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Abstract

This project sought to identify the presence of biases in the Ghanaian political system, in order to define and explain the possible polarization existing within the country, and its consequences on the country's political progress. This project involved research in Ghana, conducted in a 3 week period between December 2010 and January 2011, to test the hypothesis that biases were present within the local population and the cause of dangerous (rebellion-prompting) polarization within the population. The biases anticipated were motivated bias, explicitly 'myside' biases in the form of selective exposure, belief overkill, and biased assimilation/polarization. The research method was the use of an orally administered questionnaire to suit the needs of the population. It was found that there exists polarization within the country, though not an extreme polarization of the sort that would forewarn of revolution. These results are significant in that they help us understand the current Ghanaian political climate and the actions of its people.

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Contents

<u>Abstract</u>

This project sought to identify the presence of biases in the Ghanaian political system, in order to define and explain the possible polarization existing within the country, and its consequences on the country's political progress. This project involved research in Ghana, conducted in a 3 week period between December 2010 and January 2011, to test the hypothesis that biases were present within the local population and the cause of dangerous (rebellion-prompting) polarization within the population. The biases anticipated were motivated bias, explicitly 'myside' biases in the form of selective exposure, belief overkill, and biased assimilation/polarization. The research method was the use of an orally administered questionnaire to suit the needs of the population. It was found that there exists polarization within the country, though not an extreme polarization of the sort that would forewarn of revolution. These results are significant in that they help us understand the current Ghanaian political climate and the actions of its people.

<u>Overview</u>

Ghana is a country located on the western coast of Africa, bordered by Togo, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. It gained its independence from British colonial rule on 6th march 1957 and has fluctuated between democratic, socialist and authoritarian rule in the first 35 years of its independence; since 1992, Ghana has been recognized as a constitutional democracy. Its capital is Accra, located in the Greater Accra Region, which together with the nine other regions, the Western Region, the Eastern Region, the Central Region, the Ashanti Region, the Volta Region, the Brong Ahafo Region, the Northern Region, the Upper East Region and the Upper West Region, segment the country. The Ghanaian population stands at 23,382,848 (World Bank 2009 Consensus), with the major peoples being the Akan 45.3%, Mole-Dagbon 15.2%, Ewe 11.7%, Ga-Dangme 7.3%, other 20.4% (2000 census).

Ghana, politically, is officially characterized as a multiparty state, having 8 political parties that run for presidential and parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, acting in accordance with Duvergers law[1], two main parties have emerged that dominate the Ghanaian political scene. That is, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the National Patriotic Party (NPP), who received together 97% of the total vote in the first round of the 2008 presidential election; only candidates from these two parties have served in presidential office in the 16 years (4 elections) since return to constitutional democracy; at present, the current head of state is Professor John Atta Mills of the NDC party. Given this, the research treats Ghana as though it was a two-party democratic system, and examines it in light of the expectations anticipated within such a system.

Though some differences may be noted, Ghanaian history and politics follow the general plot of African politics in general. Ghana, like many other African countries, can be characterized as a clientelist state. Here, party leaders have relied on individuals who already possessed considerable local followings, by binding them to their party with promises of riches and other benefits and in effect, buy their committed local supporters from a trusted middleman. In this way, voters have come to look to well-known, trusted candidates, who promise material benefits

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[1] Duverger Maurice, Political Parties, University Printing House, Cambridge, 1976

such as access to infrastructure and social amenities, while these candidates turn to party leaders for personal benefits such as cash, land or credit, when parties gain access to these private and public resources in office. As such, African politics became the amassing of private and public resources, rather than the building of trust within the populace, as politicians sought to buy the vote, rather than earn it. As parties came to power, they worked to withhold these public resources from their opposition, resulting in jealousy and contention that led to battles for control of resources, in order to manipulate power; this corrupted democratic rule and led to civil strife, military rule, and dictatorships. Ghana, luckily after 35 years of such turmoil, was able to pull itself out of this cycle and return to democratic constitutional rule; nonetheless, clientelism still exists within the system.

The significance of clientelism is found in the existing polarization that this research seeks to explore. It is clientelism that allows for the promotion of ethnocentrism and regionalism, as parties have aligned themselves with well-known individuals in particular regions and ethnicities. These promoted and preserved divisions reappear in democratic elections, as parties continue to appeal to old sources of support and voters; understanding the clientelist state they live in, voters continue to sell their vote to 'trusted' buyers. 'Trusted' in the sense that, these candidates are expected to be corrupt and think only of their pockets, nonetheless, should redirect some small portion of those benefits they receive, in some form, to the people, if the people are members of their clientele (ethnic group/ local community). Moreover, to allow a politician who maintains a different set of clients (a different or rival ethnic group/ local community) access to these public resources appears imprudent. In this way, alignment with one party naturally leads to the rejection of the other: division and polarization.

The 2008 election revealed these divisions in the Ghanaian population; the expectation was for half the population to rejoice when election results were announced, while the other half mourned and rebelled. This paper would use biases to identify the existence of polarization and alignment within the Ghanaian population, which could be understood by the historic, and presently continuing nature and functioning of clientelism in the country. The biases sought were motivated bias, explicitly 'myside' biases in the form of selective exposure, belief overkill, and biased assimilation/polarization; Selective Exposure is seen in a situation where individuals

strongly prefer their party-aligned media to others, Belief Overkill is the denial of the objective truth or a show of stubborn preference, while Biased Assimilation is seen when neutral or weak evidence is used to bolster pre-existing belief. These biases inherently tell the alignment of voters by expressing their preference or disillusion with one or the other.

The research conducted found that there exists a type of polarization within the country, though not an extreme polarization of the sort that would forewarn of revolution. This was seen in the inverse relationship between support for one of the two dominant parties and the opposition of the other party among subjects. Moreover, the lack of identifiable biases in some subjects also reflects the middle ground in the Ghanaian population, given the 20-40% estimate of floating voters (27.27% identified in the research). In addition, correlations in popularly believed political biases in the population corresponded with the political bias identified, while the barely significant ethnic biases correlated with convictions that there was a declining ethnic bias in the country. These results allow us to note the polarization within the state, understand its limitations (not enough to lead to civil strife), and its believed decline. This helps us understand why, despite questionable policies and the deteriorating economic environment during each party's term of office, the same individuals consistently support them.

<u>Introduction</u>

Ghana's fifth election since return to multiparty democracy revealed a notable division within the Ghanaian populace. The 7th December 2008 election resulted in none of the eight candidates for the presidency receiving a majority of the votes needed to take office; as such, the Electoral Commission announced a runoff between Nana Akufo-Addo of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) and John Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the two dominant parties within the country. The NPP candidate had received 49.13 % of the votes cast on cast 7th December, while the NDC candidate received 47.92 % of the votes. This second round was conducted on the 28th of December 2008, with the final outcome of the Run-off election resulting in the declaration that the President-elect was John Atta Mills (NDC) with 50.23 % of the votes.[2] Such a close victory, with a differential of only .23%, could lead one to believe that there exists a high level of Polarization within the Ghanaian population, and merits a closer look.

Polarization is an interesting occurrence because it can imply two political situations with different implication for a country and its government. To be explicit, polarization speaks of a situation in which we see an even split in voter's preference between two political candidates/parties in a two-party democratic system. But a 50:50 voting preference speaks to the fact that individuals equally like, dislike or are indifferent between the candidates they must vote between. Given this, even in a situation where a 50:50 preference towards political candidates is shown, one cannot immediately assume that the nation is polarized. Polarization is shown only in the case where individuals show an extreme liking for one party and a correlated extreme opposition to the other party, in a two-party democratic state. If the people are simply disillusioned with the political process or indifferent between the candidates, then one cannot say there exists a deeply divided population, and hence, speak of polarization. In Ghana, the 2008 election revealed this near 50:50 divisions within the nation, especially with regards to the election of the country's president. Now, one is led to ask if Ghana is a case of polarization, a deeply divided and committed block of partisans on opposite ends of a two-party political spectrum; or if the population simply displayed their indifference (like/dislike of both political

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[2]Ghanaweb, "Prof Mills Wins Presidential Runoff Elections"
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/election2008/presidential2.php>

candidates) or disillusionment with the Ghanaian political system (corruption-based aversion of both political candidates) in the 2008 election.

This question is important because of the possibility of a collapse of democracy and the instigation of revolution in a polarized state. In thinking of Polarization within a country, one is led to the ideas of culture wars. To illustrate this, we may look to the United States as an example of a polarized nation. Sociologist James Hunter divided Americans into the culturally "orthodox" and the culturally "progressive," by which he meant that contemporary American voters are deeply divided on moral issues. Hunter tells us that this would inevitably lead to increasing conflict between the two groups. From this we gather that, close elections reflect evenly matched blocs of deeply committed partisans, who could at any moment engage each the other in violent wars. This situation can be expected if an electorate is highly polarized with a large number of "progressives" on the left supporting the Democrats (in the case of Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC)), and a large number of "orthodox" on the right supporting the Republicans (in the case of Ghana, the National Patriotic Party (NPP)), and very few people occupy the middle ground. This produces the 50:50 (Graphic U-shape)[3] results that could lead to revolution. On the other hand, one may have a case where most people hold moderate or centrist positions, and relatively few are extreme partisans. In this case, The NDC and the NPP parties position themselves equidistant from the center on opposite sides, producing the same 50:50 results (Graphic Inverse U-shape)[4]. In the first instance, you have the population being closely divided but deeply divided (polarized), while in the second; they are closely divided but not deeply divided (indifferent/disillusioned). In the 2008 election in Ghana, individuals were concerned, fearful, that the country would break out into war. In the capital city of Accra, shops were closed at midday in anticipation of the announcement of the elections results and the ensuing violence that would follow. This expectation of revolt suggests that there exist deep divisions within the country's population, hence a dangerous polarization which threatens the very concept of democracy and stability in the country: the voices of the people were divided. [5]

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[3] See appendix C
[4] See appendix C
[5] Fiorina M. P., Abrams S. J., Pope J. C., "Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America"

The purpose of this project is to provide a credible hypothesis that accounts for the existence of a non-traditional, polarized state in Ghana. I use the term 'non-traditional' because, as I will explain in this paper, the various traditional models and concepts used in assessing a polarized state in political science currently fail to adequately account for the situation in Ghana. Explicitly, the questions I seek to address here are the various contradictions that arise when a traditional method of thought is applied to the Ghanaian situation. To illustrate, one may question: why did extremist choose not to abstain, but rather participate in the election, if one would anticipate that, given their position on the political spectrum, they would be too disgusted at parties compromising on their policies (moving to the center) to engage in the political process? Why were parties certain that they will not see this abstention of extremist votes and hence be forced to keep away from the center and uphold their divergent socialist and conservative standpoints? Though revolution was anticipated at the end of the 2008 election, why did democratic government continue to function? Though a government chosen from one end of the political spectrum is expected to fail to please a large section of the population, why has this 'good breeding grounds for revolution'[6] gone unexploited? Moreover, regarding the distribution of voters along the political scale, given the predominant social class being the lower class, with no sizable middle class and a small upper class, why was the margin of the left-wing vote only .23%? These questions seek to address an apparent failure in the logic of the existing political apparatus to address the inconsistencies in the 2008 Ghanaian election. The responses to these questions, I propose, are found in the fact that most Ghanaians ignore the ideological basis and policy initiatives of the major parties, and rather vote on historically formulated biases or ethnic ties maintained by the clientelist state. The research conducted in Ghana was to identify if there was an existing bias within population at large to provide evidence in support of the hypothesis that this was the underlying factor that determined how individuals cast their vote.

