

The Ghana 2000 Elections: Voter Choice and Electoral Decisions

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Abstract

The 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana deserve notice, not because of their political significance but because of the theoretical weight they carry. The shift in electoral fortunes between the two main political parties in the country provide a unique leverage for assessing theories of voting behaviour. This article examines in detail the electoral performance of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party in the 2000 elections, treating the elections as opportunities for voters to endorse or repudiate the incumbent (NDC) regime's record in particular. Contrary to earlier assertions that Ghanaians pay attention not so much to regime performance and achievements as they reach their political decisions, we show empirically that the Ghanaians could also choose between parties and candidates when deciding on an election.

Introduction

"The people may not really govern themselves, but they can stir up a deafening commotion if they dislike the way they are governed." (V. O. Key Jr. 1964: 6).

To what extent is the outcome of the Ghana 2000 election a reflection of the above quotation? On 7 December 2000, approximately 9.8 million registered voters went to the polls in Ghana in the third competitive democratic elections since 1992. At stake were the office of president and the 200 seats in Ghana's Parliament. The 7 December presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana were an important test case for how sustainable democracy is in a country that is widely seen as a model democracy on the African continent. Commenting on the international significance of the Ghana 2000 elections, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General Kofi Annan had this to say: "with these elections, Ghana has demonstrated that democracy and its institutions are taking root in Africa. The international community should rejoice at this orderly and democratic transfer of power." (United Nations,

New York). Thus the importance of the December elections extends beyond Ghana's own democratic development (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001: 110).

The elections were also important from the standpoint that for the first time in the history of Ghana, government has been transferred to the opposition via the ballot box. In Gyimah-Boadi's view, the 2000 elections presented the first test of the workability of the constitutional limits on presidential tenure, as well as the real opportunity to achieve a peaceful change of power through the ballot box (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001: 103). What even raised the stakes of the 2000 election to dizzy heights was the fact that doubts persisted in the minds of many Ghanaians about whether President Rawlings would abide by the constitutional term limitation on the presidency.

In Ghana, like in most parts of Africa, incumbents generally hardly concede defeat. They are generally removed through military coups, rebellious insurgencies or assassinations (Ayittey, 2000). Of the 190 African heads of state since independence only 20 relinquished power voluntarily, and less than 10 stepped down in a democratic transition. The bulk simply retired after long years in office. It is against this background that Clapham (1985) argues that, "the control of the African state is too appealing to be abandoned by incumbent presidents." (p. 41).

Another intriguing characteristic of electoral politics in Africa is that the incumbents, however bad, tend to win elections. It is not uncommon for ruling parties and their leaders to manipulate the vote with ease. Most African heads of state see nothing odd in using the trappings of office to campaign for re-election. Some presidents also appoint those who run the election. And, when all else fails, they can loot the treasury to buy votes. Furthermore, with only a small middle class, many of whose members owe their wealth to their closeness to the government, opposition parties are poor and fractious, and defections to a cozy official job are not uncommon.

In this way, the ruling party finds it easy to play one ethnic group off against another. This in part explains why until the electoral victory of Mauritanian Socialists in June 1982, no national government in an independent African country had been transferred to another by electoral means. Little wonder, therefore, that Western researchers, for instance, Austin (1964, 1970) and Apter (1968), have concluded that elections and referenda in Africa, notwithstanding an all-nation electoral process, sometimes have little in common with the principle of democratic expression, and involve infringements of the law on the part of the authorities. Free and fair elections were on the whole very relative. Rigged elections made the picture of democracy almost ludicrous in comparison to Western-type democratic systems.

Ghana is no exception, though it is also not a typical case. It would be recalled that the opposition parties protested the outcome of the 1992 presidential elections by boycotting that year's parliamentary elections. The presidential and parliamentary elections of December 1996, though seen as generally free and fair, President Rawlings and his National Democratic Congress (NDC) party's clear electoral victory in those elections raised some doubts among opposition parties as to

whether the vote was conducted without undue government interference. After almost twenty years in power, President Jerry John Rawlings was constitutionally barred from seeking another term in office. Against this background, Ghanaians and the international community viewed the successful staging of free and fair elections in December 2000 as a litmus test for Ghana's commitment to multi-party democracy.

The 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections saw a highly competitive battle for the succession of President Rawlings and his ruling NDC party. In all there were ten registered political parties in Ghana, seven of which nominated candidates to compete the 7 December presidential seat. This notwithstanding, the presidential contest was really a straight fight between Vice-President John Atta Mills of the ruling NDC and John Kufuor, the flag-bearer of the main opposition party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP).

The Outcome of the Elections

When the results were announced, the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) party saw its 133-seat parliamentary majority whittled down to 92. The main opposition political party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP) won 100 of the 200 seats in parliament while the remaining seats went to minor parties and independent candidates. It is important to note that independent candidates hold four of the seats. None of the presidential aspirants secured the constitutionally required vote of 50% plus one of the votes cast on the 7 December 2000 elections, a run-off was thus scheduled for 28 December 2000.

