM), although registered parties, did not fight the elections due to a lack of the logistics needed to field parliamentary candidates. The NPP,

NDC, CPP and PNC were the only parties to contest both presidential and parliamentary elections. Despite the politically charged atmosphere, parties campaigned freely. All used public rallies and none complained publicly of being denied police permission to organise such gatherings.

There is no significant state funding of political parties. In 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004, however, the electoral commission provided them with vehicles to help with their campaigns. In the 2004 election it distributed 35 vehicles to political parties and presidential candidates; presidential candidates received two vehicles while parties that fielded parliamentary candidates benefited pro rata to the number of their candidates (see Table 1).

In 2003 a national forum was held at which it was agreed that political parties must be partly funded through budgetary allocation. The real challenge, however, is to decide when, how and how much money should be allocated and at the moment state funding of political parties does not seem to enjoy high priority.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1: Distribution of government-donated vehicles to political parties: 2004 elections**

	Party	Acronym	Candidates	Vehicles
1	People's National Convention	PNC	123	6
2	New Patriotic Party	NPP	226	10
3	National Democratic Congress	NDC	229	10
4	Convention People's Party	CPP	173	7
5	Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere	EGLE	30	1
6	Democratic People's Party	DPP	30	1
7	Great Consolidated People's Party	GCPP	0	0
8	National Reform Party	NRP	0	0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>811</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: Letter dated 9 November 2004, signed by deputy chairman (finance and administration), Electoral Commission.

Despite their vitality, political parties have attracted some complaints, particularly regarding selection of candidates. Although parties have constitutional mandate to promote internal democracy, they have failed to do so; this has led to serious controversy and the growth of factions within parties. In addition, sources of funding have not been made public and the parties have failed to submit audited accounts to the electoral commission.<sup>11</sup>

In May 2000 nine political parties signed up to a code of conduct in which they pledged to further the objectives of peace and public order, freedom of political campaigning and compliance with those electoral laws and regulations deemed essential to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and the ready acceptance of the results.<sup>12</sup> They also pledged to promote and apply the code in those three areas. Parties are to 'ensure that the code is made fully known to [their] officers and members, and that it is fully observed'. In addition, they 'undertake to publicise the code to the general public by all means available to them'.<sup>13</sup>

The 2000 and 2004 elections, however, showed serious breaches of the code. These included the use of defamatory, derogatory and insulting attacks on rival parties or individual personalities through verbal or written communication, and the removal,

destruction or disfigurement of posters and other campaign materials of rival parties or members.

### **Electoral system**

Under the 1992 constitution, the Representation of the People Law (PNDC Law 284) of 1992, Political Parties Act (Act 574) of 2000, and the Electoral Commission Act (Act 451) of 1993, Ghana's electoral system provides for universal suffrage for citizens 18 and older by secret ballot in presidential, parliamentary and local elections, with a national identity card to prevent impersonation. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held on the same day every four years. The electoral system for parliament is 'first past the post' and for the presidency an absolute majority, with a run-off if no winner emerges in the first round. There is a two-term limit on the presidency.

Ghana's politics are partisan at national, but non-partisan at local level. Parties are corporate entities, as is the electoral commission, which may acquire and own property, sue and be sued.<sup>14</sup>

### **Internal party democracy**

The 1992 Constitution and the Political Parties Act (Act 574) of 2000 make provision for political parties to promote internal democracy. Article 55 (5) of the 1992 Constitution stipulates that 'the internal organisation 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'. Similarly, Section 9(a) of the Political Parties Act, 2000 enjoins the electoral commission not to register a political party unless 'the internal organisation of the party conforms with democratic principles and its actions and purposes are not contrary to or inconsistent with the Constitution'.

The Political Parties Act stipulates that members of the party elect its executive officers and that the electoral commission supervises the election of national, regional and constituency party executive officers. This is regarded in some quarters as an unwelcome intrusion by the state into the private affairs of political parties. Although it was effected in terms of the constitutional provision cited above, it is doubtful whether the supervision of intra-party elections by the Electoral Commission has improved the parties' internal democracy.

In Ghana, representation of individual interests is subsumed by the growing influence of the party machine and the degree of control exerted by a caucus of senior party figures. In this connection, the parties demonstrate a version of Robert Michels' iron law of oligarchy, whereby power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of leaders. The extent to which parties genuinely permit a broadly based involvement in political affairs is questionable. Party structures are generally centralised, while decision-making is not decentralised. Consequently, the mass membership has little say on issues such as party policy. In practice, the formal accountability of party leaders to rank and file activists through mechanisms such as party congresses is often imperfectly achieved, due to the sway that leaders often hold over their parties, contrary to the constitutional provisions. Indeed, most parties in Ghana seem to subscribe to 'machine politics' with party bosses exercising control through patronage and the distribution of favours. Bosses have acted and

continue to act as power brokers and have exercised a decisive influence at conventions, congresses and conferences.<sup>15</sup>

The lack of internal democracy seems to have undermined stability, cohesion and peace in certain parties, especially the NDC. One result is the existence of factions, open disagreement and internal rivalries. Non-adherence to internal democratic principles has also stalled moves to reunite Nkrumahist parties such as the CPP and the PNC, because leaders with their eye on a run for the presidency, such as Dr Edward Mahama, are uncomfortable with competitive selection processes.<sup>16</sup>

The lack of internal democracy has also meant that an outstanding individual may be pressured to withdraw from intra-party elections in favour of a less glamorous contender who better represents the interests of top party executives. The latter eventually defeats an even doddier candidate chosen by the hierarchy to run against him. The good-quality candidate who withdrew can then be 'compensated' by the offer of another public office, which may be of little interest to him and indeed may lead to his defection. As an example, NPP national organiser Alhaji Inusah defected to the NDC when during his bid for the Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency parliamentary seat in the 2000 election he was asked to step down in favour of Nii Amoo Addy. Similarly, in 2001 Professor Mike Oquaye was prevailed upon to give up his campaign to become NPP national chairman because Harona Esseku, a less glamorous candidate, was favoured by most of the party executives, including President Kufuor. Oquaye subsequently became Ghana's high commissioner to India. Before the 2004 elections, the rank and file in Sunyani East constituency preferred the young contender Nana Obiri Boahene to the veteran incumbent JH Mensah, who was then a senior minister. Ultimately, party executives settled on Mensah while Boahene was compensated by his appointment as regional party chairman.<sup>17</sup> In what came to be called the 'Swedru Declaration', President Rawlings in 2000 nominated John Atta Mills as his successor without going through the NDC's established selection procedure. This action generated considerable heat within the party and led some members to break away and form the NRP.

A proliferation of different levels of party structures with similar powers (for example both a national executive council and a council of elders), together with non-adherence to party constitutional rules, have tended to undermine democratic processes within political parties. Sometimes the structure of the party becomes so bureaucratic and personalised that of itself it constitutes a block to the resolution of conflict.<sup>18</sup> Without internal democracy parties may divide into factions and sometimes are dismembered following defections by key members. Bitterness and resentment undermine party cohesion, while the absence of internal democracy not only kills healthy internal competition but also reduces the effectiveness of party organisation, policies and programmes.<sup>19</sup> Above all, the parties fail to develop foolproof and acceptable internal procedures for selection and recruitment, which then come to depend on the whims and caprices of the few, with the party's interests sacrificed on the altar of individual power.<sup>20</sup>

Control over party funds by a small group of people has also affected the power structure within political parties. Leadership finds itself under the control of party funders, and policies counter to the interests of party members emanate from the 'sponsors' rather than the leadership. Sometimes a few rich members manoeuvre to get themselves or their (incompetent) favourites appointed to senior positions, from which they can directly influence decisions. As a result of the 'hijacking' of party administration by big donors,

the official party leadership may lose interest in the membership and stop canvassing for new members.<sup>21</sup>

Alliances formed to contest elections but not sustained due to fundamental differences between the parties are a particular feature of political parties in Ghana. In the 1996 elections, for instance, there were two such alliances. The Progressive Alliance consisted of the NDC as dominant partner and two smaller parties, EGLE and DPP. A second, the so-called Great Alliance, comprised the NPP and one faction of the Nkrumahist groupings, the People's Convention Party (itself an amalgam of the People's Heritage Party, the National Independence Party and a section of the National Convention Party, all of which separately fought the 1992 presidential elections). For the 2004 elections, the 'Great Coalition' was formed, made up of the PNC, EGLE and the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP). Failure to sustain these alliances has led some commentators to describe them as unholy marriages formed on the spur of the moment without adequate consultation on operational modalities.<sup>22</sup>

State funding of political parties has been advocated as one way of promoting a level playing field. Indeed, there is consensus among the political parties that this is desirable. On the other hand, some analysts believe that if not carefully handled, state funding can be a drain on the national treasury and could foster the formation of cartels interested in promoting a sectarian rather than a national agenda. According to Dan Botwe, the immediate past general secretary of the NPP and now minister for information, national consultative meetings organised in 1998 and 2000 respectively, concluded that parties should be funded. His personal view is that parties must be state-funded first, because they are a necessary component of democracy and need money to effectively discharge their obligations and secondly because such a procedure will help level the political playing field. He points out that Tanzania allocates 2% of GDP to financing political parties, and questions why Ghana should not do the same. His personal opinion notwithstanding, state funding of political parties is not a priority for the ruling NPP because, as an incumbent government, it could reduce its power of patronage and provoke greater competition from opposition parties. Ironically, the NPP in opposition was vocal in its support for state funding of parties but since coming to power it has concluded that state financing could degenerate into a social welfare scheme for promoting the personal ambitions of unemployed politicians.<sup>23</sup>

The social and political educational role of political parties is stressed in the constitution and in Act 574 of 2000:

A political party may, subject to the Constitution and this Act, participate in shaping the political will of the people, disseminate information on political ideas, social and economic programmes of a national character.