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[6] Fiorina M. P., Abrams S. J., Pope J. C., "Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America"

The Political and Historical Review

Content

Introduction

The 2008 election revealed the possible existence of a dangerous type of Polarization in the Ghanaian population; the expectation was for half the population to rejoice when election results were announced, while the other half mourned and rebelled. This conclusion spurred the research that this paper explores. To fully understand the results that the experiments produced, it is necessary that one have an understanding of polarization theory, and the African political landscape, with specific emphasis on the Ghanaian political landscape. In this section, I will provide the necessary background for the experiment and discussion to follow.

Polarization and My Hypothesis

First, note that Polarization implies a failure of the democratic system to adequately address the needs of a populace. Anthony Downs, in discussing the statistics and dynamics of party ideologies in "An Economic Theory of Democracy," speaks of the failure of a two-party democratic system to provide stable and effective government except in the case of ideological consensus among its citizens. Ideology, Downs tells us, is not created for the sake of forming/promoting a better society, but rather is a weapon in the struggle for office. He makes the point that, due to uncertainty, widely varying ideologies may be employed by political parties when these parties are motivated solely by the desire to maximize votes. Ideologies can be used in this way because many rational voters tend to take shortcuts in choosing a party, by deciding to vote ideologically instead of comparing party policies and platforms. They do this on the assumption that the party ideology is reflected in the party platform and as such need only examine the former and ignore the latter. Nonetheless, for voters to be assured in this strategy, political parties, in formulating strategy, must keep to this expectation (matching ideology and policy) or stand the risk of losing credibility. As such, the competitive struggle for office compels parties to be both honest and consistent in creating platforms and ideologies and developing them over time. (Downs, A. (1957)) Despite the compelling argument the Downs makes, the majority of the Ghanaian population ignores party ideology and platforms altogether, and rather focuses on ethnicity and history as the basis on which they select their government.

One may question on what basis the claim is made that the Ghanaian population ignores ideology and party platforms altogether. In addressing this question, we first look at the ideology and party platforms that each party upholds and the Ghanaian response; by so doing, we can

assess if the parties have kept to their platforms and if the population has reacted as Down's predicts, and as such, we can determine if ideology plays a significant role in the Ghanaian voters' choices.

Party Ideology and Policies detailed

From its early beginnings, the National Patriotic Party (NPP) has always upheld, as dictated by its manifesto, that a viable democracy can be created and maintained in a liberal democratic state with a market economy and free enterprise. This state, they asserted, should be created in an atmosphere where the individual is confident and assured of his or her basic human rights and freedoms, free speech, free association, free movement and lawful actions. For the NPP, this confidence is only possible where there is rule of law and respect of it, not only by the governed but also, above all, by the government. The National Democratic Congress, on the other hand, is recognized as a social democratic party, and a recent member of the 'Socialist International' political alliance. From its beginning, as obtained from its manifesto, the NDC similarly pledged to work towards making the most basic human rights – food, shelter, education, medical care, work, the opportunity to live and develop in peace and dignity, accessible to all Ghanaians. The NDC also pledged to uphold the human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, particularly the rights to life, property, speech, association, personal liberty and freedom of the press. (Ephson Ben, 1992) The difference between the two then lies in the fact that, while the NPP believes that there must always be a credible alternative government (opposition parties serving as a check on government) to maintain the accountability needed to create the liberal democracy it envisions, the NDC takes a different, centralist approach to accountability, insisting that the rights and freedoms of powerful or influential individuals must not be permitted to threaten the rights of the disadvantaged in society. For this reason, the NDC sees the need to enforce accountability (since there are always some individuals who would be irresponsible, corrupt or incompetent) by strengthening the machinery for dealing with lapses in accountability and requiring the highest standards of conduct of office-holders. (Ephson, 1992) In this way, the NDC holds fast to its foundations based on Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) military rule in Ghana from 1981-1991.

With regards to the economy, both parties take a different approach to economic development. The National Patriotic Party (NPP) aims to concede freedom to the private sector. Its government

aims to create the conditions that allow the private sector free rein. The role of the state in the economic area is to be re-directed and focused on the provisions of the facilities needed to promote the enterprise culture. In this vein, the NPP encourages the development of strong, independent and responsible associations like trade unions, professional bodies and religious organizations. It is seeks to ensure that trade unions and other trade and professional associations do not become appendages to ruling parties. In place of controls, administrative allocations, or any socialist-type dirigisme, the NPP is committed to free enterprise in partnership, as the mode of economic organization. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) on the other hand takes a more centralist approach, but is committed to creating the conditions for enterprise to grow, in an atmosphere of confidence and partnership with government. For this reason, it aims to restrain the public sector from undertaking activities better reserved for the private sector, while ensuring that, by so doing, unemployment is neither created nor essential services withdrawn. The NDC, given this approach, seeks to maintain product fiscal policy, enabling reductions in the individual tax burden as well as providing corporate bodies with incentives to invest. The NDC promises to pay critical attention to encouraging long term lending to local business through appropriate guarantee schemes and refinancing of the banking system in respect of credit extension to strategic sectors. In this way, the NDC aims to maintain a strict balance between the public sector and the private sector in defining enterprise, while the NPP advocates for free enterprise and policies to that extent. (Ephson, 1992)

More recently, the policies of the two parties have diverged more distinctly than before. The National Patriotic Party (NPP) has become committed to the goal of a radical acceleration of Ghana's capacity to create wealth, and as such supply the means for a much higher standard of welfare development. One project implemented to ensure this goal is manpower development to create an army of skilled people. As such, the NPP government has developed and promoted far-reaching reforms in the quality and availability of educational opportunities for all Ghanaians. Another project with this aim is the new strategy of micro-economic interventions for facilitating private sector operations, including modernized farming and fisheries, to lead the nation into unprecedented engagement in wealth creation. This, the NPP believes would be achieved through focusing business intervention in growth areas of ICT applications, agro-processing, other value-addition ventures and Tourism. All this would be achieved easily in a nation of

healthy workers, well-motivated to give of their best in production and service activities. As such the NPP also advocates a more humane health delivery system to be provided through effective implementation and geographical spread of the National Health Insurance Scheme. All these would lead to the successful attainment of accelerated economic growth which should lead to accelerated improvement in the living conditions of the people of Ghana. (NPP, 2010)

Meanwhile, The National Democratic Congress (NDC) has taken up the mantra of Social Democracy, by which they advocate "a belief in the equality and egalitarian treatment of all persons with respect to their political, economic, social, cultural and religious relations in a multi-party, multi ethnic environment. By this they also make the commitment to progressive politics and the protection of the under-privileged and the upliftment of the socially disadvantaged". Instead of wealth creation as an approach to redress the country's low living standards, the NDC looks to the advancement of the vast majority of Ghanaians by taking seriously the issues of education, health, sanitation, water, housing and poverty alleviation. For the NDC, "social democracy" imposes on them the responsibility to provide to Ghanaians the basic amenities of life at affordable costs and guarantee employment to those who are willing and able to work. The objective of the NDC is the creation of a sound foundation for generations to come, in community responsibility through strengthening and expanding each one's contribution to the various units of governance and institutions that deliver social justice, fair play, and guarantee that each citizen obtains the benefit of his or her labor. In this way, the NPP and NDC, though promising the same things, approach their attainment with different focuses, highlighting wealth-creation and social equity respectively. (NDC, 2008)

Having looked at these policies, we may ask, given the distinctions, what the basis of saying individuals ignores these differing approaches to welfare augmentation by the different parties when they cast their votes. The question asked here is not adequately addressed by stating that the average Ghanaian on the street, when asked what the differences between the major parties policies would provide no suitable or convincing answer. So in supporting this claim then, one should look to African politics in general, and the broad expectations of the African citizen with regards to politicians in answering this question.

African Politics and the Clientelist State explained

Chris Allen in his work, *Understanding African Politics, 1995* , examines the internal dynamics of African politics that led to the creation of clientelist/neo-patrimonial states that exists in many African states. The first thing to note was that decolonization was a hasty affair; one could say that the imperialist governments within Africa were suddenly caught in a strong, rising wave for independence and succumbed to it in a disordered manner. As such, 'elections were introduced with little notice… requiring nationalist organizations to mobilize huge new electorates in a very short time' (Chris Allen: 1995) Allen identified two strategies for party building that marked winning candidates campaigns; the first was 'reliance on individuals who already had considerable local followings,' and the second was 'the use of clientelist politics to bind local notables to the party and local voters to the candidates.' (Chris Allen: 1995) So in essence, voters were promised by well-known, trusted candidates, collective material benefits such as access to basic infrastructure, social amenities, clinics and schools, while these candidates in turn were offered personal benefits such as cash, land or credit, by leaders who had access to private or public resources. This marked the beginning of clientelist politics in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. This resulted because the moment the candidates came to power and were given access to the immense resources of the state, their priority was the consolidation of their win. This basically involved careful allocation of funds to specific ministries in order to extend their support and recruit more charismatic personnel. As such, internal relations within the political took on a power reproducing nature, with parties in power increasing their chances of maintaining power through the effective support and recruitment of clients. So it came to be that, 'the legitimacy of African political elites… derive(d) from their ability to nourish the clientele on which their power rest(ed)' (Chabal, P and Daloz J-P: 1999).