The Electoral Commission of Ghana declared John Agyekum Kufuor of the NPP the winner of the 28 December 2000 presidential run-off election on 30 December 2000. Kufuor won 57% of the votes cast in the second round of elections. His opponent the Vice-President, John Atta-Mills of the ruling NDC won 43% of the total votes cast. When these figures are compared with both the 1992 and 1996 elections they make a dramatic contrast. In 1996, the NDC presidential candidate, Rawlings had won in all the regions except the Ashanti region with 56.8% of the total votes cast and had obtained majority votes in 142 constituencies. The NDC's closest rival, the NPP and its presidential candidate J. A. Kufuor received 40.3% of the total votes most of which were from his home region, Ashanti.

The victory by an opposition presidential candidate without any major violence or allegations of electoral misconduct, and the adherence of the incumbent President, Jerry Rawlings, to the constitutional limit of two presidential terms, has been heralded as evidence of Ghana's continued political stability in the increasingly unstable West African region (MJ, December 22/29, 2000: 486).

An Appraisal of the Outcome of the Elections

The pattern of the results had some semblance to both the 1992 and 1996 elections. The election results themselves suggest continued progress towards a more competitive party system in Ghana. The Danquah-Busia party tradition reasserted

itself after a humiliating setback in the 1992 and 1996 elections. The NPP triumphed in 100 of the 200 constituencies and the bulk of the most populous constituencies in the country. This was the first time since the early 1970s that the Danquah-Busia party tradition was able to reverse the trend of electoral slide in presidential and parliamentary elections. Should this be considered a turning point for the NPP?

Above all, the victory of the NPP presidential candidate, John Kufour, with 57% of the vote in the presidential run-off over, the NDC presidential candidate, the incumbent Vice President Atta Mills dealt a stunning setback to the NDC. It would be recalled that Professor Atta Mills, the tax expert, was nominated Rawlings's Vice-Presidential candidate in 1996 because he was considered a political asset to the party. Jefferies (1997) contends that he was brought to the party partly on the calculation that he would help win votes from the Nkrumahist tradition, the Western and Central regions. Moreover, his "clean" image made him a viable candidate to be groomed for the party's presidential candidate in the year 2000.

How are we to understand the strong showing of the main opposition party on the one part and the dismal performance of the incumbent ruling NDC on the other? Could this be seen as an indictment of the Rawlings's legacy? These questions are particularly significant because every populist regime like that of Rawlings hopes to change the population's opinion and values through social, educational, political and economic reforms that will minimize support for the regime's opponents. Moreover, the political popularity of ex-President Rawlings and more specifically his electoral successes in 1992 and 1996 have largely been explained in terms of his leadership qualities and his performance as an astute politician (Jonah 1998; Ayee 1998, 1998; Borre, 1998; Ninsin 1998, 1993; Jeong, 1998; Bluwey, 1998, Allah-Mensah; Anebo, 1998; Ayee, 1997; Jefferies 1997, Jefferies and Thomas, 1993).

According to Jonah (1998), "Rawlings is presented as the politician who stands for the ordinary Ghanaian, farmers, fishermen, hairdressers and mechanics; he is also given great credit as the one politician in Ghana's recent history who has improved the living standards of Ghana's rural population in many parts of the country" (p. 431). Moreover, in Ghana as in most other African countries, electoral politics turns not only on numbers, but also on the special advantages or disadvantages which may accrue from differing patterns of incorporation or supporting the winning candidate or political party.

Explaining electoral politics and election outcomes in Ghana (Ninsin 1998) put it succinctly as follows:

in so far as elections are perceived as the ultimate means for ensuring access to the limited national resources which a group of national political elite control for strategic distribution, it is those who control access to such limited national resources who have the greatest possibilities of winning votes at an election. Rawlings and his party men won the 1996 elections because the electorate perceived them as the ones who control the scarce resources needed for development of their communities. They were also the

ones with demonstrable capacity and commitment to deliver or punish communities that do not show sufficient support at the polls. (pp. 226–7).

If Ninsin's argument is tenable what then explains the dismal performance of the NDC party in the 2000 election? For the party and its leaders according to Drah (1995: 29–36; 1996: 63–107; 1998: 523), were basking in the belief that “apart from it [the NDC] which is the party of the people and which is led by ‘progressives’ of impeccable ‘integrity’ and ‘truth’ there is no other political party now, nor is one ever likely to emerge in the foreseeable future which can legitimately lay claim to the allegiance of a sizeable portion of the citizenry.”

If there were any real issue differences between the two major candidates (Vice-President John Atta Mills and John Kufuor) for the presidential slot, it was that the incumbent Vice-President John Atta Mills campaigned side by side with ex-President Rawlings (Rawlings sometimes overshadowing him) on the NDC's slogan of “Continuity in Change”, while John Kufuor called for a “New Team” that stands for “Positive Change”. On many public policy issues the two major parties, the NDC and the NPP, to a large extent converge pragmatically.

It is against this background that political analysts and observers are divided about factors that caused the shifts in voting patterns across the country in the 2000 election. Most, but not all, ascribe the electoral outcome of the 7 December 2000 elections to “protest” or “negative voting”. Fiorina and Shepsle (1989) proposed an explanation of protest or negative voting as follows: “within a principal-agent framework, rational voters who seek to control politicians adopt an electoral compensation scheme that possesses negative voting properties; that is, a scheme that punishes disapproved legislatures behaviour more severely than rewards approved behaviour.