Those statutes also recognise the 'input' function of parties in stipulating that every Ghanaian of voting age has the right to join a political party and the right to participate in political activity intended to influence the composition and policies of the government.

### **Political institutions**

The 1992 constitution defines the overall structure of political institutions. These include an elected president who is the head of state and of government and commander-in-chief of the armed forces; a parliament of 230 members elected for a four-year term; and an independent judiciary. The constitution also provides for a local government system with 128 elected metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in all 10 of Ghana's geographic regions. These assemblies have the authority to raise local taxes and provide services such as sanitation. There are also ten regional co-ordinating councils, which represent central government interests in the regions. The electoral commission oversees free and fair elections by secret ballot; the media commission upholds the freedom of the press and maintains standards of objectivity in reporting; and the commission on human rights and administrative justice protects citizens from 'maladministration' and injustices. Lastly, 15 public service departments, including the civil service and public corporations other than those set up as commercial ventures, are established under the constitution.<sup>24</sup>

### **The media and the rôle of civil society**

Constitutional provisions exist under Chapter 5 for the promotion and protection of civil, political, economic and cultural rights. There are no restrictions on freedom of movement, expression or association. This effect of this freedom is seen in the proliferation of orthodox, Pentecostal, charismatic and Islamic organisations: 60% of Ghanaians claim to be Christian; 16% are Moslem; and the remainder profess belief in various African traditions or other religions. Christian symbols, values and metaphors are very visible in everyday life and in political discourse.<sup>25</sup>

Freedom of expression has been an important aspect of political life since the return to constitutional rule, in contrast with the situation under the PNDC government, which literally enforced a 'culture of silence'. The enlargement of the political space through freedom of expression has been helped by more than 100 radio stations across the country to which people can call in to express their opinion without fear or favour. Some believe that freedom of expression has been abused because certain individuals have employed its agencies to destroy rival politicians through unsubstantiated allegations. Similarly the NPP government's repeal of the Seditious Libel Law has emboldened the media to engage in more investigative journalism, despite reservations in some quarters that the repeal potentially encourages defamation and libel.<sup>26</sup>

Since Article 21 of the constitution recognises and guarantees the right to 'information subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a democratic society', there are no restrictions on international media or internet access. Various FM radio stations broadcast programmes from foreign stations such as the BBC and Voice of America, while television stations transmit BBC and CNN material. Accra has several cyber-cafes, although there are few outside the capital. Films broadcast by foreign television stations have worried some Ghanaians who fear a threat to good national cultural practices.<sup>27</sup>

Despite media freedom, Ghanaian law is very restrictive as far as access to official information is concerned. Various laws (such as the 1993 Civil Service Law; the 1970 Police Service Act and the 1962 Armed Forces Act) make it an offence for public officials to pass information to anyone without prior authorisation. The most restrictive law is the

State Secrets Act (Act 101) of 1962 which protects information where deemed necessary for the promotion of vital national interests. Consequently, all civil servants are required to take three oaths: an oath of allegiance, an 'official oath' and an oath of secrecy.<sup>28</sup> This situation has led to an agitation from civil society organisations (CSOs), resulting in a Right to Information Bill, now before parliament.

Constitutional rule has created greater political space for CSOs and the media. CSOs such as the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the Centre for Democracy and Development have influenced public policies and programmes through research, symposiums and memorandums. Traditional CSOs representing professional groups (e.g. the Bar Association), organised labour (Trades Union Congress), religious associations (Christian Council) and students (National Union of Ghana Students) have also influenced public opinion and policies while one of the newcomers, the Network of Domestic Election Observers (Nedeo), has provided observers for domestic elections. Demonstrations, sometimes violent, such as those led by the Alliance for Change (AFC) that resulted in withdrawal of value added tax in March 1995, graphically illustrate the crucial rôle of civil society in the re-establishment and consolidation of democracy and good governance in Ghana. It was agitation by civic groups that brought about an independent media and CSOs and the media have worked together to challenge the legitimacy of government policies and expand the political space.<sup>29</sup>

It would appear from interviews held with NPP officials in February and March 2007 that CSOs have made little or no direct contribution to party politics. They have, however, unquestionably contributed towards political education. Working through the electoral commission, CSOs organise educational workshops and seminars for party officials, and also train polling assistants. The IEA formed a committee of political party chairmen that meets annually to promote collaboration and reduce tension among them. The Berlin-based Friedrich Ebert Foundation sponsored a programme for party general secretaries to learn the party systems in Germany and Holland, in particular party formation and management, fund-raising and campaigning. The immediate impact of these activities on party formation and consolidation may be difficult to measure, but their potential long-term influence cannot be under-estimated.

### THE NPP: EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>30</sup>

The NPP's beginnings go back to 1991 as a 'Friday Club' of old politicians unhappy with the authoritarian regime of the PNDC. With the lifting of the ban on political parties in May 1992 the club was thrown open to like-minded elites and turned into a think-tank of people devoted to planning and raising funds for the anticipated formation of the NPP.

Tradition was central to the formation of the NPP, which belonged to the Danquah-Busia tradition in Ghanaian politics. The NPP is the 'direct descendant of the political tradition of the United Party (UP)<sup>31</sup> and the 'successor to the [UP] tradition', the main creed of which was the 'avowal of individual freedom in a liberal democratic state where the development of the individual and of society in a free political atmosphere, under the rule of law, are the principles of the State'.<sup>32</sup> The party's association with past UP leaders is elaborated in the NPP manifesto as follows:

The New Patriotic Party is the home of all those who believe in the living philosophy of Joseph Boakye Danquah, George Paa Grant, Obetsebi Lampitey, Edward Akuffo-Addo, William Ofori-Atta, Solomon Odamtten, Kofi Abrefa Busia, Kofi Amponsah Dadzie, S.G. Antor, J.A. Braimah, Yakubu Tali (Tolon Na), R.E.G. Armattoo and others, all of blessed memory.

Their commitment to free enterprise, fundamental human rights and the vigorous pursuit of private initiative are also 'fundamental beliefs of the NPP'; beliefs which were also considered to have 'inspired the Progress Party Government' of Kofi Abrefa Busia in the period 1969–72 and 'informed all the policies and programmes of that government'.<sup>33</sup>

The party was founded in Accra in early 1992 and registered as a political party on 28 July 1992. Its emblem is the elephant while the motto is 'Freedom in Development'. The party colours are blue, red and white.

### **The NPP manifesto**

The NPP manifesto is guided by the liberal democracy leanings of the party's predecessors. The foreword is preceded by this quotation from Dr JB Danquah (regarded as the founding father of the NPP political tradition), which summarises the NPP philosophy:

[The 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 of the land should be dedicated in order specifically to enrich life, property and liberty of each and every citizen.<sup>34</sup>

Given that the manifesto was drafted when the party was in opposition, its intent was to attack the policies and programmes of Rawlings's NDC government. That objective has remained unchanged since the NPP took power. One reason Rawlings did not attend several of Ghana's golden jubilee independence activities, despite an official invitation, is his reluctance to share the platform with a government which consistently declared that the NDC had not 'done anything for the country' and which laid the woes of Ghana squarely at the doorstep of 19 years of PNDC/NDC rule.<sup>35</sup>

At the jubilee People's Assembly in Sunyani, Brong Ahafo on 16 January 2007 President Kufuor noted that his administration inherited a collapsed economy with numerous debts, unable even to purchase crude oil. Faced with that problem, he travelled to Nigeria, where President Olusegun Obasanjo agreed to supply Ghana with 30 000 barrels of crude oil daily on a 90-day credit facility that is still being used.<sup>36</sup>

The NPP's manifesto commits the party to a 'complete change from the NDC's shameful and depressing record that has led Ghana and Ghanaians into poverty and insecurity'.<sup>37</sup> Specifically, the NPP promised once in power to do the following:

- Institute a proper economic management team for Ghana, characterised by commitment, competence and moral probity;
- implement policies and programmes to solve the eight major economic problems; i.e. slow growth, high unemployment, increased rural and urban poverty, high interest and inflation rates, excessive government debt and fiscal deficit, the declining value of the

- Ghanaian cedi, and the narrow and unstable national export base.
- promote a positive partnership between the government and the private sector in ensuring persistent upliftment of business activity in the country;
  - boost business confidence and foster high levels of investment in the country by Ghanaian business, foreign private investors and resourceful Ghanaians abroad;
  - create 'jobs, jobs and jobs';
  - put in place a strategy for training, empowering and motivating each individual to participate fully in productive activities, to ensure prosperity at individual and national levels;
  - put forward a social contract binding government, employers and workers to balance productivity gains with rewards and incentives in the system; a dispensation which would operate as a vehicle for regular consultation between partners, not merely to smother crises;
  - build a strengthened and independent machinery of justice, free from political interference; to uphold the rule of law and enforce contracts under conditions of fair dealing and equity; and
  - restore law and order in general, curbing the crime rate and making the streets safe for mothers, wives, sisters and children.<sup>38</sup>

The 49-page manifesto is divided into five chapters, the first of which catalogues the failures of previous governments and vows to 'break out of the suffocating cycle of poverty and underdevelopment'.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Fulfilling the NPP manifesto<sup>40</sup>**

How far have the objectives of the manifesto been achieved, and what are the implications for the NPP membership, support base and overall development? This analysis is based on interviews with NPP officials in February and March 2007 and on four documents: respectively, the budget statements presented to parliament by the minister of finance; the Ghana poverty reduction strategy (GPRS I) 2003–2005; the growth and poverty reduction strategy (GPRS II) 2006–2009; and finally the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) country review report and the programme of action of the Republic of Ghana of June 2005.