The creation of a clientelist state did not go unopposed, with members of the opposition refusing to subjugate to the new state system which inherently excluded them from the political. It is not surprising that many who had failed to gain power found the situation in post-colonial Africa to be unacceptable, not simply because of the increasing corruption which resulted as government exploited resources for patrimonial purposes, but mainly because they found themselves excluded from the benefits of state. Consequentially opposition parties moved to avoid permanent exclusion from the political by exploiting communal divisions; this however only

served to politicize long-standing local, ethnic, or religious divisions. 'Party conflicts became redrawn and reconstructed as communal conflicts (Chris Allen: 1995);' Violence proliferated as those in power resorted to oppressive tactics, rigged election, harassment, beatings, bans, and imprisonment of the opposition party and its members to keep hold of power. In some cases, the opposition's response reflected the violence of their rivals, and led to the formation of groups of party thugs. As party violence increased, so did corruption for personal enrichment, as ruling parties depended less on support and more on force to stay in power (Chris Allen: 1995). The African states entered into a period of political decay, characterized by the rapid growth of politicized communalism, political conflict and violence, abuse of political and human rights, and corruption, which would continue over the next decade and a half. Ghana reflects this theory, given its turbulent history from 1960-1981, characterized by violent and non-violent coup d'états ending in a period of military government before the return to democracy.

Why did this neo-patrimonial system persist in African states? The answer can be determined in a number of factors. The first is that, it has become the standard view that a position in government is the main means of personal enrichment. This is what Chanal and Daloz refer to as the public sector being appropriated by the private sector. With the entrance of parties into government, it is the general sentiment that it one's 'time to eat' – to reap the benefits of the system. Moreover, this is exacerbated by the fact that there exists a 'wide acceptance of the behavior of civil servants' (Chabal, P and Daloz J-P: 1999). The populace has come to accept and expect that those in power will abuse that power for their own ends, and have quietly recognized state bureaucratic institutions as the empty shell it is. Their lack of motivation to address the problem, gives civil servants more space and freedom to continue to abuse their powers. And generally, civil servants place the edicts of their political leaders over that of any regulation put into place by those same political leaders. After all, it is from these leaders that the civil servants will gain their share in the spoils of the state, and as such, to contradict these political leaders would be unreasonable. In this way, 'the most basic rules of bureaucratic accountability are flouted at will' (Chabal, P and Daloz J-P: 1999). For these reasons, the clientelist state still persists in Africa, and Ghana is no exception in this regard.

Now if one understands African politics in clientelist terms, what one inherently accepts is that the population is not concerned with the policies of government as first and foremost, they expect government to be corrupt and think only of their pockets first and foremost. Secondly, the population accepts that the politicians they vote for would be able to redirect some small portion of those benefits, in some form, their way if they are a member of the politicians' clientele (ethnic group/ local community). Given this, party policies and platforms are of no importance to the average voter when looking at political parties. Individuals are more concerned with what resources could be directly amassed from government, as opposed to the larger picture of social institutions providing those resources in an ideal world. Hence individuals are willing to sell their vote to the most promising buyer. So rather than simply saying individuals blindly follow one party or the other without knowing the party policies, we should recognize that individuals follow parties looking only at their backgrounds for affirmation of some future, tangible resource gained in exchange for their vote. An unfortunate consequence of this is that the state is rendered ineffectual mainly because 'it has never been in the interests of the (Ghanaian) elite to work for the proper institutionalization of the state apparatus (Chabal, P and Daloz J-P: 1999).'

The failure of political science models explicated

Given this, one can understand how political science as applied to a democratic state can fail to explain the 50:50 voting patterns of the Ghanaian population. If we simply consulted the political science model to explain the polarization we found in Ghana, we would come to two conclusions concurrent with the violent polarized state or indifferent populace theories already iterated above; using Hotelling's model[7], one would find that competition in a two-party system would drive each party to move towards its opponent's ideology because of each party's confidence in its extremists (its end of the scale) vote, allowing politicians to reach for the crucial middle-of-the-road voters by moving closer to the opposition. In this case, political parties become less extreme and more moderate in policy, resulting in a growing indifference of the population towards their candidates. This phenomenon is what Kirchheimer describes as the arrival of the catch-all party. Kirchheimer, 1966, argues that modern parties, in their increasing attempt to attract votes from whichever social groups they can, have a highly significant effect on

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[7]See Appendix C

ideological competition.[8] Mass parties gain reason to shift their organization towards the catch-all system because it seems the more effective option in securing votes. The party leadership, concerned only with their ongoing success, forces the party to broaden its appeal to every possible group, and so extends beyond their original and distinctive class support.[9] Contrary to the preceding class-based mass parties, existing electoral-professional parties aim for a wider market of voters, and so formulate programs which are not particularly partisan or divisive: a program which could be said to serve the interest of all involved. In this way, this catchall phenomenon contributes to policy convergence, as the need to maintain a distinctive constituency through ideology and policy is undermined, thus encouraging a waning of the ideological and/or policy distinctiveness of the parties,[10] and the indifference of the populace vis-a-vis the two main political parties. It could be argued that this is the case in Ghana, because, though the NDC and NPP in their approach and self-description fall left and right of the center on a linear political scale, they each profess the same policy objectives of provisions of basic human rights to food and security, as well as individual freedoms, as detailed above. However, I will argue this is not the case.

Using Smithies model, 2008[11] which introduces elastic demand at each end point on the linear political scale, one finds that extremist should choose to abstain from the political process altogether, rather than vote (probably from disgust at parties compromising on ideologies). As such, the predicted political parties convergence on moderation will not occur if most voters are massed bimodally near the extremes; the threat of abstention from extremists force the parties to keep away from the center, ensuring that their ideologies remain poles apart (as parties cannot afford to lose extremist votes in this instance). In such a situation, democratic government will fail to function properly as any government from either extreme end will fail to please a large section of the population, and leave a setting that is good breeding grounds for revolution. So, if we think of the Ghanaian situation, where both governments hold different ideological standpoints though identical policy objectives, it would seem the extremist have failed to pull the parties from convergence on the middle (that is, if we accept the threat of violence upon the

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[8]Edwards, 2008
[9]Kirchheimer, 1966
[10]Katz and Mair, 1997: pp.102-103
[11]See Appendix C

announcement of electoral results in 2008 to mean that voters are massed bimodally near the extremes on each end of the political scale, as Downs explained above). What then could explain this failure of the electorate to pull the parties from converging on central policies? The same premise argued from the beginning: Ghanaians tend to ignore the ideological and policy standpoints of the major political parties.

More relevant to note is the existing inconsistency between party ideology and party policies as advocated by the major political parties. The NPP, which describes itself as a liberal democratic advocate and proclaims 'free enterprise,' expected to occupy the 'right' side of the political spectrum, is seen promoting left-wing policies such as heavy investment in healthcare and education. This is self-contradictory. The NDC, which is a social democratic party, expected to occupy the 'left' side of the political spectrum, is seen backing a right-wing policy such as the Divestiture of State Owned Enterprise. Again, this is self-contradictory. Down, as expounded on in the second paragraph of this section, told us that for voters to be assured in the strategy of using ideology over policy as a determinant of their vote, it must be the case that, in formulating policies and platforms, political parties keep to this expectation (matching ideology and policy) or stand the risk of losing credibility. And as such, the competitive struggle for office would compel parties to be both honest and consistent in creating platforms and ideologies and developing them over time. (Downs, A. (1957)) This we find is not the case in Ghana, were the two parties contradict themselves with no apparent retribution from the Ghanaian populace in terms of reduced support.

Furthermore, under more normal circumstances, Down tells us that two opposite social classes with no sizeable middle class will more likely be skewed to the left (lower class), with a small mode at the right (upper class), leading to installation of a leftish government (granted equal individual voting weight) given the majority of the lower class. In this way, the numerical distribution of voters along the political scale determines what kind of democracy would develop. (Downs, A. (1957)) In this respect again, Ghana fails to meet this expectation. With a middle class estimated at only 0.0128% in 2000[12], its large lower class and tiny upper class

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[12] Figure derived from The World Bank Online Article "*Africa, Mortgages Boost an Emerging Middle Class,*" 2007 against population estimates.

political distribution, one would expect the installation of a leftist government at every election by a wide margin. However, the victory for the NDC party was .23% of the population. Again, this can be explained if one accepts the average Ghanaian ignores the ideological basis and class-based policy initiatives of the major parties and focuses on something else.

The Support for the Hypothesis

So if the average Ghanaian pays no heed to ideological and policy initiatives of parties as argued above, what caused the strong division shown in electoral results? The hypothesis which the research sought to support was that individual Ghanaians, using historical events or ethnicity as a basis, had developed strong biased preferences for one party over the other, which had no basis in policy or ideology. In this way, the Ghanaian population naturally became split bimodally along the political spectrum due to historical and ethnic factors that influence their choices in the clientelist state that Ghana is. And with performance and ideology not determining one's vote, we can understand how those falling into the lower-class of society do not feel compelled to move toward a party skewed left, if their historical or ethic preference and bias veers right. This then provides reason for why we saw only a .23% left win in a country with a majority lower-class population. Given this, the research sought to show that these biases existed within the Ghanaian populace and explain the 2008 election results.