Post-elections commentaries across Ghana resonate with such contention. For example, a businessman at Mankessim in the Central region, Mr Frederick Kwamina Reynolds, has attributed the defeat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the December general election to protest voting against some arrogant appointees of the government. Mr Reynolds, who was the immediate past NDC chairman for the Mfantseman West Constituency, said:

some of the appointees and members of parliament had made themselves tin gods and had completely lost touch with the electorate. Their lifestyles were incompatible with the teachings of the party, he added. Mr. Reynolds, who was speaking in an interview with the Ghana News Agency at Mankessim on Saturday, said though the party had a good flag bearer whose capabilities and qualities were acknowledged, the electorate decided to prepare the grounds for him by removing those undesirable elements from their posts by voting out the party from office. He assured Professor John Atta Mills that, with the grounds now prepared for him, he would be given the mandate in the next election. He urged Professor Mills not to regard the outcome of the election as his rejection by the electorate but to remain resolute and start reorganizing the party for the next election. [Accra, 30 December (Reuters)]

Mr Reynolds therefore urged the NDC party functionaries to learn a lesson from the last election and at all times place the interest of the people above anything else since "power belongs to the people". He said "the NDC could have ruled for a longer period if the functionaries had avoided arrogance and complacency. All is not lost if we can accept our mistakes and make amendment. We can regain power sooner than later."

In Northern Ghana, a stronghold of the NDC, where swing voters added weight to Kufuor's victory in the run-off vote, it was reported that opposition and ruling party supporters celebrated side by side describing the electoral outcome of the 2000 elections as a victory for all Ghanaians. It is equally reported that even in the Volta Region where John Atta Mills and the NDC won over 88% of the votes, an NDC supporter is reported as explaining the outcome as follows: "we want our democracy to work like American democracy" (AFP Saturday, 30 December 2000). Gregg Quintin, a British diplomat among the International Observer Group (IOG), marvelled at the calm and peace that greeted Ghana after such a tumultuous change as saying "there is no ill feeling among winners and losers." Emmanuel Anning of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) described the aftermath of the election in these terms:

Ghana had been brought back into a neocolonial state, turned into a beggar nation and lost its national pride. ... Ghanaians have waited for this(*change*) for decades (AFP Saturday, 30 December 2000) [emphasis mine].

According to Gyimah-Boadi (2001: 109) "the lacklustre performance of the ruling party, including electoral defeat of its ministers forced the NDC to become introspective and candidly examine the reasons for its defeat. It openly conceded some of its shortcomings, including undemocratic internal practices such as top-down imposition of parliamentary candidates on constituencies, abuse of office, and arrogance."

The "protest voter" hypothesis represents an extension of the rejection voting model, where voters displeased with a certain policy or personality within their party defect to another party. It also applies to the dynamics of voter turn-out and the appeal of third parties (Fiorina, 1981; Kernell, 1977; Key, 1966). When an individual is faced with an external situation that is perceived as undesirable, he is presented with two options: (1) take remedial action; or, (2) exit the scene. In an electoral context, the individual who has become disenchanted with the political system either votes or abstains. The internal or self-perceived capabilities of the individual involved may influence whether one participates or withdraws. An individual who feels politically inefficacious is less likely to become involved in politics even if one believes that the current political situation is in need of remedy. External evaluations of the political system, such as the responsiveness of political parties or the effectiveness of the electoral process, also affect one's decision on whether to participate.

In rational choice terms, such attitudes, both internal and external, fall into an expanded conception of the category as Downs (1957) conceived it, the value of

seeing democracy continue and a broader conception of the "expressive" components of the vote, such as how much individuals care which party wins the election. These long-term attitudes have been shown to be deep-seated and persistent (Aldrich, 1993; Craig and Deaton, 1977; Fiorina, 1976; Hinich, 1981; Piker and Ordeshook, 1968).

Contextual considerations, such as the nature of the political choices offered in any one-election year, also influence the voting decision. Here, the difference in benefits derived if one candidate wins over another comes into play. Aldrich (1993) argues that the linkage between general orientations and election-specific forces must be better established. As an example, Aldrich (1993) suggests that low levels of efficacy lead to lesser benefits from electing any particular candidate to office. This linkage lends support to the hypothesis that alienated individuals are more likely to abstain from voting than their more allegiant counterparts; a conclusion consistent with recent studies of voting behaviour (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975; Southwell, 1985; Zipp, 1985). Drawing from the above, we suggest that the context of the Ghana 2000 election, specifically, the exit of the Rawlings candidacy, transformed certain individuals, from likely voters to non-voters.

The "protest voter" hypothesis differs from the strategic or "tactical" model in which individual preferences are often overridden by assessments of the competitive situation. As well-established in rational choice literature, this model assumes that an individual will vote for his second preference in a situation in which his first preference is unlikely to win, therefore avoiding a "wasted" vote (Black, 1978; Cain, 1978; Downs, 1957; Duverger, 1967; Palfrey, 1989).