#### **What has changed under the NPP government?<sup>41</sup>**

The NPP won the 2000 elections on a slogan of 'positive change'. It campaigned against the NDC as a corrupt government with a legacy of stagnant economic development due to poor education, health and socio-economic policies and mismanagement of state funds. It pledged to turn the economy around and improve the welfare of the people. After more than six years in office, it is pertinent to assess its progress and the remaining challenges.

#### **The economy**

The NPP government continued a market-orientated economic policy and declared a 'golden age of business'. Some macro-economic variables have improved; for instance the average annual economic growth rate rose to 5.1% from 4.3% in the Rawlings period

although according to Tsikata, this could be explained by ‘improvements in cocoa due to the crisis in Cote d’Ivoire, [better] gold earnings and probably the gradual growth of investor confidence in the “golden age of business”’.<sup>42</sup> The cedi also stabilised, with exchange rate variations dropping to 17% from 37% under Rawlings. Although inflation fell from 36% to 27% the ideal of single-digit inflation was not achieved.<sup>43</sup>

Despite such gains, poverty remains an intractable social problem. The NPP government has energetically pursued poverty alleviation initiatives though without much success. The measures include implementing the World Bank’s Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) of 2000 and formulating the Ghana poverty reduction strategies of 2003 (GPRS I) and 2006 (GPRS II). GPRS I and II aimed to create wealth by transforming the economy so as to achieve growth, accelerate poverty reduction and protect the vulnerable and excluded, within a decentralised, democratic environment. This was to be achieved through sound economic management for securing accelerated growth and increasing production and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The millennium challenge account (MCA) of 2006 was expected to create businesses such as warehousing and storage of agricultural produce, sales and marketing, and transportation and processing; thereby creating more than two million jobs for individuals within and outside the districts targeted by the programme.

The major industrial thrust of the NPP government has been to develop and promote outward-orientated and globally competitive trade and industry. To realise its private sector development goals, the government launched the president’s special initiative (PSI)<sup>44</sup> in August 2001 with the aim of identifying and developing business opportunities in the country. The PSI was expected to boost investment in salt, cassava, starch and textiles and garments, sectors in which Ghana has international comparative advantage and also a sub-regional competitive advantage.<sup>45</sup> The government’s support of business included commitments and pledges to promote, develop and sustain small-scale enterprises (defined as enterprises with fewer than 30 employees). A ministry of private sector development established in 2001 was charged with co-ordinating more than 75 NPP private sector-related programmes and projects and promoting the development and growth of a competitive private sector.<sup>46</sup>

While these policies can potentially help private sector development, the government has failed to play a central part in creating an enabling environment for private enterprises and providing support and protection to business. The president acknowledged this in his state of the nation address to parliament in January 2007. A flagship PSI project, the Ayensu Starch Factory, was closed in 2005 but expected to resume production in April 2007. Another, the Juapong Textiles Company, was shut down in June 2005, but is being reactivated by a Chinese company to resume full-scale operations in April 2007 and will employ about 800 people.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it appears that while the ‘golden age of business’ is a neo-liberal concept, its effective implementation requires robust statist measures.<sup>48</sup>

### **Millennium development goals (MDGs)**

Speaking at a 2005 event for pilot countries in the UN millennium development project, President. Kufuor indicated that the country has made modest but significant progress towards MDGs because those goals were consistent with Ghana’s own agenda for growth and prosperity.<sup>49</sup> The achievements mentioned by the president *vis-à-vis* the eight MDGs are shown in Table 2. Macro-economic indicators have not, however, translated into micro

indicators. Quality of life has fallen. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) 2004 human development index (HDI), which focuses on longer and healthy living, education and decent standards of living, indicates that in Ghana the rich are getting richer but the poor, poorer. With an HDI of 0.520 in 2004, Ghana had fallen to 138th out of 177 countries, from 131st position in 2000 with a 0.556 HDI. The incidence of poverty in Accra is 2%, but in the rural savannah, where more than seven out of 10 Ghanaians live, it is 70%. In short, despite the 2004 UN Millennium Project report's assurance that 'given Ghana's significant improvement in governance, it will be relatively easier to mobilise the needed resources for achieving the MDGs than in many other countries',<sup>50</sup> there is grave scepticism about improved standards of living for Ghanaians. Infant mortality has actually risen and access to water, health and education remains low. Many more people are falling below the poverty line. Furthermore, lack of access to jobs, social services and infrastructure has prompted youngsters to migrate from rural areas, which inhibits the social reproduction of communities and damages informal support networks. As people increasingly spend time away from where they live, younger generations leave and 'incomers' move in, the depth and breadth of social networks and their concomitant trust and reciprocity have loosened and cracked.

**Table 2: MDGs: Achievements and policy interventions**

MDGs	Achievements and policy interventions
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Adoption of the Ghana poverty reduction strategy (GPRS) to reduce poverty over the medium term; increased budgetary allocation to the social sector, rural infrastructure and making agriculture the central focus of the GPRS.
Reduce child mortality	The number of health facilities designated 'baby-friendly' by the country's child welfare clinics because of their focus on malnutrition has risen from 15 to 100 over the past 10 years.
Universal primary education	Increase in the education budget. In 2001, government committed 28.4% of its budget to the education sector, the following year 35.5% and in 2005 it was raised to 44.27%. Half of the Ghana poverty focused expenditure was devoted to basic education. To improve delivery of services, the free, compulsory and universal basic education programme has been reviewed while from the 2005-2006 academic year, public primary education will be fully fee-free; commencement in 2005 of a pilot programme to offer free feeding to primary school pupils.
Promote gender equality and empowerment	Creation of a ministry for women and children's affairs headed by a female cabinet minister; more women involved in decision-making both at legislative and executive levels of government; women enjoying equal access to educational opportunities including the study of science and other subjects traditionally dominated by males; affirmative action in admissions to state universities.

Improve maternal health	Provision of relevant services such as ante-natal and post-natal care to reduce causes of maternal mortality such as pre- and post-natal haemorrhage, obstructed labour, hypertension and eclampsia
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Establishment of a multi-sectoral Ghana national AIDS commission; dropping of prevalence rate from 3.3% to 3.1%; massive campaign against malaria on preventive measures within the framework of the 'roll back malaria' programme.
Ensure environmental sustainability	Establishment of environmental protection agency and directives to district assemblies to devote a portion of their budget on environmental issues; improved water access to urban and rural areas.
Develop global partnership for development	Assistance from developed countries to achieve the other seven goals; reached HIPC decision points and completion points; decline in the debt-service ratio from 22.5% in 1998 to 10.9 in 2003; sustainable level of debt below 25%.

Sources: ISSER, *op. cit.*, pp.28–29; *Daily Graphic*, 17 September 2005, p.20

### Human rights

The government repealed the seditious libel law that criminalised any journalist who published material considered defamatory and against the public interest. Although most people feel that the political climate is freer now than it was under the NDC government, the NDC in opposition holds the opposite view. At a press conference on 14 February 2007 the party alleged that since the NPP came to power there had been a 'pernicious attempt' not only to demonise the NDC but also to pursue a policy of selective justice, in which the judicial process is used to incarcerate many leading NDC members, with the aim of prosecuting the party out of existence. It also complained that since 2001 the homes of some NDC members had been searched under the pretext of looking for illegal weapons, while other members had been hauled before investigative bodies and the courts.<sup>51</sup> To the NDC, human rights and security remain a major problem because under the NPP government highway robberies and armed robberies involving rape and murder have become daily occurrences.<sup>52</sup>

### National reconciliation

The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) presented its findings to the government in 2004. It recommended payment of compensation to Ghanaians who had suffered human rights abuses and violations. The NDC, however, considers the reconciliation programme to be a witch-hunt against members of the Rawlings government. The NDC caucus in parliament therefore boycotted the passage of the Reconciliation Act and bipartisan agreement could not be reached. In spite of progress with reconciliation, members of the opposition feel that the NRC and its report have generated further controversy along political and ethnic lines.<sup>53</sup>

### **Gender sensitivity**

On assuming power the NPP created a separate ministry of women and children's affairs devoted to the 'empowerment' of women and children. The activities of this ministry together with other gender advocacy groups led to the Domestic Violence Act of November 2006 and the Female Genital Mutilation Act of June 2007. In addition, the government appointed the first female Ghanaian chief justice: Justice Georgina Wood was sworn into office in June 2007.

In spite of such progress, Rawlings's wife, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, threatened to lead a demonstration of women's organisations against the government during the AU summit conference in Accra in July 2007, to draw attention to the harassment of women and their organisations. This may be seen as retribution for the prosecution of Mrs Rawlings and some members of her December Women's Movement (DWM) for causing financial loss to the state through misapplication of loans, which the DWM saw as a government witch-hunt.