The Historical Ethnic Explanation

In terms of Ethnicity, one needs only to understand the historical relations between the major ethnic groups and how that translates to party relations, to comprehend how individuals vote in favor of one party with this bias. In a country with over 35 languages spoken, split along many ethnic lines, there is a wealth of historical interaction which has gone unaccounted for. However, what any Ghanaian could tell you is the basic course of history, taught in schools and evidenced in social settings, that has led to the popularly cited ethnic biases/stereotypes within the country. The notable accepted biases are as such; The Ashanti's suffer from a superiority complex, enhanced by their proud history and the wealth (Gold, cocoa, timber, among many other natural resources) found in the Ashanti region and managed by the Ashantehene (chief). This expectation stems from the past strength and size of the Ashanti Kingdom (17th-19th century)[13],

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[13] Garbrah, S., Ashanti, access 6/4/11 <http://www.ashanti.com.au/pb/wp_8078438f.html?0.32588155932771734>

which allowed the Ashanti's to aggressively pursue their expansion in the general area now known as Ghana. Located center-south of modern Ghana, locked between the Northern states and the southern coastal states, any expansion encroached on others territories. So, naturally, the desire for expansion by the Ashanti kingdom put the southern ethnic groupings on guard against a possible invasion. This fear led a large population in the south to create the Fanti confederacy, which compounded (after growing tensions), in the Ashanti-Fanti war of 1806. Moreover, this fear was realized in the quick, strategic alliance of the southern states with British colonial powers to head off possible future Ashanti domination. With this history, one can come to understand the root of the general ambivalence of the southern Ghanaian population towards the Ashanti peoples. More interestingly, the mighty Ashanti kingdom demanded slaves for the new market created by Europeans, and most of these slaves came from the territories it conquered in now Northern Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali. Here lies the expressed hatred towards the Ashanti's by the Northerners (a reference to the people in the large area comprising northern Ghana; though these people include many different ethnic groups and languages, they are generalized under this title), who continue to view the Ashantis as arrogant bullies.[14] From this, one would understand why it's the general belief, and evidenced in elections, that an Ashanti man would never win the Northerners vote.

On a different note, the Ewe's of the Volta region in eastern Ghana formally joined the country when British Togoland and the Gold Coast (former Ghana) were officially merged in December 1956. The Ewe's could as such be thought of us a relatively new group to join the ethnic circle in the area that encompasses modern Ghana. Like a new kid at school, the Ewes kept to themselves and have not changed since, if one takes word at face value. The Ewe's have been stereotyped as strongly family-oriented: though loyal to a fault to those they see as kin, it is widely acknowledged that outsiders are treated, and remain, as such. From this characterization, one should expect, as evidenced by elections, that a Ewe man running for office is assured the Ewe vote.

These generally acknowledged divisions and stereotypes have proven useful tools in creating political division within the country, as one may posit that, it is the politicians that create ethnicity and not ethnicity which feeds into politics (as expounded on by Chris Allen above). To

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[14] **Lonely planet,**The need for Diversity in Ghana - a discussion, **accessed 5/20/11,**
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/thread.jspa?threadID=1309614>

be unambiguous, the National Patriotic Party (NPP), despite claiming otherwise, is widely acknowledged as an Ashanti party, having been formed by Ashantis and maintained by an Ashanti leadership. As such, it is a party to be met with the general ambivalence of the southern population, as well as the strong disassociation of the northern population, and finds its love and welcome in the Ashanti region and among many of its cousins, the Akans. This is a pattern easily seen in voting results over the years. The NDC on the other hand was formed by an Ewe, and as such, is the object of the familial loyalty of the Ewes, and can be said to secure the Northern vote by default (the only other feasible option to the NPP). This again is a pattern easily seen in voting results over the years. We may look to results in the 2008 runoff to support these statements:

In the Ashanti region the NPP won 92.3% of the constituency vote, and in the Eastern region (home to many Akans - the Ashanti's cousins) the NPP won 75% of the constituency vote. In the Volta region, the NDC won 100% of the constituency vote, and in the Northern region the NDC won 80% of the constituency vote.[15] In the remaining four regions, factors other than ethnicity may have come into play. In one instance we find an inherent contradiction; the Brongs of the Brong Ahafo region have strong yet bitter ties to the Ashantis, being their relatives, yet having been oppressed by the Ashantis in the past. The region voted 63% in favor of the NPP. In another instance we have swing states, states with no explicit party loyalties; both the Central region and the Greater Accra Region are known to be swing states, given that the Fanti's of the central region are generally ambivalent towards the major parties, and the large mix of ethnic populations inhabiting Accra prevents ethnic-voting analysis by region results. Nonetheless, the NDC won 68% of the constituency vote in the Central region and 63% of it in the Greater Accra region (Ephson tells us due to a desire for change from 8 years of NPP rule). The western region, which is known for its independent stand, not shockingly, produced a perfect split of 50-50 in its constituency votes for the parties[16]. In this way, we can see how ethnic preference can manifest in election results.

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[15] Constituency votes refer to the percentage of seats won in the region in the parliamentary race, here encompassing the party as a whole. They differ from individual votes and their percentages found in appendix B, which were notably lower in the presidential election. Figures derived from percentage of constituency seats won in "Ephson, Ben, Ben Ephson on the 2008 Elections, Media Graphics & Press Limited, Accra, 2009"

[16] Figures derived from percentage of constituency seats won in "Ephson, Ben, Ben Ephson on the 2008 Elections, Media Graphics & Press Limited, Accra, 2009"

<u>The Historical Political Explanation</u>

Even if we may understand the existence of an ethnic bias, we may compound the issue with the historical bias associated with the two major political parties. To explain this, one must draw from the recent political history of Ghana and the roots of the two parties which are the basis for the anticipated biases. Professor Adu Boahen, in his book *The Ghanaian Sphinx* tells us that "there are only two real political groups or parties or…political cultures, in this country (Ghana) – the CPP/PNP culture and the PP/PFP/UNC culture (Boahen (2009))." Though the country has seen its share of military government, authoritarian rule is not a culture that the people embrace, and has been successively followed by return to civilian rule. This has taken the form of peaceful transitions, as well as coup d'état's, violent and non-violent, instigated by members of the military itself and the police on behalf of the people. The CPP culture, also known as Nkrumaism, is one that is based on the ideas of Scientific Socialism, while that of the PP is one formulated by J.B Danquah, with the ideology of Ghanaism in mind; it promotes the establishment of a right-wing capitalist state. But as has already been said, Ghanaians ignore political ideologies, so this differential is not what stands out but rather the people who founded these ideologies and the parties that have descended with the attached (slightly modified) doctrines and the same supporters.

At Ghana's independence, the two main parties that stood out were the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) led by J.B. Danquah and the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) led by Kwame Nkrumah. Initially, Nkrumah had worked under the UGCC, but broke away from the party after he came into conflict with party leaders such as Danquah, and formed the CPP. Then, the National Liberation Movement (NLM) was formed, and posed a challenge to the CPP. Founded in Kumasi, the NLM relied upon history to fan Asante's ethnic sentiments. The NLM's core of old guard-traditional chiefs and intelligentsia made its base widely parochial and not truly national. In the end it was the CPP that led Ghana to its independence, having a truly national base. However, it wasn't long before the party morals degenerated and reduced Ghana to a corrupt, restrictive, one-party state. It was at this point, in face of great social adversity and quickly decreasing support for Nkrumah, that the CPP was overthrown by the National Liberation Council (NLC), composed of senior police and military officers. These new leaders were aided behind the scenes by the political advisory council, composed of former politicians

such as K.A. Busia and Akuffo Addo, who had provided the strongest opposition to Nkrumah during the UGCC and NLM days. However this new government failed to make strides in the economic field and living conditions continued to decrease, leading to intense criticism; the NLC witnessed over 100 strikes in its 3 year reign, and transferred power to the politicians who had been patiently biding their time. Ghana returned to civilian rule after Busia Progress Party (PP) won the 1969 election; now Nkrumah's opposition from 1948 had come into government.

The PP relied heavily on external advisors, such as the Harvard Development Advisory Group, the IMF, World Band and nations that Ghana had borrowed from, and this lack of internal consultation was the undoing of Busia's regime. As with Nkrumah's corrupt one-party state, under the PP regime, economic hardships, political intolerance and a sense of helplessness pervaded the nation. The National Redemption Council (NRC)'s coup brought down the PP regime. Despite its claims of diverse ideologies from that of the PP, the NRC ended up implementing similar policies, which led to the exact same ending for this military government (at least in name). The regime re-organized itself into the Supreme Military Council (SMC), which through corrupt self-enrichment and clientelist favoritism managed to alienate a large section of the population and disregarded the interests of workers. On June 4th 1979, the SMC was overthrown by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), in a bloody clash between rank and file of the army and their senior officers. The AFRC was bent on carrying out a "house-cleaning" exercise to combat corruption, and this led to the execution of two successive heads of state (NRC and SMC leaders) as well as many other senior officers. The AFRC then allowed the schedule of return to civilian rule to continue, handing power over to the People's National Party (PNP), led by Hillal Limann. Though Civilian rule once more was expected to correct matters, the composition of those seeking political power was the same coalition of forces which had been the beneficiaries of state largesse even as the economy declined. It was the same class of professionals, intelligentsia and veteran politicians who had always aspired for state power. With their past performance as an indicator, it was not long before the AFRC ousted the new government out of power on charges of corruption and negligence once more. It was at this point that the AFRC reformed itself as the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). The PNDC resurrected the memory of Kwame Nkrumah by giving support to the view that that foreign interests and historical colonial rule was the major reason for Ghana's condition. The PNDC's

plan favored a mass-based, anti-establishment movement which would seek popular participation, ensure justice and fairness to all (Osei, (1999)).[17]

One need only establish the roots of both the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to understand that the ensuing rivalry between the two parties runs deep and began prior to the decolonization of Ghana. The NPP was born out of the Danquah-Busia Memorial Club. The club was founded in Kumasi in the late 80's by the veteran nationalist and freedom-fighter, Yaw Attakora Gyimah and its main purpose was to keep alive the liberal democratic ideas and traditions of J.B. Danquah and K.A. Busia. That is to say, the NPP is an ideological descendant of the UGCC, the NLM, the NLC, the PP, and the PNP. The NDC on the other hand was birthed from the PNDC under the leadership of Jerry John Rawlings. It adopted the ideologies of Nkrumah, and as such adopted the historical standpoints of the CPP, and its immediate predecessors, the AFRC and the PNDC. The NDC aimed to ensure that Ghanaians continue to build on the foundations which had been laid together in the last ten years of Rawlings led PNDC military rule (1981-1991), and that Ghana should not go back to the failures of the past that created conditions for interruptions and even reversals of Ghana's development process. In this way, we see that ideologically and historically, the CPP(NDC) vied and won against the NLM (NPP) and the UGCC (NPP), but was then ousted out of power by the NLC (NPP) which handed over power in elections to PP (NPP), who was then ousted out of power by the NRC/SMC (Independent). The AFRC (NDC) then kicked the SMC (Independent) out of power and handed over power through elections to the PNP (NPP). Shortly afterwards, the PNP (NPP) was kicked out of power once more and was replaced by the PNDC (NDC), who then lead Ghana to the 1992 elections, were the current NDC and NPP parties had been formed. In the end, though party names had changed more than eight times, the same individuals filtered through the system in different guises, advancing the same ideologies, appealing to the same crowds, in the case of the NPP. While with the NDC, they adopted the legacy of Kwame Nkrumah, building a populist movement on socialist lines and recalling a past desire for freedom and justice; in this way, they became an embodiment of the CPP (though the CPP as a party does exist with a different stance than before currently). As such, each party can be thought to have inherited a support-base from its predecessors.