In contrast, the protest voter may behave in an opposite manner to the strategic voter. He or she may gravitate toward a third party candidate because that candidate has less chance of victory. Bowler and Lanque (1992: 489) describe the protest voter as one "who may vote for a third party not so much to unseat the incumbent as to reduce the majority status of that incumbent and so send a message of dissatisfaction." Bowler and Lanque (1992), found that protest voting was more likely to occur in those districts in which third party strength was weakest. Alienated individuals, per se, may not regard a vote for an unlikely winner as "wasted," but as a statement of dissatisfaction. We therefore suggest that, among party supporters, alienated individuals are more likely to vote for an opposition candidate. Alienation can, and often, leads to abstention, but when conditions are ripe, it can result in electoral participation, albeit of a negative quality.

When we examine the patterns of party support of Ghanaian electors and compare them over time, a noteworthy pattern appears to be one of increasingly volatile electoral behaviour and a corresponding fragmentation of established party loyalties. This was particularly true in the 2000 elections. Gymiah-Boadi (2001: 105) rightly notes, "the 2000 election was also marked by high-profile defections from the opposition to the ruling party. The dramatic defection to the NDC of Alhaji Inusah, former campaign manager of the NPP presidential candidate, recalled a similar defection to the NDC in 1996 by Faustina Nelson, a long-time Nkrumahist activist

and head of the women's wing of the opposition Convention Party." It seems not implausible, therefore, to expect some linkage between oscillating voting habits and policy evaluations of political parties and party candidates in Ghana.

In the analysis that follows we examine the party leader and the parliamentary (local) candidate effects in turn, applying multivariate statistical analysis to the raw data of the 2000 elections. But first, I review the literature on electoral politics in Ghana. The key to mass participation in a democracy is the electoral process. Elections represent a way of making a choice that is fair to all—one that leaves each member of the electorate a reasonable hope of having his alternative elected. The use of elections, therefore, implies the existence of several possible alternatives from which to elect, and that within the electorate, different groups and individuals are likely to indicate their political preferences by voting for one or the other alternative. By serving this function, elections and their results confer legitimacy to those who emerge as winners. The winning party is to be determined by the number of votes it commands. Such a government can claim rightly that it is ruling for and on behalf of the people who elected it in accordance with democratic principles. However, it is important to emphasize that the mere existence of elections does not make for democratic government. This is so because as Ninsin (1993: 177) rightly observes, "while in Ghana an election may be seen as a mechanism for securing democratic representation, in practice it serves a different purpose."

The literature on elections in Ghana is voluminous but not altogether tidy. The evidence is, in fact, thoroughly divided on the question of exactly which factors influence electoral outcomes. Most, but not all the investigations, report that elections in Ghana mask important issues. Some studies find that policies programmes (or manifestos) and ideologies are entirely without political significance (e.g., Ninsin, 1996, 1993, 1991; Chazan, 1979, 1987; Austin, 1976, 1975, 1964; Apter, 1963).

In his seminal work on electoral politics in Ghana, Austin (1964) observed the instrumental role of community conflicts and local associations in mobilizing electoral support as well as determining electoral outcomes. Writing on Politics in Asunafo, Dunn (1975: 191) states: "Policies programmes (or manifestoes) and ideologies have usually played a strikingly insignificant role in shaping voters' choice." Chazan's analysis of electoral politics in Ghana closely collaborates with Austin and Dunn. According to Chazan (1987), issues have rarely supplied an important vehicle for mobilization in post-independence Ghana. In her view, "once issues were set, politicization during elections tended to occur around social groups, local interest, and personalities and not around contents" (p. 67). Others report that personal obligations to candidates, traditional loyalty, ethnicity and other primordial considerations influence voting behaviour (Jonah, 1998, Jefferies, 1997, Chazan et al. 1992; Chazan, 1989, 1983). Echoing this viewpoint, Jonah (1998) writes:

parliamentary elections by their nature are markedly different from presidential elections. People usually know the candidates personally and intimately. Local factions, and rivalries between towns and villages, exert

their own distinctive influence on elections. To a much greater extent local and personal factors cloud the issues more in parliamentary than in presidential elections. (p. 439).

Comparing the Ghanaian electorate with its British or American counterpart Ninsin (1993) agrees with Austin (1970; 1975) that the Ghanaian electorate is influenced by the community's interest, which is always its need for development. He succinctly puts it as follows: "the Ghanaian electorate does not vote as sovereign individuals aiming to implement certain democratic ideals or rights but as members of the community aspiring to improve their material conditions (p. 182).

According to Owusu (1970), the individual prefers outcomes with higher utility to those with lower utility and chooses actions to receive more highly valued outcomes. That is, voting is an instrument to achieve outcomes. The vote is invested to achieve desired outcomes. Drawing from these empirical findings, Austin (1975: 10) concludes:

so long as Ghana remained a predominantly peasant and small town society, tradition as locality, communal and personal relationships of the community are bound to decisively influence voting behaviour. And therefore, issues of social inequality or class will continue to be less salient.