### **Corruption**

President Kufuor's declaration at his inauguration in January 2001 of 'zero tolerance for corruption' has fizzled out. At a public forum in 2005 where ordinary citizens questioned the president on perceptions of increasing corruption, he responded that 'if anyone has specific reports of corruption involving anyone in my government, I will dare that person to substantiate them and the law would take its course'. On another occasion Kufuor stated that 'corruption began with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden', implying that his government did not initiate corruption.

At the jubilee People's Assembly in January 2007 at Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo region the president was asked what he was doing to reduce corruption. His response was that his hands are clean and he noted that he would not tolerate laxity among his ministers at the expense of the nation. Should such a minister be found culpable of corrupt acts, Kufuor would expel him and allow the law to take its due course.<sup>54</sup>

The difficulty of investigating allegations of corruption against a government in power is self-evident. Corruption is a principal-agent problem that benefits governments in power through patronage and the largesse they distribute to their clients. Consequently it is difficult for any government to demonstrate the political will necessary to combat corruption. Without such demonstrable commitment, there is a lack of moral authority to enforce laws and punish corruption, and legal authorities lack confidence that enforcement against powerful individuals and groups will be supported by the leadership. There is also a reciprocal lack of public confidence in the commitment of political leaders.

### **Water**

The government's 2003 decision to privatise the water supply to improve service provision did not sit well with some sections of the public, who believe that the government is insensitive to the plight of the 'common man'. A coalition was formed to oppose water privatisation, which played an advocacy rôle in pointing out the alleged debilitating effect of such a venture. Mounting pressure compelled the government to withdraw the proposal. While some NPP sympathisers saw this as evidence that the government was sensitive to public opinion, opposition members, perhaps predictably, labelled it an example of government indecision.

## Energy

Electricity rationing was imposed from August 2006 due to the low level of water in the Akosombo dam on the Volta. Although power had been rationed before the 2006 move dented the government's image. NPP sympathisers and some members of the public alike believe that the NPP knew of the problem but failed to take the necessary steps to avert it. Power rationing has forced industries and factories to close, resulting in worker lay-offs. A survey of the business climate by the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), which took in 226 private business executives, found that the greatest challenge facing the private sector is national power load-shedding, followed by the high cost of credit, the quality of power supply and competition from imports. The government has acknowledged the embarrassment these problems have caused, and the president's 2007 state of the nation address emphasised that government has not 'reneged on its responsibilities but rather taken short-to-medium term measures to put an end to the embarrassing and expensive load-shedding ... over the past six months'.<sup>55</sup> Interim measures to deal with the problem include a West Africa power pool whereby Ghana will source a 200MW supply from Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, the establishment by the Volta River Authority of a 300MW generating plant in Tema; and construction of the 400 MW Bui dam on the Black Volta.

## Employment

Job creation is a key objective set out in the NPP manifesto and campaign message but government measures to address it have been *ad hoc* and reflexive. On assuming office it opened a register of the unemployed, which was considered a time-buying exercise, and the following year it launched a campaign to spray cocoa trees which purported to generate about 40 000 jobs. A series of 'presidential special initiatives' was launched to create jobs and the government launched a national youth employment programme (NYEP) in October 2006, which is expected eventually to provide employment for 155 319 people. The programme is organised into 10 modules, including agri-business, community education, teaching assistance, community protection systems and auxiliary nursing, waste and sanitation, internship, information technology and trade and vocation. So far the programme has provided almost 34 000 jobs<sup>56</sup> and the 2006 budget statement hailed the NYEP as a tangible instrument for tackling unemployment and poverty.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the millennium challenge account is also expected to create jobs.

In spite of these strategies, unemployment remains a major problem and, like the energy crisis discussed earlier, is an Achilles heel of the NPP. Many young people are frustrated because they cannot get jobs and in consequence have to turn to survival strategies such as street vending. It is disturbing that the government began developing its draft national employment policy and labour market information system only in 2006. Among priority areas under consideration are the identification of constraints on employment generation, and promoting the employment potential of specific economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and construction.<sup>58</sup>

## The passage of the Representation of the People's Amendment Law

In 2006 parliament enacted the Representation of the People's Amendment Law (Ropal), which enables those Ghanaians living abroad to vote in future elections. The passage of the law created tension between government and the opposition NDC, whose MPs staged a walk-out when parliament was about to vote on the matter. They considered Ropal an

NPP stratagem to rig the 2008 elections. The electoral commission felt that it did not have the logistics to implement Ropal in the 2008 elections; meantime, while on a trip to Europe in May 2007 the president told Ghanaians there that they could not vote in the 2008 election because the requisite mechanisms to implement Ropal were not in place. The president's speech was construed as a concession to the NDC and a recognition of the controversy that attended the passage of Ropal.

### **Failure to meet some manifesto aims: Implications and potential effects**

The obvious question is whether since 2000 the NPP government laid a foundation on which to build the private sector, develop Ghana's human resources and sustain a culture of good governance. When seven of its officials were asked to evaluate the NPP's achievements and their implications for the future, they conceded that despite some progress there is room for improvement. There are, however, two key issues for which they believed the party will be remembered. The first of these is the national health insurance scheme (NHIS) introduced in 2004 as an affordable health care delivery mechanism; by 2006, 134 district mutual health insurance schemes had been set up. The second is the capitation grant, a basic school feeding programme introduced on a pilot basis in 2005, which will be expanded to cover 92 000 pupils nationwide. This programme is expected to have a positive impact on school enrolment figures.<sup>59</sup>

On the other hand, the NPP's inability to resolve the power-rationing problem has led to mass retrenchment of workers in the private sector and dented the government's ability to address problems in a timely and decisive fashion. Its attempts to privatise the water supply system may have helped create the impression of a party not of the common man, but of the middle class. The NPP's lax anti-corruption stance also has potentially grave consequences for the 2008 elections, as does its inability to generate employment for so many young people. They voted for the NPP in the hope that it would bring positive changes by eradicating corruption and generating employment. A 2004 survey conducted by the University of Ghana Department of Political Science predicted that the government's inability to deliver on its electoral promises and manifesto objectives is likely to affect its chances in the 2008 elections. Party officials, however, have intimated that the party would still win the 2008 elections because its record is better than that of the NDC. This view may prove a false reading of the position on the ground.

The party's inability to deliver to the satisfaction of its members led to its foot soldiers expressing their concerns to party gurus including the president, vice-president and national chairman, at the NPP delegates' conference at Koforidua in December 2006. Whether this disaffection will affect the NPP's organisation and support base will not be known until the election, but such disenchantment must be of concern to the party hierarchy. The Tema East constituency vice-chairman intimated that 180 people had registered as new NPP members in his constituency alone, which to him signals that the party's support base has not been damaged by the disaffection of the rank and file.

### **Internal organisation of the NPP<sup>60</sup>**

The political parties law (PNDC Law 281, 1992), which was replaced by the Political Parties Act (Act 574, 2000) and the NPP constitution of 1992, have together influenced

the NPP's internal organisation. The law stipulates the following conditions that all political parties must meet before registration:

- The internal organisation of the party should conform to democratic principles, its actions and purposes not contrary to, or inconsistent with, the constitution;
- the party should have on its national executive committee one member from each region;
- the party should have branches in all the regions and in addition, should be organised in not less than two-thirds of the districts in each region;
- there should be in each district at least one founding member of the party who is ordinarily resident in the district or is a registered voter in the district;
- the party's name, emblem, colour, motto or any other symbol must hold no ethnic, gender, regional, religious or other sectional connotation or give the appearance that its activities are confined only to part of the country; and
- the party should not be in breach of any provisions of the Political Parties Act.

The NPP apparently met these requirements and it was registered by the Electoral Commission in 1992.

The NPP's 1992 constitution identifies three categories of membership. They are respectively founding members, that is those who were instrumental in bringing the party into being and who have paid the prescribed fees; patrons, who undertake to contribute to the national fund of the party for the support of the party organisation such extra levies as the party may impose from time to time; and members outside these two categories, who are required to have membership cards and in some constituencies, to pay monthly membership subscriptions.

The organogram in the NPP constitution reveals a structure with five levels: polling station; constituency; regional; overseas and national. This makes for a centralised, top-down structure with all other layers subordinate to the national organisation. Although the party has a fairly well-developed bureaucratic structure at national level, the rest of the organisation is weak and mainly characterised by the absence of logistical, permanent and salaried or paid staff. Like those of other Ghanaian parties, NPP activities at constituency level are regarded as voluntary rather than as a full-time business that attracts monthly salaries.

The structures at national level merit attention because of their importance to the party's direction, control and financing. The national level organisations are:

- 1 *The national annual delegates conference*, held annually at least four weeks after the last regional annual delegates conference. It is made up of members of the national council, two delegates from each constituency, one founding members' representative from each region, one patrons' representative from each region, and one representative from each overseas NPP branch. It elects officers such as the chairman, vice-chairman, general secretary, national secretary, national organiser, and national women's organiser. It is the supreme governing body of the party.
- 2 *The national congress* is responsible for electing the party's presidential candidate. It is held not less than 24 months before the national election. Those eligible to vote for the presidential candidate are 10 delegates from each constituency, one representative of

the founding members from each region, one representative of the patrons from each region, and one representative from each overseas branch.

- 3 *The national council* may give such directives to the national executive committee and the national chairman as may be considered necessary for the well-being of the party.
- 4 *The national executive committee* is responsible for directing and overseeing the operations and activities of the party unless otherwise directed by the national council.
- 5 *The council of elders* consists of members who have given selfless service in the formation, welfare and progress of the party and its forerunners.
- 6 *Special organs* for which provision is made under Article 14 of the NPP constitution. They are the national women's wing, the national youth wing, and any other organs as the national council may direct, such as the tertiary educational schools congress and various regional and district branches of the youth wings, known as the 'young elephants'.