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[17]See Appendix B for a simple pictographic summary

Nevertheless, rather than thinking of the NDC in Nkrumah-like terms, some would call it the third wave in Ghanaian politics. Here, what is important to note is the popularity and grievances caused in the arrival of this third wave. The coup d'état led by the PNDC came us a populist movement, riding high on the popularity of Jerry John Rawlings, to oust a deemed corrupt government from office. However, the executions that took place during the AFRC's "house-cleaning" and later the murder of the judges (three high court judges and the personnel department manager of the State Industrial Corporation were kidnapped and killed on 5th July, 1982: an act said to be commanded by Rawlings in personal revenge for the acts of judiciary bodies revising AFRC's activities in 1979 (Petchenkine (1992))), managed to alienate a large section of the population that held and holds that, this action was far too extreme and unnecessary even in the midst of the revolutionary atmosphere the country was filled with. Moreover, this socialist wave resulted in many major business leaders being imprisoned, while many were forced to flee and abandon their property, which was seized by the government regardless. Furthermore, the re-distribution tactics employed by the AFRC, which confiscated goods from local traders thought to be hoarding food and charging high prices in the droughts of the 1980's, left scars on those who fell victim to their socialist campaign. Those scars remain today, and such individuals are drawn towards the NPP naturally, believing the NDC to be brutish. In the same way, the workers who benefited from these re-distributions witnessed the detention of managers who had profited while they labored, and those who believed the executions necessary, align themselves with the NDC who they believe have it right. Of course, this is all tampered by the fact that ethnicity plays a role in the decision as to who to vote for (That is to say, the NPP, UGCC, the NLM, the NLC, the PP, have always maintained Ashanti and Akan leadership, while the NDC, like the CPP, purports to be 'national' because it knows no regional, ethnic or religious boundaries but encompasses all Ghanaians; its leadership has been composed of diverse groupings, Nzemas, Ewes, Northerners, Gas and more), but these historical ties should not be taken for granted either.

Psychology Literature Review

This research searches for My-side bias and Irrational belief persistence in identifying the existence of strong beliefs (biased perceptions) within the Ghanaian populace. The research sought to expose a disposition in the Ghanaian populace to maintain their set preferences for political parties, due to their convictions that one party is better than the other. Such convictions were to be found in the manner by which search, especially search for evidence, and the making of inferences given the evidence at hand was conducted by individuals. The expectation was that individuals would, in the search for evidence concerning their party, look only for evidence that favored their political party and withhold from searching for evidence that contradicted or slighted their party. If they were to find evidence that did contradict their beliefs about their party, they were expected to ignore and discredit it. These two characteristics sought are what Perkins, *Perkins*, Bushey, and Faraday refer to as "myside bais"(Perkins et al., 1986)[18]. Here, the Ghanaian populace was expected to display reasoning that demonstrated that they looked only to 'their side' of the argument, specifically their political party's good points, and neglected viewpoints to the contrary.

In this way, the research seeks to expose Irrational belief persistence; that is not to say that there is not a rational basis on which the Ghanaian populace determines its party affiliation, but that in the maintenance of its party loyalties, the process of search for evidence and inference from evidence is biased so as to reinforce pre-existing beliefs about the party. This manner of thinking is irrational in so far as it allows for incorrect beliefs to persist, and moreover, strengthens such belief when they ought to become weaker with growing evidence. Specifically, one would expect, given this bias, that the Ghanaian populace would grow stronger in its commitment to one party, as opposed to losing faith in it, even when the performance by the party and its members are deplorable. The persistence of such faith is as such, irrational. (Baron, 2008)[19]

Irrational belief persistence, as many have noted, is one of the major sources of human folly (Bacon 1620/1960; Janis and Mann, 1977; Kruglanski and Ajzen, 1983; Nisbett and Ross,

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[18]*Perkins*, D.N., Bushey, B., & Farady, M. (*1986*). *Learning to reason*. Unpublished manuscript, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA

[19]Baron, J., (2008)*Thinking and Deciding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

1980)[20]. The tendency to hold onto one's belief without sufficient regard to the evidence available is a deviation from our concepts of human reason and allows one to be critical of the judgments rational individuals make. Irrational belief persistence results from 'my-side' bias; specifically, we identify it in the over-weighing of evidence consistent with one's favored belief, the under-weighing of evidence to the contrary, and the failure of one to search impartially for evidence. For the Ghanaian population, we thought to find Irrational belief persistence in the advocated support of, or opposition to, parties despite factual evidence to the contrary, and the choice of political media that individuals engaged in streamlining their political consciousness. (Baron, 2008)

Moreover, one of the guiding principles underlying the research conducted and the biases sought was the neutral-evidence principle. The neutral-evidence principle is the theory that "neutral evidence should not strengthen belief."[21] Neutral evidence within this research was specifically taken to mean 'weak evidence;' that is to say, evidence that was gathered from uncredible sources (a fact highlighted to subjects) and exaggerated beyond truth, and mixed evidence that lent no particular support or opposition to either of the political parties concerned. In this way, the evidence was neutral because it was grounded in no truth and hence should have been disregarded entirely with regards to belief, or was equally consistent with a belief and its converse, providing equal evidence both for and against the various parties, and hence should have nullified any possible effect of the evidence on belief. The research, in identifying a bias within the population, sought the violation of the Neutral-evidence principle among Ghanaians; that is to say, the research expected that individuals would respond positively to the 'weak' evidence that supported their beliefs, regardless of the fact that it was baseless and equally contradicted their own beliefs. As such, similar to experiments conducted by Lord, Ross, and

[20]Francis *Bacon* (*1960*). *The New Organon*, and Related Writings. *New York*, Liberal Arts Press

Janis, I.L. & *Mann*, L. (*1977*). *Decision Making: A psychological analysis of conflict, choice, and commitment,* New York: Free Press.

Kruglanski, A. W. and *Ajzen*, I. (*1983*), *Bias and* error in human judgment. European Journal of Social Psychology, 13: 1–44.

Nisbett, R. E., & *Ross*, L. D. (*1980*). Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

[21]Baron, J., *Thinking and Deciding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008 Pg 208

Lepper (1979)[22], the hypothesis behind the experiment was that exposure to baseless and mixed data would result in the strengthening of subjects polarized political beliefs, rather than leaving no effect, as one would expect from an impartial consideration of inconclusive data.

Lord, Ross, and Lepper looked specifically at the bias they titled 'biased assimilation.' Here, the authors sought to explore the consequences of introducing objective data to opposing factions, in social decision making. Specifically, they used mixed or inconclusive evidence that defined complex social issues in examining the social response to the data provided. Logically, one would expect that this sort of evidence would lead to a moderation in ones viewpoint using mixed data, or at least be ignored by members of opposing factions, however Lord, Ross and Leper expected to find that belief polarization would increase, as opposed to decrease or remain unchanged, when this data was presented. The assumption on which the "polarization hypothesis' was based was that data relevant to a belief was not processed in an impartial manner, but rather, "the judgements about the validity, reliability, relevance, and sometimes even the meaning of proffered evidence are biased by the apparent consistency of that evidence with the perceiver's theories and expectations."[23] In this way, Individuals were expected to assimilate in a biased manner neutral evidence that supported their views as further evidence in support of their view, while dismissing the contradictions that lay in such mixed evidence. In this way, the same neutral piece of data could lend support to each side of an opposing faction, bolstering their beliefs in opposition of the other. So though neither set of data provided conclusive evidence, the reports resulted in subjects becoming polarized in their beliefs; that is to say, they became stronger in their initial belief on both ends of the opposing spectrum. This result runs contrary to logic and has the effect of perpetuating incorrect beliefs as subjects, in the inferential process, readily used evidence processed in a biased manner as a result of the initial belief to 'justify' the original belief. (Lord, Ross, and Lepper (1979))

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[22]*Lord*, C. G., *Ross*, L., & *Lepper*, M. R. (*1979*). Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence. JPSP, 37, 2098-2109

[23]L*ord*, C. G., *Ross*, L., & *Lepper*, M. R. (*1979*). Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence. JPSP, 37, 2098-2109

The research sought to mimic the findings of the Lord, Ross, and Lepper experiment with biases in favor of a political party as the basis, with objective and weak evidence expected to be assimilated into, and polarize, these pre-existing beliefs. Nonetheless, the biased response against counter-evidence needs to be extreme to reflect polarization. Normatively, we expect the strength of evidence presented on both ends of the belief spectrum to force convergence to the middle of the range, unless individuals already maintain more evidence for the side the favor; in this case, evidence to the contrary of one's belief only adds relative strength to the opposing end. As such, one more clearly views polarization in situations were individuals given nothing but negative evidence, strengthen their initial belief despite having no positive support for it. Here, the bias against counter-evidence is extreme in the sense that negative evidence somehow results in a strengthening of one's positive belief; here, one can assume the evidence is ignored, criticized or degraded in such way that it ends up reinforcing the very thing it sought to refute. For example, in the research conducted, in questioning if the National Patriotic Party cheated in the 2008 presidential elections as noted by objective observers, subjects who favored the party or strongly believed this statement to be false, responded either by ignoring the evidence altogether and declaring it was not true, or criticized the evidence in positing that if the party did cheat, then is should have won the election, but by the fact that it failed to win the election, we can conclude that it did not cheat. In this way, objective evidence could lead individuals to express highly polarized viewpoints. (Lord, Ross, Lepper (1979), Baron (2008))