The community model of voting has two basic claims: that each community/social group votes for the party that serves its interests. Individuals as individuals, that is, independent decision makers do not exist. What voters claim to be their own, personal political attitudes simply reflect the interests of the community/group to which they belong. Secondly, the model assumes that potential participants are utility maximizers. Given the low odds an individual vote being pivotal to political outcome, no instrumental benefits are likely to outweigh the costs of action. Consequently, in contrast to other rational models of voting behaviour, which treat voters as independent individuals with relationships to candidates but not to each other, the community model hinges upon the recognition that Ghanaian voters make their choices within a social structure. There exist group/community affiliations and layers of intermediary elites between politicians and citizens. Loyalty within the community translates into power outside it (Austin, 1975; Ninsin 1993, 1998; Nugent, 1996; Chazan, 1979, 1987). Community leaders will invest more resources in the consumption benefits as the candidate provides benefits (patronage) in exchange for community support. Thus, the process can be seen most easily in terms of what Owusu (1970) describes as "instrumentalist calculations".

While this line of argument offers an explanation for the pattern of, for example, regional block voting in Ghana, it has little to offer in regard to those voters who do not act in accord with the model—for example, working-class (urban voters) who vote differently from the rural voters. For instance, we may ask, how do we explain the split voting in some constituencies in the 1996 and in the 2000 elections? In the 1996 elections, Rawlings won the presidential elections in constituencies such as Abelekuma South in Greater Accra; Offinso North and Asokwa East in Ashanti; Wenchi East in Brong-Ahafo; Bimbilla and Wulensi in the North Region; and

Ellembelle in Western region, however, his party parliamentary candidates were defeated in these constituencies (Ayee, 1998).

In this paper I contend that changes over time have not merely been haphazard, but that the electoral impact of policy evaluation of parties and party leadership have increased systematically in the last two decades. Consequently, the 2000 election in Ghana provided an opportunity through which many disenchanting individuals and alienated communities expressed their frustration at the political system. Specifically, such individuals and communities protested the current state of political affairs by voting for the main opposition political party.

With the data available here, this proposition cannot be directly tested, but evidence can certainly be brought to bear on the question whether such a trend has in fact occurred in Ghana. Other important questions about party leader effects that can be addressed with the data include whether prominent politicians other than the actual party leaders of the day have an electoral influence; and finally, whether incumbent NDC parliamentary candidates (MPs) have stronger effects than opposition candidates in the parliamentary contest? I view the voter's utility for each party to be a function of the voter's evaluation of the party's leadership qualities and its ability to (perform) deliver the goods.

The Model

My dependent variable is the percentage of ballots cast for the NDC presidential candidate. The basic idea is that there are good reasons to think that personal economic grievances—discontent and frustration toward the political system or a regime may have important consequences for political behaviour. These are intuitions, of course, but there is substantial and respectable evidence that fluctuations in general economic conditions measured in aggregate, powerfully affect presidential and parliamentary elections' outcomes (Kramer, 1971; Meltzer and Vellrath, 1975; Tuft, 1978). Thus periodic election reassures the people that they are not powerless all of the time. One way of measuring this is the percentage proportions of vote share, of each of the political parties or presidential candidates in an election. In the absence of survey data or opinion poll data on Ghana elections, these percentages were taken as theoretical frequencies for each of the parties in each of the 200 constituencies electing a representative to parliament.

First, it was necessary to run a basic regression model. In the model, the NDC percentage share of vote in both the presidential and parliamentary elections in the 200 constituencies (10 regions) are seen as a function of the regional variations, whether the NDC parliamentary candidate is an incumbent or non-incumbent and how his/her constituency perceives him/her.

$$\text{NDC\% share of the vote} = a + b_2(\text{BAreg}) + b_3(\text{Cenreg}) + b_4(\text{Westreg}) + b_5(\text{Eastreg}) + b_6(\text{Northreg}) + b_7(\text{UEreg}) + b_8(\text{VOLTareg}) + b_9(\text{GrtAreg}) + b_{10}(\text{incum}) + e$$

where Ashreg = coded 1 if Ashanti Region, 0 otherwise
 BAreg = coded 1 if Brong-Ahafo Region, 0 otherwise

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Centreg | = | coded 1 if Central Region, 0 otherwise |
| Westreg | = | coded 1 if Western Region, 0 otherwise |
| Eastreg | = | coded 1 if Eastern Region, 0 otherwise |
| Northreg | = | coded 1 if Northern Region, 0 otherwise |
| Uereg | = | coded 1 if Upper East Region, 0 otherwise |
| Voltareg | = | coded 1 if Volta Region, 0 otherwise |
| GrtAreg | = | coded 1 if Greater Accra Region, 0 otherwise |
| ndcinc | = | coded 1 if the NDC parliamentary candidate is incumbent, 0 otherwise. |
| <i>e</i> | = | the error term |

A couple of points are in order regarding the model. First the model explicitly incorporates the distinction between incumbent and non-incumbent parliamentary candidates. The NDC presidential candidate John Atta Mills is from the Central Region. His vice-presidential mate is from Upper East. As stated elsewhere in this paper, John Atta Mills' dreaded challenger, John Kufuor, hails from the Ashanti Region with a running mate from the Northern Region. Second, ordinary least squares (OLS) analysis is used to estimate the model. Data for the analysis were collected from the home page of Ghana Electoral Commission, Election 2000 (<http://www.ghanaelections.com/>).