In the national level structures, specific rôles and responsibilities have not been spelled out, which has led to conflict over overlap and duplication of functions. The NPP's internal democracy is, however, reasonably healthy despite some problems and indeed has been strengthened because the chairman of the party, not its presidential candidate, acts as party leader. Unlike the NDC, the NPP does not impose any one candidate on the party as its presidential flag-bearer and at least five candidates enter the contest. There have, however, been instances when a perceived lack of internal democracy has caused deep resentment. One former national organiser<sup>61</sup> resigned in 2000 to joined the then ruling NDC after having been forced to step down in favour of another candidate in the Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency. Similarly, a second national vice-chairman<sup>62</sup> withdrew from party activities in the run-up to the 2000 elections because he had been overlooked in the selection of a presidential running mate. He later resigned to join the NDC, citing a lack of internal democracy<sup>63</sup> and was elected MP for the NDC in 2004, but resigned from both the NDC and parliament on the grounds of lack of internal democracy in that party, too: he cited fears for his life and heckling at the 2005 NDC congress. He returned to the NPP fold, claiming that it is more democratic than the NDC where, according to him, there is no internal democracy because Rawlings and his wife run the party on whim and caprice.

It is also fair to state that Ghana's party elections have become opportunities for contestants to distribute largesse (cars, agricultural implements, lanterns, clothes and so on) and buy political clients (constituency, regional and national party executives and members) to guarantee victory. Party primaries have become a horse-trading exercise between contestants and voters.

#### **Political actors and the NPP constituency<sup>64</sup>**

The main political actors in the NPP are the national, regional and constituency chairmen, the general secretary, and regional and constituency secretaries. The national organiser, aided by the women's and youth organisers, also seeks electoral support. Depending on the level, the chairman instructs the general secretary, or regional, or constituency secretary to convene meetings of the executive committee or general meetings, congresses

or conferences, where decisions can be taken regarding the performance and activities of the party.

The general secretary is a full-time employee. As head of the secretariat he is pivotal to the party's entire administration. The national organiser, treasurer, and the women and youth organisers complement him in the secretariat. The NPP also has a directorate of campaign strategy and communication as well as supervisory, disciplinary, constitutional and legal committees.<sup>65</sup>

The head office possesses resources that other structures lack. Because head office holds information that it can use to secure consent for its programmes, it controls the formal means of communication with local executives. Frequent visits by national executives enable head office staff easily to pass on information regarding party policies and programmes.

Some sections of the electorate, particularly NDC supporters, believe that despite the activities of these party office-bearers the NPP operates as a 'mafia' and that the real political power brokers within the NPP are those in government. The president, vice-president, ministers, members of parliament and district chief executives, are seen as 'moneybags' and are therefore expected to provide money to run the party. Interviews with party officials indicate that these office-holders contribute to party finances because they are direct beneficiaries of the party's operations. These sources were less than frank, since party financing is a closely guarded secret in Ghana, but one can glean from their responses that party funds come from various sources, including officials holding government positions. Other than the president, one individual mentioned as an especially powerful force in government machinery is the chief of staff and minister for presidential affairs. He has the president's ear and can make or unmake political office holders.

If these assertions are all true, one might assert with some confidence that the effectiveness of party structures has tended to weaken under the stress of government. Others, however, hold that the real political actors are the NPP founding members, who are its key financiers. They also have a shared vision and philosophy and connect well with the party's history and tradition. Despite being the 'invisible hands' behind certain party decisions, the founding members are limited in their influence because they are not involved in the day-to-day running of the party. Apparently the founding members are committed to fight for the cause of democracy. Their motivation for financing the party includes continuing the democratic tradition of the party as initiated by Danquah and Busia; they draw a parallel with founder members of football clubs who earn no dividends but instead are committed to the cause of football. Akenten Appiah Menkah,<sup>66</sup> a wealthy industrialist, is a founding member of the NPP because of its tradition of promoting democracy, a liberal economic environment, competition and the growth of the individual. These ideals have always influenced him regardless of whether the NPP was in power.

Political parties in Ghana have their roots in ethnic constituencies. The NPP draws most of its members from the Akan ethnic group. Originally, it found support mainly in urban areas but this trend seems to have reversed, given the inroads it made in rural areas that enabled it to win the 2000 and 2004 elections.<sup>67</sup> The NPP's support base and the so-called ethnic undercurrents can be analysed by looking at voting patterns in the 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004 polls. There is a general perception that ethnic undercurrents played a major rôle in these four elections. We can examine the validity of this assertion by analysing the outcomes of the four elections for trends towards ethnic voting. This process

involves disaggregating regional voting results and making a case that winning elections in Ghana requires support beyond ethnic constituencies or regions.<sup>68</sup>

Since 1992 the Volta and Ashanti regions have been the major electoral strongholds of the NDC and the NPP respectively. In 1992 the NPP presidential candidate, Adu Boahen, received his highest vote of 60% from Ashanti Region, against his lowest vote of 3.6% from the NDC's Volta Region stronghold. Rawlings, the NDC presidential candidate, received his highest plurality of 93.2% from Volta Region and the lowest of 32.9% from Ashanti Region. It is instructive to note, however, that Rawlings's lowest vote was far higher than Adu Boahen's 3.6% from Volta Region (see Table 3a). The PNC under its former president Hilla Limann came second to Rawlings in the Upper East and Upper West regions, with 32.5% and 37.1% respectively. Some people explain Limann's impressive performance on the grounds that he was from Upper West Region, but this is debatable because the PNC has not fared well in elections subsequent to Limann's exit (see Tables 3b, c, d and e and 4). In the 1996 election there was no significant change in voting patterns in Volta and Ashanti regions: Rawlings obtained his highest vote of 94.5% from Volta Region and his lowest 32.8% from Ashanti. Meanwhile the NPP presidential candidate, JA Kufuor received his highest vote of 65% from Ashanti Region and his lowest (4.7%) in Volta. The PNC's vote fell appreciably, dropping to 13.7% and 14.2% in Upper East and Upper West regions respectively (see Table 3b). This implies that personality, rather than ethnicity, may play the more significant part in garnering votes.

After the Rawlings era during the 2000 and 2004 elections, significant developments emerged in voting patterns. In 2000 the NDC's candidate, Mills, won 86.81% and 22.73% of votes from Volta and Ashanti regions respectively. NPP candidate Kufuor obtained 75.56% and 6.64% from the Ashanti and Volta regions respectively (see Table 3c); the PNC improved slightly but still did not reach the high level set by Limann in 1992. In the 2000 presidential run-off between Mills and Kufuor, the voting pattern in the two regions did not change. Mills received 88.47% of the Volta Region votes while Kufuor got 11.53%, in contrast to Ashanti Region which gave Kufuor 79.89% of the votes against Mills's 20.11% (see Table 3d).

In the 2004 elections Mills and Kufuor obtained 83.8% and 14.2% respectively from Volta Region. In Ashanti Region Kufuor took 74.6% against Mills's 24%. It is instructive to note that the NPP more than doubled its votes in Volta Region between 2000 and 2004, while the NDC improved its performance in Ashanti by a little over 1% (see Table 3e). In the parliamentary elections the NDC won 21 out of 22 seats in Volta Region (the NPP won the remaining seat) while in Ashanti Region the NPP won 36 out of 39 seats with the NDC winning the remaining three (see Table 4).

Since 1992 so-called ethnic voting has been confined to Ashanti and Volta regions. This is because the two main parties have their traditional strongholds in these regions, and it is a phenomenon not new to electoral politics. Both parties, however, must rely on other regions to win elections, because the presidential votes and parliamentary seats from the two regions are not enough to win an election. Adding together the votes in Tables 3 a, b, c, d, e and the number of seats won by the two parties from the two regions in Table 4, clearly shows that those regions alone would not bring either party anywhere close to victory. The 39 and 22 parliamentary seats of Ashanti and Volta regions amount to only 61 out of a total 230 seats in parliament (see Table 4), far short of electoral victory. This confirms the view that winning Ghanaian elections requires support beyond traditional

ethnic or regional party constituencies.

Indeed it can also be argued that ethnicity is relatively unimportant. If it were the major factor most presidential candidates since 1992 would have done better in their home regions. For instance, Mills is from Central Region, but did not perform well there in the 2000 and 2004 elections (see Tables 3 a, b, c, d and e); yet he did well in Volta Region, presumably due to a backlash against the Rawlings legacy.