Other essential mechanisms of underlying irrational belief persistence that this research sought to utilize in identifying biases were Selective exposure and Belief Overkill. "Selective exposure is the tendency to search selectively for evidence that will support current beliefs."[24] In order to preserve existing beliefs, Individuals consciously choose to expose themselves to information they know will most likely support their convictions. In this way, supporters of the National Democratic Party were predicted to listen to "Radio Gold," a radio station strongly influenced in favor of the NDC party, and read publications such as the "Heritage" and "Inquirer" that favored the political party. In this way, individuals strengthened their beliefs by listening to only their side of the argument. In this way, individuals easily fall prey to assuming that there are no good arguments on the opponents end and wholeheartedly assume that their manner of thinking is

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[24]Baron, J., (2008)*Thinking and Deciding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK pg219

right. This selective narrowing of one's viewpoint helps maintain irrational belief persistence in that individuals never have a chance to challenge their own views, and as such, modify them with growing contradictory evidence. Individuals manipulate their own beliefs in only listen to their side of the argument, limiting opportunities to incite change, and as such, beliefs are slow to change. "This kind of manipulation is particularly easy, because people tend to change their beliefs in response to one-sided evidence even when they know it is one Sided. They under-compensate for their knowledge that there is another side."[25]

Another method by which individuals manipulate evidence to suit their own beliefs is in the avoidance of the rational, qualitative method of balancing evidence. When presented with good evidence on two sides of an issue, the individual downplays evidence contrary to his viewpoint in assuming that all the good evidence is only on one side: his side. "Belief overkill is the tendency to deny conflicting arguments, even if they do not need to be denied."[26] Here, individuals take the objective or factual truth of a matter and condemn it as false, despite the fact that it can exist consistently with their own beliefs. In illustration, the research asked subjects if they believed the NDC and the NPP respectively, as stated in their manifesto, had the well-being of the Ghanaian people at the center of their ideology; many were quick to deny this fact for one of the parties, while believing it to be true of the other, as though it was not possible for both parties to be simultaneously concerned with the well-being of the populace. One could read this result as a reflection of the fact that subjects felt it necessary to deny that a party they opposed could do something good, or even propose to be concerned with doing good (Jervis, (1976))[27]. However, rationally, we know this is not the case; one can objectively admit that each party claims to concern itself with the good, and still maintain that one party is better than the other at this, by virtue of say the outcomes of each regime. In this way, one objectively considers the evidence, and yet maintains one's belief. Nonetheless, subjects fail to do this, and rather, discredit objective evidence and act as though it is only possible for one party to maintain humanist concerns; here they display a case of belief overkill. They strengthen their own belief

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[25]Baron, J., (2008)*Thinking and Deciding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK pg220
[26]Baron, J., (2008)*Thinking and Deciding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK pg219
[27]Jervis, Robert, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics. 1976*: *Princeton* University Press, *Princeton*, N.J.

by convincing themselves that the argument on the other-side is false, allowing them to disregard it completely and persist in their irrational belief. (Baron, (2008))

So in these different ways, people show biases that strengthen and perpetuate their already existing beliefs. The research conducted reflected this in that some individuals revealed that it was the case that they strengthened their own beliefs by regarding the arguments and evidence brought forth by their opponents as weak, as well as by listening only to their own side. Many studies have found this sort of bias toward information can strengthen desired beliefs. (Frey, 1986)[28] The research looked to identify these biases as a basis on which we could establish individual support for political parties and determine the relative strengths of such beliefs, and existing polarization denoted by such belief, as a quantitative measure based on the biases subjects expressed.

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[28]*Frey*, Dieter. *1986. Recent research* on selective exposure to information. In Advances in experimental social psychology. Vol. 19 (pp. 41-80)

Methodology

My research was conducted in Accra, Ghana, starting in late December 2010 and ending in early January 2011. The research project was designed to identify the biases of Selective Exposure, Belief Overkill, Biased Assimilation/Polarization, and beliefs about the Ghanaian political mindset, within the general Ghanaian adult population. Each participant gave consent in the form of a signature on a consent form. The research was conducted by way of a questionnaire, constructed with the intention of drawing out biases, in the form of an oral interview. The choice of an oral interview was made in order to avoid a situation in which the illiterate, 45.5%[29] of the population, were unable to partake in the interview. Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, two-on-one basis, or a three-to-one basis as determined by the circumstances. This is to say, it depended on the amount of people who wanted to be interviewed and were waiting to be interviewed.[30] Interviews were recorded and scored for biases in line with the pre-anticipated responses that stemmed from the natures of the questions themselves (see Appendix A detailed questionnaire). That is to say, a question like which newspaper do you enjoy reading, yielding a response of 'the Heritage,' a paper inclined in favor of the NDC will automatically score for Selective Exposure an NDC pro-bias for that question. In total, 110 interviews were conducted, with each one taking an average of *30 minutes*. The combined results based off the individual scores were then analyzed using the R programming language, to determine if there was polarization in the Ghanaian populace.

In conducting the experiment, subjects were first made aware of the nature of the experiment and its boundaries to ensure that they felt comfortable discussing political issues with us, and were not inclined to lie. Subjects were told that the study included no experimental procedures and involved minimal risk and discomfort. Moreover, the questions asked involved no personal information other than what participants might expect to provide in an opinion poll, and all responses were to be treated as confidential. In this way, subjects were aware that in no case will

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[29] Ghana Literacy, Index Mundi, accessed 5/20/11 <http://www.indexmundi.com/ghana/literacy.html>

[30] Interviews done together did not contaminate the data, in the sense that it restricted or influenced the views of the other. Given it was an oral interview, individuals were prompted to speak even if they agreed with another participant, and spoke up when they disagreed – many interesting conversations between participants were noted.

responses from any participant be identified. Furthermore, it was stressed that participation in this study was voluntary; refusal to participate involved no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants were otherwise entitled and participants may have discontinued participation at any time without penalty. In the case that participants sought extra information on the subject, or wanted to lodge a complaint, they were provided the contact information for the principal investigator, advisor, and the University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board to do so. It was reassuring for some to see a foreign institution as a part of the process, reinforcing my guarantee that the data was to leave the country. The consent form, which contained these details, was to ensure participants of the ethical considerations and legitimacy of the experiment being conducted, and moreover, guarantee the well being of participants during and after the process.

A questionnaire was used as the primary means of obtaining the necessary information for my research. The justification of this method is, for one to see a manifestation of the biases sought, one would need individuals to express a bias some form. In order to get individuals to express their biases, one need persuade individuals to discuss their opinions on government in many wide-ranging contexts, and over different time periods, to properly establish a strong pattern of favoritism or detestation. As such, questions were designed to this specification, ranging over many different events, time-periods and actions, which would lead individuals to provide a general overview of their beliefs about a party. Both factual and exaggerated information were used in the questions, to allow for biases of belief overkill and biased assimilation/polarization to be identified (see paragraphs below). This method was deemed best, as the only other option would be to examine election results by area. However, election results cannot properly capture the reality of favor or abhorrence that one party has or suffers, given the compilation of many different factors that may influence one's vote. Hence, a questionnaire appeared to be the most justifiable means of detecting preferences within the populace.

Problems anticipated with this method of research were first and foremost a lack of trust and consequently false responses from the population questioned. Though Ghana is 19 years out of military rule, and many of the respondents questioned were but children during this time period, there was hesitancy about responding to questions that touched on the political sphere.

Individuals were very wary about identifying with one party or another. They were often suspicious of the research, questioning if it was a project of the government, probably to identify individuals who proved to be supporters of their opponents. Thankfully, this was not a deep-rooted fear, as many individuals were quickly convinced with a few words of reassurance, the names on the consent form (that is to say, the listing of the University of Pennsylvania), as well as the possibility of using initials as opposed to their full names in agreeing to participate. Nonetheless, the possibility of distorted answers initially cannot be properly assessed (I say beginning because all lost themselves in their opinions quite quickly). This fear can further be assumed in the results for party identification, given that 54.5% of the subjects chose 'no party' though a majority showed strong political preferences.

The questionnaire was composed specifically with the purpose of identifying the three biases of Selective Exposure, Belief Overkill, and Biased Assimilation, as well as to expose corresponding beliefs about the Ghanaian political mindset:

Section A, tested for Selective Exposure. This was done by listing politically-oriented media, as well as neutral media, and leaving open the option of other types of media, to determine if an individual preferred a form of political geared media, or neutral media. The three main forms of media, political or otherwise, that pervade the Ghanaian society are Radio, Newspapers, and Television. As such, the questionnaire asked for an individual's preference of station, newspaper, and television channel, to determine if there existed a situation where individuals strongly preferred one politically associated form of media to another. This would display a case of selective exposure. An illustration of the questions posed is:

 "What radio stations do you prefer to listen to, Joy FM, Radio Gold, Peace FM, Choice FM, or Other?".

A selection of Joy FM would be neutral as the radio station is not known to perpetuate politically oriented material, while Radio Gold would be thought to be NDC skewed and Peace FM to be NPP skewed. In this way, a selective bias is exposed depending on what political media the participant listens to. Three questions were posed.