Methodologically, one issue I need to address is that my data meets the assumption under multiple regressions and that I obtain generalized least square estimates which are more efficient than the OLS in this case. In the empirical studies, I adopted this approach and subjected my initial OLS estimates to regression diagnostics.

Diagnostic

Regression diagnostics can be described as statistical techniques that systematically search for unusual or influential data, that is, observations that lie outside patterns set by other data, or those that strongly influence the regression results. To determine these unusual or influential data points, and extreme departures from the Gauss-Markov assumptions on which the desirable properties of ordinary least square (OLS) rest, I used the regression residuals, $e_i = y_i - \hat{y}_i$. As is well known the residuals can be used to detect some form of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation and can provide the basis for mitigating these problems. I used the residuals to test for the approximate normality of the disturbance term, since even moderate departures from normality can noticeably impair estimation efficiency and the meaningfulness of standard tests of hypotheses (Belsley et al. 1980). It must, however, be mentioned that the OLS estimates retain their property of best linear unbiasedness even in the absence of normality of the disturbances.

Three diagnostics measures based on the regression residuals are presented here. First, I tested for heteroscedasticity using the graphical method. The residuals

(μ_i^2) from the OLS regression were used as proxies for the (u_i^2). With a sample size of 200, this should not present any serious problems. The estimated residuals (μ_i^2) were plotted against the σ_i from the regression model. The idea here is to determine whether the estimated mean value of Y is systematically related to the squared residuals.

Next, I performed the Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity using each of the independent variables. The results equally do not show any sign of heteroscedasticity. Furthermore, the Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey (BPG) test was conducted. First, p_p was defined as $= \mu_i^2/\sigma_i^2$. The error sum of squares (ESS) was obtained and a theta value for the BPG test computed. Theta has a chi-square (χ^2) distribution with degrees of freedom p , where p is the number of parameters. The theta (Q) value as depicted in the Stata output is 14.536. Reading from the chi-square distribution with 10 degrees of freedom we obtain 18.31. We observe that the Q value (14.536) is smaller than the critical chi-square of 18.31 for alpha of 0.05, thus accepting the hypothesis of homoscedasticity. This test then, collaborated the graphical method of no serious heteroscedasticity. A closer examination of the coefficients and their t-ratios depicted below show no signs of heteroscedasticity.

Table I: Summary Statistic for the Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey (BPG) Test

| P | Coefficient | Std. Err. | t-ratio | P>t |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Regbrong | 4627843 | 5481529 | 0.844 | 0.400 |
| Regcentr | -0.1255815 | 5711175 | -0.220 | 0.826 |
| Westreg | 0.4451055 | 0.5559353 | 0.8010 | 0.424 |
| Eastreg | 0.7521235 | 0.4938263 | 1.523 | 0.129 |
| Northreg | -0.3055651 | 0.5220078 | -0.585 | 0.559 |
| Ueastreg | 0.6734649 | 0.6758493 | 0.996 | 0.320 |
| Voltareg | -0.1558158 | 0.5892961 | -0.264 | 0.792 |
| Grtareg | 0.3386338 | 0.5237514 | 0.647 | 0.519 |
| Upwestreg | 0.8935373 | 0.7710763 | 1.159 | 0.567 |
| Incum | 0.1756815 | 0.3060255 | 0.574 | 0.567 |

The second is the normal probability plot, which displays the cumulative normal distribution as a straight line whose slope measures the standard deviation and whose intercept reflects the mean. Thus a failure of residuals to be normally distributed will often reveal itself as a departure of the cumulative residuals plot from a straight line. Outliers often appear at the end of the cumulative distribution. We observe from the normal-quartile plot of the residuals that this is the case. We therefore suspected that there are cases with high leverage values or large residuals.

The residuals for each observation were saved and the Cook's "D" value computed for each case. A closer examination of the "D" values shows that there are no large Cook's "D" values. A critical value for the Cooks "D" was computed, $[D = 4/(N-P)]$. Where N = size of the sample and P the number of parameters. In this case $"D" = 4/(200-11) = 0.021$. Comparing each of the "D" values to this critical value, we observe that six cases (constituencies) had values exceeding this value. This corroborated the observation from our normality plot that there exist a few cases that are outliers.

As a diagnostic tool, then, I was interested in observations that result in values of covariance ratio that are not near unity, for these observations are possibly influential and warrant further investigation. In order to provide a rough guide to the magnitude of such variations from unity the "hat" values for each observation was computed. The "hat" value measures the leverage of each case. We observed that none of the cases has unusually large "hat" values. To test whether any of the "hat" values have extreme influence on the regression line, a critical value for "hat" was computed using $2*P/N$, where P is the number of parameters and N , the sample size. The critical value in this case is $2(11)/200 = 22/200 = 0.11$.