Ethnicity alone cannot explain voting patterns in the elections of 2004 and earlier. Some commentators have suggested that the NPP won the 2004 elections in regions with at least 40% Akan populations, while regions with between 2% and 10% Akans voted for the NDC. The evidence for this is patchy. Explaining electoral outcome solely in terms of ethnicity amounts to uni-causal reductionism that seems to have no strong empirical basis.<sup>69</sup>

Three explanations may be offered for the Ashanti and Volta regions vote since 1992. First, dominant parties usually have strongholds from which they draw support, and Volta and Ashanti regions are the respective support bases of the NDC and the NPP, the two dominant parties. Secondly, voting patterns are also influenced by factors such as personality, the quality of governance and poverty levels, and a party's ideology, programme, organisation and access to resources. The impact of Rawlings's personality in Volta Region cannot be underestimated even though this is diminishing with the NDC's second term in opposition. Rawlings has also admitted that he could have done better for Volta Region in terms of development projects when he was in power. Even though Rawlings does not hail from Northern, Upper West or Upper East regions, those three regions have voted for the NDC since 1992 because of voters' perceptions that the NDC improved their lot while it was in power. Thirdly, voting patterns have shown that ethnic sentiments are an instrument for contestation or re-configuration of power rather than an element in social fractionalisation.<sup>70</sup>

**Table 3a: Results of presidential election 1992, by region**

Region	Turnout (%)	Total votes cast	NDC (Rawlings) votes (%)	NPP (Adu Boahen) votes (%)	PNC (Limann) votes (%)	NIP (Darko) votes (%)	PHP (Erskine) votes (%)
Western	47.8	410 266	60.7	22.8	8.6	5.6	2.4
Central	47.7	349 751	66.5	26.0	1.9	3.5	2.2
Gt. Accra	46.0	516 853	53.4	37.0	4.3	4.1	1.2
Volta	62.4	491 551	93.2	3.6	1.6	0.7	0.9
Eastern	51.0	517 733	57.3	37.7	1.9	2.3	0.7
Ashanti	50.5	732 990	32.9	60.5	2.5	3.6	0.6
B/Ahafo	46.0	407 189	61.9	29.5	5.3	2.0	1.0
Northern	50.7	344 008	63.0	16.3	11.0	1.5	8.3
UWest	51.5	138 752	51.0	8.9	37.1	1.8	1.2
UEast	51.2	218 783	54.0	10.5	32.5	1.4	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>4 127 876</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 3b: Results of presidential election 1996, by region**

Region	Turnout (%)	Total votes cast	NDC (Rawlings) votes (%)	NPP (Kufuor) votes (%)	PNC (Mahama) votes (%)
Western	74.5	708 589	57.3	40.9	1.8
Central	74.3	562 923	55.7	42.9	1.4
Gt. Accra	78.4	1 219 833	54.0	43.3	2.7
Volta	81.8	730 251	94.5	4.7	0.8
Eastern	81.1	853 938	53.8	45.0	1.2
Ashanti	79.8	1 258 032	32.8	65.8	1.4
B/Ahafo	71.8	640 474	61.7	36.0	2.3
Northern	73.7	596 269	62.1	32.0	5.9
U/West	75.8	195 437	74.6	11.2	14.2
U/East	79.8	334 528	69.0	17.4	13.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>7 225 161</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 3c: Results of presidential election 2000, by region**

Region	Turnout (%)	Total votes cast	NDC (Mill) votes %	NPP (Kufuor) votes (%)	PNC (Mahama) votes (%)	CPP (Hagan) votes (%)	GCPP (Lartey) votes (%)	NRP (Tanoh) votes (%)	UGM (Werekobrobby) votes (%)
Western	58.8	622 296	43.95	50.54	0.85	2.90	0.85	0.76	0.00
Central	63.9	542 441	43.73	49.68	0.51	3.19	1.27	1.34	0.00
Gt. Accra	59.5	1 094 317	43.21	53.18	0.27	0.96	0.58	1.43	0.00
Volta	60.3	586 703	86.81	6.64	0.33	1.38	1.41	0.56	0.01
Eastern	63.9	745 235	41.34	54.97	0.61	0.91	0.92	1.0	0.00
Ashanti	65.1	1 271 975	22.73	75.56	0.25	0.47	0.53	0.35	0.00
B/Ahafo	58.4	606 146	44.64	50.59	1.72	0.63	1.05	1.09	0.00
Northern	64.2	564 399	50.75	29.56	8.12	6.78	1.82	2.30	0.01
U/West	59.9	178 742	62.29	15.51	15.57	1.31	2.14	2.40	0.01
U/East	60.3	288 616	52.07	21.46	19.90	1.37	2.45	1.91	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>6 500 870</b>	<b>44.85</b>	<b>48.37</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 3d: Results of presidential run-off 2000, by region**

Region	Mills	Kufuur	Valid votes	Rejected votes	Total votes cast	Registered voters	Turnout (%)
Western	229 978 (39.10%)	358 138 (60.90%)	588 116	6 460	594 576	1 076 778	55.2
Central	199 006 (39.69%)	302 414 (60.31%)	501 420	7 106	508 526	870 876	58.4
Gt. Accra	421 954 (40.05%)	631 506 (59.95%)	1 053 460	6 182	1 059 642	1 845 889	57.4
Volta	589 719 (88.47%)	76 839 (11.53%)	666 558	10 884	677 442	983 588	68.9
Eastern	269 270 (37.59%)	447 154 (62.41%)	716 424	6 713	723 137	1 187 573	60.9
Ashanti	258 623 (20.11%)	1 027 132 (79.89%)	1 285 755	7 041	1 292 796	1 976 959	65.4
B/Ahafo	245 300 (41.70%)	342 961 (58.30%)	588 261	7 174	595 435	1 041 920	57.1
Northern	277 038 (51.10%)	265 076 (48.90%)	542 114	13 149	555 263	930 911	59.6
U/East	154 703 (57.17%)	115 880 (42.83%)	270 583	7 547	278 130	480 894	57.8
U/West	104 533 (61.97%)	64 163 (38.03%)	168 696	5 360	174 056	303 264	57.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 50 124 (43.10%)</b>	<b>3 631 263 (56.90%)</b>	<b>6 381 387</b>	<b>77 616</b>	<b>6 459 003</b>	<b>10 698 652</b>	<b>60.4</b>

Source: Ghana Gazette, 2, 12 January 2001.

**Table 3e: Results of presidential election 2004, by region**

Region	Turnout (%)	Total votes cast	NDC (Mills) votes (%)	NPP (Kufuor) votes (%)	PNC (Mahama) votes (%)	CPP (Aggudey) votes (%)
Western	83.6	819 162	40.8	56.6	0.8	1.6
Central	84.4	707 471	39.2	58.5	0.8	1.4
Gt. Accra	84.4	1 750 707	46.3	51.9	0.9	0.7
Volta	87.6	705 827	83.8	14.2	0.9	0.9
Eastern	82.2	920 672	38.3	60.2	0.6	0.7
Ashanti	88.7	1 655 760	24.0	74.6	0.8	0.4
B/Ahafo	83.0	763 005	46.0	51.9	1.2	0.7
Northern	88.0	756 661	56.9	36.2	5.0	1.7
U/West	81.2	211 735	56.6	32.2	9.5	1.5
U/East	81.6	334 785	53.9	31.6	12.6	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>8 625 785</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 4: Performance of parties in presidential and parliamentary elections 2004, by constituencies won**

Region	NDC (pres.)	NDC (no. of seats)	NPP (pres.)	NPP (no. of seats)	PNC (pres.)	PNC (no. of seats)	CPP (pres.)	CPP (no. of seats)	Independent	Total
Western	8	8	14	12	0	0	0	2	0	22
Central	2	2	17	16	0	0	0	1	0	19
Gt. Accra	11	11	16	16	0	0	0	0	0	27
Volta	22	21	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	22
Eastern	7	6	21	22	0	0	0	0	0	28
Ashanti	3	3	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	39
B/Ahafo	9	10	15	14	0	0	0	0	0	24
Northern	21	17	5	8	0	0	0	0	1	26
U/West	8	7	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	10
U/East	12	9	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>230</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

### **Interaction between the NPP and opposition parties**

The NPP candidate failed to win the 2000 presidential election outright because he was unable to secure the 50%+1 majority required. In the run-off, all opposition parties except the NDC and EGLE urged their supporters to vote for the NPP. Thus, when it came to power, the NPP represented an inclusive government. It appointed the opposition PNC's national chairman, Mallam Issa, as minister of sport and the former flag bearer of the CPP, George Hagan, as chairman of the National Commission for Culture. Upon the exit of Issa following his complicity in misappropriation of funds and subsequent imprisonment, the NPP replaced him with another leading CPP member. Interaction of the NPP with other opposition parties is limited to a few public sector appointments.

The incumbent NPP also works with other parties in the inter-party advisory committee, designed as a common platform to deal with electoral issues and problems and to advise the electoral commission. The IEA has also established a caucus for chairmen of political parties in which party chairmen deliberate on issues aimed at forging unity between the parties. The NPP depends on co-operation with other parties to pass legislation, except for rare instances such as the debate over the national reconciliation commission bill from which the NDC minority walked out in protest. NPP co-operation with the main opposition party, the NDC, is poor, given the bad blood between the two parties. The increasingly intense polarisation of Ghana on partisan lines over certain issues is as visible in parliament as it is in the media and among the public.

### **The NPP and election 2008**

In the 2008 elections, as many as 16 candidates contested the presidential candidature of the party in the primaries. This was potentially divisive for the party, and for that reason the chairman of the NPP Council of Elders in Ashanti, Appiah Menkah, called for the party's candidate to be elected before March 2007, so that the nominee could build up and unite the party.<sup>71</sup> The emergence of as many as 16 candidates was not, however, new: the NPP prides itself on offering an opportunity to every member to contest any position.

The other issue the party had to resolve was that of the deposit to be paid by aspirant candidates. In September 2006 Menkah recommended that each of the candidates should pay a deposit of 500 million cedis,<sup>72</sup> because to him 'the party is non-financial as a party in power'. But his comments prompted an outcry from people within and outside the party, who believed this could deter the right calibre of person from standing.