The second section, Section B, tested for Belief Overkill. This was done by presenting factual information or information obtained by credible organizations, and asking for beliefs about the verity of this information. A biased individual was expected to deny this objective truth and show stubborn preference for their initial belief and in this way, display Belief Overkill. Two measures of Belief Overkill were obtained: a strict measure which did not account for embellishment and a lenient measure which did account for embellishment of the objective truth (subjective, hence the distinction). Embellishment was noted in a case, given factual information such as "In *An agenda for positive change*, the NPP promised to the people of Ghana "a change that will be reflected in a lowering of the intolerably high cost of living and a reduction in the depressingly high rate of unemployment, a change that will bring jobs and a living wage for the majority of our people ..." and asked "Do you believe that the NPP had this goal for Ghana?" Individuals embellish the truth in stressing the point that the NPP seeks what is best for the nation as promised, with added examples to truly convince one. This would have been scored as a pro-NPP bias because, if one felt it was the unambiguous truth, there would be no need to reinforce the prompt passionately, and that they passionately do so unnecessarily reflects a strong preference for the NPP party. An example of a strict Belief Overkill question with the prompt given is:

"The Ghana Legal Literacy and Resource Foundation, an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) which observed the 2000 general elections… commended the electoral process and described it as "largely free and fair."

    7. Do you agree or disagree that the electoral process was "largely free and fair?"

- Do you agree or disagree that the NDC played fair?
- Do you agree or disagree that the NPP played fair?

Given that the information presented is from an objective source/observer, the answers should all agree to an objective truth. Nonetheless, all do not agree. Those who disagree either display disillusionment with the political process by denouncing all politics as corrupt, or display a Belief Overkill bias by naming one party as corrupt while the other is relieved from any possible guilt, when the truth mentions no guilt to begin with. The disillusioned response is marked as such, neutral/disillusioned, while those who show a bias are scored as either NDC con-bias or NPP con-bias with regards to which party they slandered. Six prompts (each marked as a separate question) were given, with an average of three subset questions per one prompt; a total of eighteen subset question were posed.

Section C tested for Biased Assimilation/Polarization, presenting prompt questions that would prove to be weak or neutral evidence in favor or disfavor of one political organization. A bias would be observed if the individual were to use the presented information in a manner that would support his or her own belief, despite the lack of credibility. An illustration of a Baised Assimilation question with the prompt given is:

"What the NPP must come to terms with is the fact that the good people of Ghana gave them an eight-year mandate to address the socio-economic challenges confronting them which they failed miserably necessitating the NPP being booted out of government" (The Lens)

1. Do you think this commentator is right? Did the NPP fail Ghanaians in their 8 years of power?

The prompt arose from a politically-oriented newspaper which generally skews perception of the opposition in a negative light. Moreover, the statement itself is objectively exaggerated and as such was counted as weak evidence. A response agreeing or disagreeing (depending on reason given) would demonstrate a bias. Four sections were involved (each marked as a question): performance, events, drugs, and opinions. A total of fourteen prompts were provided, with eighteen subset questions posed.

Section D tested for beliefs about the Ghanaian political mindset. This was done by posing questions about the most popular political characterizations, politically biased, lacking objectivity, and ethnic-minded. In these ways, questions were designed to expose biases and beliefs about the Ghanaian political mindset. An example of a Mindset question with the prompt given is:

"When it comes to choosing a president, Ghanaians seem to be putting more emphasis on ideas and values than in the past. Today, more and more voters look beyond tribe and qualifications in examining candidates' personal and professional qualities and values."

1. Do "more and more voters look beyond tribe" in choosing a president? Yes or no?

These results then could be actually weighed against the biases, or lack of biases, found in the first three sections as aligned with subjects' ethnicities. Five prompts were given with a total of seven subset question posed.

If a bias was found in Section A to C, a value of '1' was entered into a score sheet under the corresponding bias detected (pro ndc/npp or con ndc/npp); if the answer was objective, unbiased, hence neutral, a value of '1' was entered under neutral. The values for each question (a tabulation of the '1's' given for each possible presence of a bias or none in the subset questions) were then used to analyze the biases within the population. An example of a compressed score sheet for a subject is presented below:

File BL recording 3b								
Selective Exposure	Pro NDC	Con NDC	Pro NPP	Con NPP	Pro Other	Con Other	Neutral	Disillusioned
Question 1							1	
Question 2			1					
Question 3							1	
Belief Overkill	Pro NDC	Con NDC	Pro NPP	Con NPP	Pro Other	Con Other	Neutral	Disillusioned
Question 2			2				1	
Question 3		2					1	
Question 4							3	
Question 5		1	1				1	
Question 6	1			1	1		1	
Question 7			2					
Biased Assimilation/Polarization	Pro NDC	Con NDC	Pro NPP	Con NPP	Pro Other	Con Other	Neutral	Disillusioned
Question 1	1	3	6				1	
Question 2							2	
Question 3							2	
Question 4			2				1	
Total	2	6	18	1	1		15	

Given the above score sheet, we see a large presence con-ndc/pro-npp bias, a near non-existing bias for other political parties, and a significant number of neutral response for the participant. As such, though we identify a polarized bias within this individual participant, he or she does maintain an objective perspective on some questions. These figures were then analyzed, as explained in the 'Results' section following, using statistical methods (R programming language).

(See Appendix A for Detailed Analysis of Questionnaire)

Results

From the methodology, it was explained that numerical values of '1' were entered into the score sheet to signify the presence or absence of a particular bias was expressed by a subject. This was then summed in accordance with the Section (see methodology) and question (see appendix A) and the subset that a question fell under, to give a total score for a participant in each category. The possible biases expressed for any questions were Pro-NDC/NPP/Other and the converse, con-NDC/NPP/Other. If no bias was noted, the question was marked neutral (see appendix A). Participants were given twenty prompts, and asked thirty-nine related questions that searched for a bias. Answers from these questions could then be used quantitatively to identify the political preferences of the subjects questioned. In order to analyze the research results, two conditions were specified given the results obtained:

The first condition was that questions were eliminated from consideration if they obtained a response less than two or greater than 108, out of the total possible 110 responses given. This is because questions are not very informative when almost all subjects give the same answer. Given this condition, we eliminated the "Pro/con other party bias" from consideration and focused mainly on the NDC and the NPP biases.

The second condition was given in the elimination of Neutral and Disillusioned responses from consideration, in order to analyze only the biases that individuals expressed. The main focus of analysis hence was the Pro/Con NDC biases and the Pro/Con NPP biases found in subjects.

The summary of results below show the Mean, Median and Standard Deviation bias scores that the population reflected given these conditions. That is to say, the data below reflects the revealed bias for a specific party, in its aggregation across the subject population based on the individual score of each subject from the questions asked in each section:

(Key: SE - Selective Exposure, BO - Lenient score of Belief Overkill, BO5 - Strict score of Belief Overkill, BA - Biased Assimilation, SD – Standard Deviation)

Section	Summary	Median	Mean.	SD
A	SE	0.0000	0.1364	-0.17
B	BO (lenient)	0.4286	0.4424	-0.13
B	BO5 (strict)	0.2857	0.2870	-0.14
C	BA	0.8125	0.7727	-0.26

Results 1

Given this data, to identify if the biases were positively correlated, as logic would dictate they should be, the following table was produced using Pearson's product-moment correlation, to measure the strength of linear dependence between two variables.

(Key: SE - Selective Exposure, BO - Lenient score of Belief Overkill, BO5 - Strict score of Belief Overkill, BA - Biased Assimilation, cor - Correlation)

> cor(cbind(BO5,BO,SE,BA))

	BO5	BO	SE	BA
BO5	1.0000000			
BO	0.7539189	1.0000000		
SE	0.2017670	0.1877821	1.0000000	
BA	0.3191498	0.5100685	0.1872092	1.0000000

All correlations were across subjects, so the N is 110. All results were significant at p<.05 and positive, though the correlation values were smaller than anticipated.

Given these results, we can identify from all three measures a general tendency toward my-side bias within the Ghanaian population.

Results 2

To identify the overall strength of a party bias, all bias scores that revealed a preference for one party were deducted from bias scores that showed a dislike of that same party. Then the obtained figure was correlated with the overall biases expressed.

(Key: (SE - Selective Exposure, BO5 - Strict score of Belief Overkill, BA - Biased Assimilation)
Bias <- scale(BA)+scale(BO5)+scale(SE)
The overall Bias measure is the sum of the standardized measures on the 3 components. The "scale" takes each of the 3 scores and subtracts from it the mean of that score across subjects, then divides by the standard deviation, the s.d.. This way, the three components are weighed equally.

Strict Preference Score NPP <- Mean Pro-NPP bias scores - Mean Con-NPP bias scores
Strict Preference Score NDC <- Mean Pro-NDC bias scores - Mean Con-NDC bias scores
Strict Preference Score Party <- Strict Preference Score NPP- Strict Preference Score NDC
This is a measure of bias towards the NPP and away from NDC.)

Using Pearson's product-moment correlation, correlating Bias and Strict Party Preference Score, we found a correlation of 0.24 across the 110 subjects. The p-value was equal to 0.0123 with a 95 percent confidence interval set at 0.053, and hence we found the correlation to be significant.

This tells us that those who strongly favor one party are more biased. Hence, one can assume polarization given this expressed preference for one party over the other.

Results 3

To Identify if polarization existed within the views of the electorate, we plotted strict party preference results for both parties. Polarization in the electorate would mean that people favor one party or the other, with nobody in the middle. The more standard political-science assumption is that most people are in the middle and not at the extremes of a political spectrum. Results of preference/dislike shown toward both parties are graphed below:

(Key: plot(Strict Preference Score NPP, Strict Preference Score NDC)
Strict Preference Score NPP <- Mean Pro-NPP bais scores - Mean Con-NPP bais scores
Strict Preference Score NDC <- Mean Pro-NDC bais scores - Mean Con-NDC bais scores
Each score is the mean of the pro-party bias minus the mean of the con-party bias.

Note that this analysis uses all biases expressed, hence the lenient, not strict, belief overkill measures (B.O) omitted in other analyses)
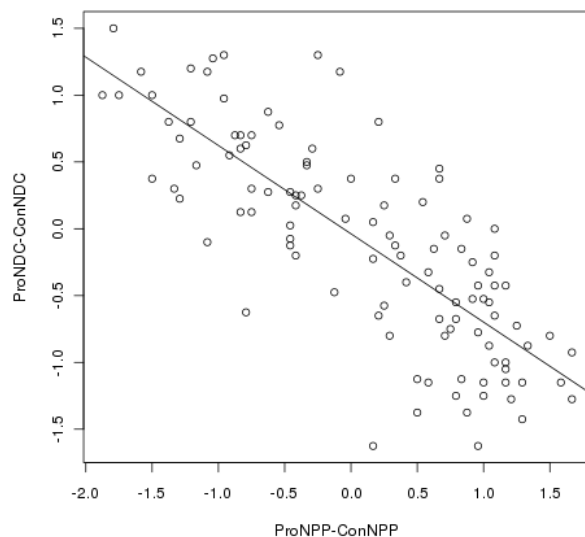
Here, we identify a negative correlation in party preference of -.79. Given such a high correlation, a significance test is rendered unnecessary. Hence, we note significant polarization in the view of the electorates.