We notice that except in the Upper West Region, there are no cases with "hat" values exceeding this critical value. We could not drop these cases first, because the essence of diagnostics is not to exclude data points that may be distorting the estimation process underlying the relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables, and second, the substantive interpretation that these outliers in particular have for our model. It would be recalled that on the eve of the 2000 elections all the political parties saw the Northern vote as crucial for the 2000 election outcome and for geographical balance of power. Consequently, all the political parties selected their vice-presidential candidate from the North except the United Ghana Movement Party (UGM). Also except the Peoples National Convention Party that won a seat there the region was carried by the NDC. This might partly explain these outlier cases in the region.

In the phase of non-normal errors, the robust regression is more efficient than the OLS regression. Consequently, we run the robust regression to determine the fit of our regression model. We notice that the robust regression estimates are pretty similar to the OLS estimates. Furthermore, it is important to note that except a few initial cases, there is not much variation in the robust regression weights and that all the weights are fairly close to 1. This is an indication that the data do not have dramatic influential outliers or serious violation of the normality assumption.

Thirdly, I tested for the problem of multicollinearity. Gujarati (1995) explains that multicollinearity among independent variables is often accompanied by OLS estimators with large variances, which are related to the expansion of confidence intervals used in hypothesis of a zero or no relationship between variables. As a result hypothesis tests conducted on multicollinear variables are unreliable.² Moreover, the presence of collinear or perfectly collinear variables compromises the precision of estimates produced by regression equations. As a diagnostic tool, the "Variance Inflation Factors" (VIF) were computed for each of the parameters from both SPSS and Stata. As depicted in Table II, the data has no serious threat of multicollinearity.

Table II: Summary Statistics of the Variables

Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | B | | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.388 | 0.043 | | 9.099 | | 0.000 | |
| | Region = Brong-Ahafo | -0.147 | 0.035 | -0.218 | -4.202 | 0.000 | 0.612 | 1.633 |
| | Region = Central | -0.145 | 0.036 | -0.196 | -3.987 | 0.000 | 0.681 | 1.467 |
| | Region = Western | -0.122 | 0.036 | -0.172 | -3.425 | 0.001 | 0.651 | 1.537 |
| | Region = Eastern | -0.151 | 0.032 | -0.245 | -4.785 | 0.000 | 0.627 | 1.595 |
| | Region = Northern | 0.260 | 0.033 | 0.401 | 7.799 | 0.000 | 0.623 | 1.604 |
| | Region = Upper East | 0.271 | 0.043 | 0.311 | 6.282 | 0.000 | 0.671 | 1.490 |
| | Region = Upper West | 0.330 | 0.049 | 0.312 | 6.705 | 0.000 | 0.757 | 1.321 |
| | Region = Volta | 0.567 | 0.038 | 0.803 | 15.060 | 0.000 | 0.579 | 1.727 |
| | Region = Grt. Accra | -0.177 | 0.033 | -0.267 | -5.275 | 0.000 | 0.644 | 1.553 |
| | candidate is NDC incumbent | -8.810E-02 | 0.020 | -0.213 | -4.507 | 0.000 | 0.739 | 1.353 |

a. Dependent Variable: percentage votes for NDC presidential candidate

Since my data is from a single election year, I did not suspect any problem of autocorrelation since this is mostly associated with times series data. The Durbin-Waston test statistic is 1.861, indicating that my regression equation is not compromised by the presence of auto correlation.

Because our data meets the Gauss-Markov assumptions, we can now interpret the output generated from the OLS. As can be seen in Table I, the model provides an impressive fit to the data for the 2000 Ghana elections. Looking first at the results, both the R-squared (R^2) and the adjusted R-squared indicate that the model explains nearly 69% of the variance in the NDC presidential vote. Moreover, every variable in the equation is statistically significant. Looking at each predictor separately, we notice that consistent with the pattern of voting in the two previous elections (1992 and 1996) the Volta region (the World Bank of the NDC party)³ scored the highest vote share for the party in the 2000 election. The sign of the coefficient is also positive, indicating a higher NDC vote share than the excluded region, Ashanti. The beta is 0.803 predicts highly the NDC presidential candidate's share of the vote. In all the regions, five regions with the negative coefficients, the NDC presidential candidate received a smaller share of the vote than in Ashanti, Kufuor's home region compared to the excluded region. This is to be expected. Looking back to history, the people of the Volta region have never lent their support to the Danquah-Busia tradition. The NPP being an offshoot of the Danquah-Busia tradition, it is unthinkable that the region will vote for the NPP. Beside, the region looks to the NDC party as a party for their son (ex-President Rawlings).

Table III: Summary Statistics of Presidential Run-off

| Region | Constituencies | Mills | % | Kufuor | % | Rejected votes |
|-------------|----------------|--------|------|--------|------|----------------|
| Ashanti | 23/33 | 235502 | 19.5 | 972170 | 80.5 | 0 |
| Brong-Ahafo | 20/21 | 228359 | 40.3 | 337597 | 59.7 | 0 |
| Central | 17/17 | 198682 | 39.8 | 301139 | 60.2 | 0 |
| Eastern | 26/26 | 278325 | 36.5 | 484131 | 63.5 | 0 |
| Western | 18/19 | 206761 | 37.5 | 344054 | 62.5 | 0 |
| Northern | 21/23 | 253296 | 51.4 | 239048 | 48.6 | 0 |
| Upper East | 12/12 | 156997 | 58.4 | 111987 | 41.6 | 0 |
| Upper West | 8/8 | 104534 | 62.0 | 64165 | 38.0 | 0 |
| Volta | 18/19 | 560929 | 89.2 | 67970 | 10.8 | |
| Grt. Accra | 21/22 | 403725 | 39.5 | 616729 | 60.4 | 1230 |

An examination of the coefficient for the Central region shows rather unexpected results taking the estimate at its face value. We did not expect the NDC presidential candidate to perform badly in his home region. However, the coefficient of -145 indicates that the NDC vote share in the Central region was 14.5 percentage points lower than in Ashanti region. This indicates that John Atta Mills opponent Kufuor beat him in his own region.