The large number of candidates, the fact that the NPP was strapped for cash and the constitutional limitation on the incumbent president were all factors that made the 2008 election a turning point for the NPP. The party sought a candidate who could confidently succeed Kufuor. In the view of one newspaper this paragon would be:

an independent and committed personality who can build, unite and carry along the whole party, Ghana and the whole world but who is also nationally marketable ... he must be selfless, far beyond corruption and reproach, a visionary with the commitment to put the nation into the circles of developed countries. ... We need a presidential candidate who can build and protect local industries to national competitive standards.<sup>73</sup>

The NPP entered the 2008 election weighed down by baggage. There were perceptions of corruption at high levels of government; Eric Amoateng, the NPP MP for Nkoranza North was arrested in 2006 for drug trafficking in the US; and unemployment and a weak economy added to the general disillusionment at the party's inability to meet the expectations of most Ghanaians.

### RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMON GOALS: THE NPP AND REGIONAL OR NATIONAL PARTIES

Given the close relationship between President Kufuor and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, one would have expected a close relationship between the NPP and the People's Democratic Party of Nigeria. This is not the case. Kufuor and former President Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo were also close, but that personal friendship was never reflected in close relations between the NPP and the Togolese People's Rally. One explanation for this is that parties in the region do not see themselves as pursuing common goals or interests. Nonetheless, there does appear to be a relationship of sorts between the NPP and the Republican Party in the US, perhaps because the two share a common emblem (the elephant) and a common ideology of a 'property-owning democracy'. At the domestic level there seems to be no formal relationship between the NPP and opposition parties, mainly because the minority parties are predictably disenchanted with the NPP. Although the opposition parties usually attend congresses of the NPP to read 'solidarity' messages, such messages are seen as merely a public relations ploy.

There is a perception especially within the NDC of a cordial relationship between the NPP, Kufuor (himself an Ashanti royal) and the Asantehene, the king of Ashanti and arguably the most powerful traditional authority in Ghana. This relationship is being linked to the creation of an Asante nationalism, which although it has the merit of popular appeal may be counter-productive since it carries with it dangers for multi-party democracy, regional cohesion and overall national unity: issues particularly relevant when considering the relative under-development of Northern Region among others.

Some observers, especially from the opposition, have noted that important visitors to Ghana are asked to pay homage to the Asantehene, while other chiefs or kings are not given the same standing. Others have cited preferential treatment accorded to the Asantehene, such as allowing his motorcade to drive straight onto the tarmac at the international airport, a privilege normally reserved only for the head of state. These allegations may be true. But the Asantehene is a progressive king who wants to co-operate with any government in power, as indeed he did with Rawlings's NDC administration. The Asantehene has pointed out that he will work with any government in power because he is interested in promoting the development not only of his people but also the entire country. He has set up an Asantehene educational trust fund to promote education throughout the country irrespective of ethnicity. Moreover, he has spoken publicly against some NPP policies that he thought would not promote national progress. These facts rather contradict the perception that the NPP's relationship with the king may create a new Asante nationalism.

## CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS FROM THE GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE

In summary, in its transformation from an opposition to a practising government, the NPP had a mixed record. It met some of the objectives in its election manifesto, while others were still outstanding. It faced many challenges that weakened its base and structure, as well as causing its defeat in the 2008 elections. Its cohesion depended on its ability to deal with issues decisively and promptly, but disenchantment and disaffection in some quarters crippled its unity and stability. This notwithstanding, some who left the party returned to the party fold, and thus far the NPP, unlike the NDC, has not suffered the kinds of major internal upheaval that could threaten its existence. The perception of the NPP as an Akan party may be true, but of itself cannot be turned to political advantage, because votes from non-Akan areas are needed to ensure electoral victory. Extended to a general principle, this means that winning elections in Africa involves support beyond a mere ethnic constituency.<sup>74</sup> While ethnicity is often present in political conflict in Africa, it is less an element in social fragmentation than an instrument for contesting or reconfiguring political power.<sup>75</sup>

A second lesson is that opposition is different from government. Running a government in Africa with inadequate resources, and with patronage as a key debilitating factor, is a Herculean task. While in opposition, the NPP criticised the NDC government for its inability to implement most of its policies. Having itself been in government for eight years, it realised that its ability to achieve many objectives was constrained by a lack of resources and an unfavourable global environment that carried profound implications for domestic policies and programmes.

The leaders of a political party must take account of a plethora of political, economic, social and cultural factors that may run counter to the party's expressed ideals. Those ideals must therefore be fine-tuned to suit the context within which they are being implemented. Certain of the NPP's proposals (e.g. the election of district chief executives) could not be effected because the party realised that Ghana is not ready for them, given the particular context in which the country finds itself.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of policy recommendations can be distilled from this study. Firstly, political parties are the formal vehicles of political competition in any democratic state. To promote healthy competition, it is imperative to have a level playing field and to sharply reduce the over-exploitation of incumbency advantage by ruling parties through some state funding of political parties, based on their relative strength.

Secondly, political parties must receive some training in governance to avoid repetition of their predecessors' mistakes when they take over the running of government.

Thirdly, though every competition has winners and losers there must be clear and precise rules and regulations that govern the electoral process and give legitimacy to the results, so that losers do not feel cheated and in consequence resort to non-partisan forms of conflict.

Fourthly, a united opposition is a *sine qua non* for democracy. In Ghana, however, opposition parties have competed with one another rather than coming together to provide

a united front against the incumbent government. Some have attributed the factionalism among opposition parties to the 'divide and rule' tactics of the incumbent government; the NDC, for instance, accuses the NPP government of harassing its members in order to cast the party into oblivion.

Fifthly, the presidential system of government in Africa does not seem to promote genuine political party contestation and democracy because office-holders have been unable or unwilling to maintain a proper balance between their dual positions as head of state (father of the nation) and head of government (party leader). Most presidents behave like heads of government and become excessively partisan, exhibiting the 'winner take all' characteristics that are precisely what the presidential system is intended to correct.

Finally, even though ethnicity cannot be excluded from political party structures and bases, it has advantages and disadvantages. Electoral victory should not be seen as based solely on ethnicity and regionalism. To gain electoral advantage parties need a broader constituency than the narrow confines of ethnicity and regionalism can offer, and they must conscientiously work beyond ethnic issues towards a broader democracy.

#### POSTSCRIPT: THE DEFEAT OF THE NPP IN THE 2008 ELECTIONS

The 7 December 2008 presidential elections were contested by eight candidates, including one independent candidate (see Table 5). The parties that contested the elections were the NPP, the NDC, the CPP, the PNC, the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), the DPP and the Reformed Patriotic Democrats (RPD). The two front runners were the incumbent government's Nana Akufo-Addo and the NDC's John Atta Mills. While the NPP campaigned on the slogan 'Moving Ghana Forward', the NDC's campaign centred on 'Change for a Better Ghana'.

Some of the key issues included a strong and effective leadership, fighting corruption, security and safety, unemployment, the economy, the drug menace, the enforcement of sanctions, general conditions of living in the country and the performance record of the two governments when they were in power, i.e. the NPP and NDC. For specific regions like Greater Accra, the main issue was the return of land that was taken over by governments and which was not being used for the purpose for which it was acquired, but sold to some public officials. Even though the campaign was issue based, it sometimes degenerated into 'gutter politics', with some politicians using belligerent, inflammatory and foul language. In addition to this, some challenges became apparent, such as the abuse of incumbency, the lack of logistics for the Electoral Commission, and controversy over the voters register and registration of voters.

The elections were bitterly fought and the results show that they were basically a close and a straight fight between the NPP's Akufo-Addo and the NDC's Atta Mills (see Table 5). Akufo-Addo received 49.13% of the vote, while Atta Mills received 47.92%, a difference of 1.21%. None of the candidates therefore secured the 50%+1 requirement to win the presidency. Akufo-Addo needed an additional 0.88% to avoid a run-off.

In the parliamentary elections, the NPP lost 21 seats to the opposition NDC (see Table 6) and won seats in only three of the 10 regions of Ghana. The NDC won the remaining seven regions.

The presidential run-off took place on 28 December. It was thought that the NPP's Akufo-Addo would win, since in the 1979 and 2000 run-offs,<sup>76</sup> the leading candidate in the first round of the presidential elections had gone on to win the second round. However, history did not repeat itself as expected, and the NDC's Atta Mills won the elections with 4 501 466 votes, i.e. 50.13% of the vote, while the NPP's Akufo-Addo had 4 478 411 votes, or 49.87%, a difference of 0.26%. This was seen as inconclusive by the Electoral Commission in its press conference on 30 December 2008, because there was an outstanding election to be held in the Tain constituency, which had 53 890 registered voters and was a swing constituency, since it voted NPP in 2004 and NDC in 2008. The people of Tain did not vote in the run-off because of a disagreement between the two parties about a missing 1 800 ballots in the constituency. Furthermore, the NDC and NPP complained about some results in their strongholds in the Volta and Ashanti regions, respectively, and the Electoral Commission therefore asked them to provide evidence to support their claims, which was factored into the final results before the winner was declared. Surprisingly, the NPP withdrew from the Tain constituency election, which was held on 2 January 2009, with the claim of opposition intimidation. In the final results declared, the NDC's Atta Mills obtained 19 566 votes, bringing his vote tally to 4 521 032, or 50.23% of the vote, as against the NPP's Akufo-Addo's 4 478 411 or 49.77% (see Table 7) after 2 035 NPP supporters voted in Tain, even though the party had officially boycotted what is referred to as the 'Tain tie breaker'. With this victory, the NDC won in eight out of the 10 regions in the presidential elections.

It is instructive to note that in the presidential run-off especially, the delay in releasing the final results caused tension in the country. Some shops closed earlier in Accra on 29 December, while some supporters of the NDC stormed the headquarters of the Electoral Commission demanding the declaration of results and creating the impression that the commission was manipulating or trying to rig the elections. A counter-demonstration was held by the NPP to show its disapproval of the behaviour of the NDC supporters. There were also hot exchanges between the representatives of the two parties in the 'strong room' of the Electoral Commission, where results are received for vetting before they are released to the public. Several mediatory efforts were made by the Ghana Peace Council and other civil society organisations to ease the tension and what seemed to be the imminent breach of law and order by militant party supporters.

### **Why did the NPP lose the 2008 elections?**

A plethora of reasons explain the defeat of the NPP. They are as follows:

- 1 *The opulence and show of wealth exhibited by some officials of the NPP while in office was a factor.* The 16 presidential aspirants who contested the party primaries displayed arrogance and opulence uncharacteristic of Ghanaian politics. Most people wondered how the 16 aspirants got the money to pay a nomination fee of the equivalent of \$25,000 and to mount an expensive campaign. The perception was that the aspirants — most of them former ministers — had engaged in corruption to get the money from the national coffers for their campaign.
- 2 *The top party officials were seen as arrogant and uncaring.* Some ministers and their deputies, as well as district chief executives, made themselves inaccessible to party

supporters and activists for discussion on party issues and activities. National and regional executives did not make sufficient effort to travel across the country to interact with the party's foot soldiers.

- 3 *There was lack of internal democracy.* Some candidates were imposed on the electorate during the primaries, while others were disqualified or forced to step down in favour of rather unpopular candidates against the will of the constituents. Consequently, a large number of supporters decided to stay away when the elections were held. Examples of cases of the imposition of candidates occurred in constituencies such as Tain, Yendi, Suhum and Bekwai. Indeed, the four independent candidates who won parliamentary seats were originally NPP candidates who, not satisfied with the party's primaries, decided to contest the elections as independents.
- 4 *Complacency on the part of party officials, who did not think that they would lose power, was an issue.* This was exacerbated by personal differences among some top party officials. For instance, there were reports that the national chairman of the NPP and his general secretary were not on good terms.
- 5 *There is also the perception that there was lack of maximum support for the party's campaign from the incumbent president, John Kufuor.* He did not seem to give full endorsement to Nana Akufo-Addo, simply because his favourite, Alan Kyeremanten, lost the presidential primaries.
- 6 *The campaign promises of the NPP in 2000 and 2004, such as reducing corruption, dealing with armed robbery, generating employment and promoting other governance principles, were largely unfulfilled.* There was therefore the yearning for change, which indicates that the electorate can no longer be taken for granted.
- 7 *The NPP's government inability to redistribute resources equitably had a negative effect.* For instance, in the Greater Accra region, the chiefs and people were dissatisfied with the government's handling of the return of unutilised land taken over by previous governments and its development by private people, especially party politicians.
- 8 *The inability of the government to deal with foreign trawlers fishing in Ghanaian territorial waters and therefore depriving local fisherman of their means of livelihood and the irregularity of the availability of pre-mix fuel used by fishermen for their boats contributed to the loss of votes in the coastal regions of Central and Western.*

From all these reasons, it is clear that the NPP shot itself in the foot or committed political suicide, and its defeat should be a lesson to all parties that staying in power depends on fulfilment of the party's electoral promises, humility, unity, frugality, internal party democracy and staying in touch with the electorate.

**Table 5: The 7 December 2008 presidential elections results**

Party	Name of candidate	Votes received	% of votes received
NPP	Nana Akufo-Addo	4 159 439	49.13
NDC	John Atta Mills	4 056 634	47.92
CPP	Papa Kwesi Nduom	113 494	1.34
PNC	Edward Mahama	73 494	0.87
DFP	Emmanuel Ansah-Antwi	27 889	0.56
Independent	Kwesi Amofo-Yeboah	19 342	0.33
DPP	TN Ward-Brew	8 653	0.10
RPD	Kwabena Adjei	6 889	0.08

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 6: Parliamentary seats held by parties, 1996–2008**

Party	No. of seats (1996)	No. of seats (2000)	No. of seats (2004)	No. of seats (2008)
NDC	133	89	94	115
NPP	61	103	128	107
CPP	5	1	3	1
PNC	1	3	4	2
Independent	-	4	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>230*</b>	<b>229**</b>

\* The total number of parliamentary seats was increased in 2004 from 200 to 230.

\*\* The parliamentary results for Akwatia constituency is yet to be declared because of a pending court case.

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra.

**Table 7: The 28 December 2008 presidential run-off elections in Ghana**

Region	Constituencies	NPP votes	NDC votes	Valid votes	Rejected votes	Total votes cast	Reg. voters	Turnout (%)	Rejected votes (%)
Western	22	384 028	414 144	798 172	9 038	807 210	1 214 128	66.48	1.12
Central	19	325 454	378 975	704 429	10 359	714 788	1 020 761	70.03	1.45
Gt. Accra	27	798 556	953 086	1 751 642	9 166	1 760 808	2 514 739	70.02	0.52
Volta	22	102 173	630 899	733 072	6 924	739 996	1 012 122	73.11	0.94
Eastern	28	536 366	396 277	932 643	10 380	943 023	1 306 852	72.16	1.10
Ashanti	39	1 438 820	479 749	1 918 569	12 259	1 930 828	2 317 686	83.31	0.63
B/Ahafo	24	384 237	408 029	792 266	9 047	801 313	1 164 155	68.83	1.13
Northern	26	311 774	500 953	812 727	14 161	826 888	1 097 597	75.34	1.71
U/East	13	117 477	223 994	341 471	6 915	348 386	495 884	70.26	1.98
U/West	10	81 561	134 926	216 487	4 637	221 124	328 834	67.24	2.10
<b>National total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>4 480 446</b>	<b>4 521 032</b>	<b>9 001 478</b>	<b>92 886</b>	<b>9 094 364</b>	<b>12 472 758</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, Accra

## LIST OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

Dan Botwe, former general secretary and minister of information, February 2007.

Dr Osei Akom, executive member, NPP, February 2007.

John Boadu, polling agent, March 2007.

George Theophilus Acquah, first regional vice-chairman, Accra, March 2007.

Charles Agyaebra, Tema East constituency secretary, March 2007.

Cecilia Amoako Mensah, Tema East constituency assistant secretary, March 2007.

Nii Amoo Addy, former NPP MP, Ayawaso West Wuogon, March 2007.

Some others interviewed wish to remain anonymous.

## ENDNOTES

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- 48 Arthur P, *op. cit.* This notwithstanding, three-quarters of private businessmen were still confident that 2007 would be good for their operations. In a maiden Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) Climate Survey conducted by the AGI in December 2006, out of 226 chief executives of private sector organisations only 4% expected 2007 to be poor for their businesses. The survey sponsored by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) covered AGI members in textiles, garments, knitting, food, drinks, beverages, metals, packaging, printing and stationery, drugs and chemicals, electricals and electronics, building products, wood processing and furniture, toiletries and cosmetics, and services in Accra, Tema, Western, Central, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo. The survey, however, established that big and especially medium-sized companies were much more optimistic than small companies. For those who said 2006 was good, 3% were small companies, 24% were medium-sized and 13% large companies.
- 49 *Daily Graphic*, 9 April 2005, p. 15.
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- 51 Since 2001, the NPP government has prosecuted some NDC functionaries who were convicted for causing financial loss to the state under a law passed by Rawlings' NDC government. Some of the functionaries imprisoned are Kwame Peprah, a former minister of finance, Victor Selormey, a former deputy minister of finance and Dan Abodakpi, a former minister of trade and industries, who was jailed in February 2007. Also being prosecuted in the court is Nana Konada Agyeman-Rawlings, the wife of former president Rawlings. The impression being created by the NDC is that officials of the party are being hounded and persecuted and that the NPP government is carrying out a vendetta against the NDC.
- 52 *Daily Graphic*, 15 February 2007.
- 53 Ayee JRA, 'Political leadership and democratic consolidation', in Bofo-Arthur K (ed), *Voting for Democracy in Ghana: The 2004 Elections in Perspective*. Accra: Freedom Publications, 2006, pp. 79–99.
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- 62 The second national vice-chairman is Professor Alhassan Wayo Seini, who became MP on an NDC ticket in the 2004 elections, but returned to the NPP because of lack of internal democracy in the NDC.
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- 66 Menkah was the founding father who suggested that presidential candidates should make a deposit of 500 million cedis (\$50,000).
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- 68 Ayee JRA, 'Voting patterns in the 2004 elections', in EC/FES, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–100.
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- 71 *The Chronicle*, 4 October 2006, p. 8.
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- 73 *The Chronicle*, 4 October 2006, pp. 8–9.
- 74 Monga C, *The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998.
- 75 Davidson B, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*. New York: Times Books, 1992; Englebert P, *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 2000.
- 76 In the 1979 presidential elections, Dr Hilla Limann of the People's National Party, who won the first round against Victor Owusu of the Popular Front Party, went on to win the second round. Similarly, in the 2000 elections, John Kufuor of the NPP led in the first round against the NDC's John Atta Mills and went on to win the second round.

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