Also worth noting is the relatively high value for the coefficient associated with the variable tapping NDC parliamentary incumbency. As expected, the variable is statistically significant and the sign is in the negative direction. The regression coefficient on the parliamentary incumbency variable is -0.085 which suggests that the NDC presidential candidate's share of the vote was 8.5 percentage points lower in constituencies where an NDC incumbent was running for parliament. This seems to be evidence of a protest vote. Having an incumbent NDC MP on the ballot actually hurts the NDC presidential candidate. In absolute terms this may not be very large, but in substantive terms this is quite significant considering the fact that all things being equal, it is not unreasonable to expect sitting NDC members of parliament to have a stronger electoral impact, since their incumbency will have almost certainly given them a higher public profile for a longer period than any challenger could hope for.

On the flip side of the coin, it would not be equally unreasonable to expect incumbent NDC MPs to have weaker electoral impact, since their incumbency will have almost certainly given them a higher public exposure, negatively for a longer period of time than any challenger. The 2000 election data support the view that attitudes towards incumbents may account for the bulk of candidate effects.

Close substantive examination of the data, constituency by constituency, indicates that the local candidate effects appear to be even stronger than the model predicted. For instance, the Anlo and Akan constituencies in the Volta Region [the stronghold of the NDC], independent candidates emerged as winning candidates over incumbent NDC parliamentary candidates. In part, this has been ascribed to what is described as the NDC's undemocratic practice of imposing parliamentary candidates on constituencies (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). The incumbency coefficient, of our regression model must therefore be interpreted with caution since the local candidate effect could be highly variable and depend on particular individuals rather than party or incumbency status. This was clearly evident in our diagnostics analyses. The outlier cases were in Attebubu, Sene, Afram Plains North, West Akim, Sissala and Ningo Prampram Constituencies which were all but for Sissala Constituency won by very influential NDC parliamentary candidates.

Conclusion

This paper studied electoral choices and decisions of the NDC presidential and parliamentary vote in the Ghana 2000 elections using constituency level data from the Electoral Commission of Ghana. In general, the statistical results support my argument that disenchanted and alienated individuals are less likely to vote for the

incumbent party or incumbent MP to register their protest to how the country is being run. Voting for an opposition political party becomes an outlet for expressing that dissatisfaction.

Earlier studies have argued that given the low level of political knowledge of the majority of the Ghanaian electorate, coupled with the community based interest politics, and other primordial characteristics of the Ghanaian social structure, citizens have little incentive to evaluate parties and candidates on issues and competency. I believe a more complete examination of the relationship between protest voting and electoral outcomes in Ghana needs to be examined further. Although this modest attempt is undoubtedly underdeveloped due partly to the paucity of relevant survey data on elections in Ghana, it does advance the debate about the nature of electoral choices and decisions in Ghana. In order to properly examine how incumbency punishes a regime it is essential to have opinion data about citizens' attitudes towards the political system. Despite the limitation of this study, in the end we find that Ghanaian voters are quite capable of deciding between parties and candidates.

In sum, it is hard not to interpret the election as a setback for the NDC. Certainly, it represented a huge interruption of the momentum the NDC party had built up since its inception in 1992. More seriously in question is the future of the NDC, which not only saw its parliamentary seat share nearly halved from 135 to 89, but also lost control of the executive arm of government. With these results, and the chaos in the party's organization and leadership that lies beneath them, the NDC has approached the brink of extinction. Whether it will live or die as a party will depend on whether it can find new leadership that can unite its ranks while articulating a clear and compelling vision of its purpose to the Ghanaian electorate.

What does one learn about progress toward democratic consolidation from the character Ghana of the 2000 elections? The picture is mixed but on the whole positive. On the negative side, the politics of commandos and election management through "macho men" is not very healthy for our infant democracy. It was reported that guns have been fired, people have been shot and stabbed and innocent people in queues have been brutalized or threatened. These are alarming incidents that do not promote civility and democracy.

Notes

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1. This was pulled down from [wysiwyg:/24/http://www.ghnaweb.com/Ghana-HomePage](http://www.ghnaweb.com/Ghana-HomePage).
2. Gujarati, D. N, (1995) *Basic Econometrics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 327.
3. After the 1992 Presidential Elections, ex-President Rawlings pulled nearly 98% of the Volta region's votes and he was reported as saying that the Volta-Region was the "World Bank" of the NDC party in the supply of votes just like the World Bank supplies needy countries with loans and credit. Ever since, the region has been labelled the "World Bank of the NDC party".

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