Results 4

To identify the strength of opposing preferences in party-oriented biases, specific correlations between Pro-NDC biases-Con NPP biases, and Con-NDC biases- Pro-NPP biases were graphed. In doing this, we derived an overall consistency score for each of the two main parties by using all the data, without eliminating any items. The NPP-consistency score was the sum of all responses favoring the NPP or opposing the NDC, divided by the sum of all responses. Thus it would be 1.0 if all responses were on the side of the NPP or against the NDC. The NDC-consistency score was the found in the same way, with parties reversed.

(Note that this analysis uses all biases expressed, hence the lenient, not strict, belief overkill measures (B.O) omitted in other analyses)
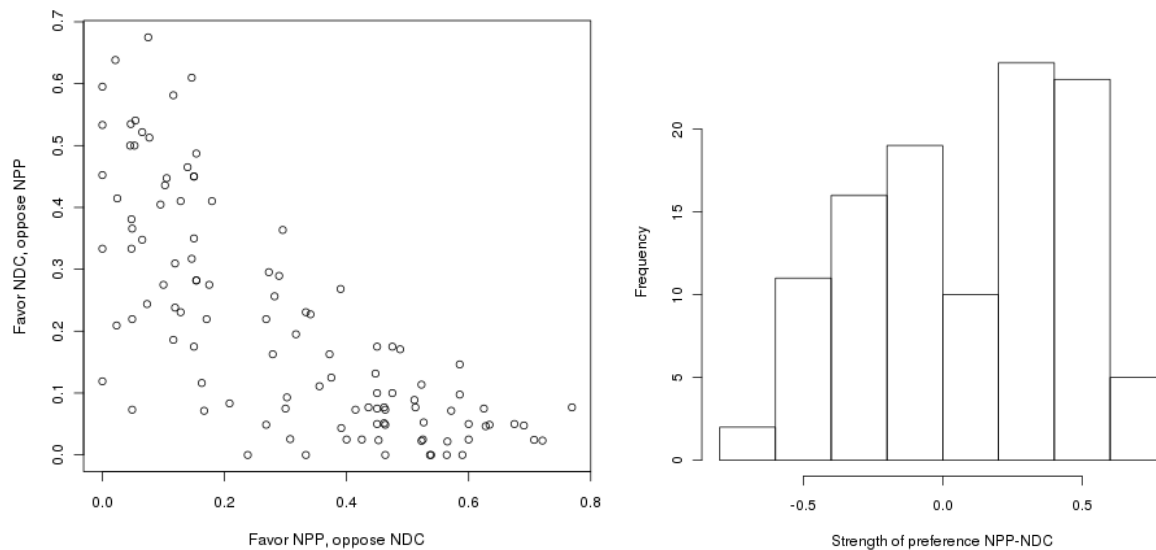
Here, we note relatively few extremists on either end of the spectrum, but clear preferences for the majority of the populace in favoring one party over another. Interesting to note 27.27% of respondents fell in the middle ground, consistent with the belief that 20-40% of the populations are swing voters (individuals who hold no party loyalties).

Result 5

To test the correlation between strength of biases against party affiliation (neutral scores counted to determine affiliation), another graph was drawn. We defined "Side" as the difference between the two consistency scores. It could range from 1 (totally on the NPP side) to -1 totally on the NDC side). The graph shows the mean bias measure as a function of Side, with each point being a subject:
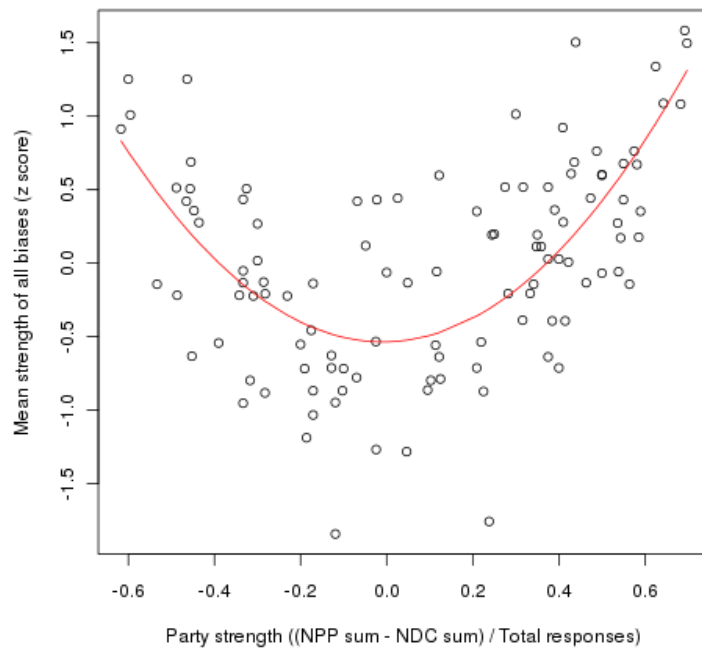
The curve is the best fitting quadratic function (3.7*(Side^2) -.5). Here, we find that those who held the strongest biases, showed stronger party affiliation i.e. they showed a strong preference towards their party and a strong dislike towards its opposition.

Result 6

The correlations between subject's demographics and biased results were examined:

Occupation was first examined. Individuals were divided into three categories based on how much education their occupation indicated and were given a corresponding score:

University level subjects received a score of two and included the following occupations: Student, Banker, Businessman/woman, Assistant, Officer, Accountant, Nurse, Manager, Scientist, Doctor, and Cosmetologist.

Secondary/Tertiary level subjects received a score of one and included the following occupations: Trader, Kente-weaver, Secretary, Electrician, Wholesaler, and Carpenter.

Junior High level subjects received a score of zero and included the following occupations: Gardener, Footballer, Driver, Security guard, Cook, and Farmer.

These occupations were then correlated with Bias to identify any existing effect on Party preference shown. Using Pearson's product-moment correlation, correlating Bias and Occupation, we found a correlation of -0.14 across the 110 subjects. The p-value was equal to 0.015 with a 95 percent confidence interval set between -0.318 and 0.0494.

Here we found occupation correlated non-significantly with bias, though subjects in occupations needing more education showed less bias.

A correlation of Age and bias was also conducted. Using Pearson's product-moment correlation, correlating Bias and Occupation, we found a correlation of 0.028 across the 110 subjects. The p-value was equal to 0.776 with a 95 percent confidence interval set between -0.164 and 0.218.

The correlation was not statistically significant and showed Age to have no effect on bias.

Result 7

To examine the effects of party orientation, taking into consideration occupation, the following analysis was conducted:

Call:
lm(formula = Bias ~ Occ + m6party)

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-5.0916	-1.5189	0.0852	1.4017	4.7588

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.4934	0.4540	1.087	0.2795
Occ	-0.4053	0.2952	-1.373	0.1727
m6party	0.3032	0.1218	2.488	0.0144 *

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 2.042 on 107 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.07299,   Adjusted R-squared: 0.05567
F-statistic: 4.213 on 2 and 107 DF, p-value: 0.01734

Here we found the effects of party are still highly significant even after including occupation in the regression.

Results 8

To determine if there was a correlation between Ethnicity and Party preference, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to observe the variance in a particular variable as partitioned into components attributable to different sources of variation. ANOVA provides a statistical test of whether or not the means of several groups are all equal, and therefore generalizes *t*-test to more than two groups.

(Key: Eth - Ethnicity)
First we asked if Side depends on Eth:
anova(aov(Side ~ Eth))
Analysis of Variance Table
Response: Side

Df	Sum	Sq Mean	Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Eth	5	1.3691	0.27381	2.1211	0.07002

Residuals 90 11.6180 0.12909

Here we found that ethnicity barely correlates with the strength of party preference by analysis of variance. This, however, only reflects that the differences between ethnic groups are not extreme i.e. it is not the case that all Akans strongly favor the NPP while all Northerners strongly favor the NDC, with no one coming near the middle; there are individuals from every group near the middle, even if on different sides. As such, it is not significance that matters in this test, but rather the apparent size of the ethnic differences, as we can see in the box-plot below:
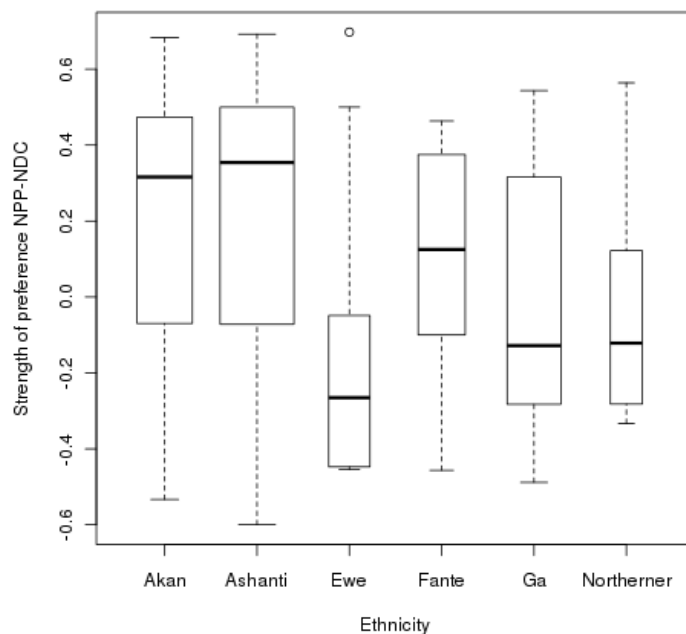
The width of each box is proportional to the number of subjects. The heavy line is the median. The top and bottom are the first and third quartile (25th and 75th percentile) cutoffs. The whiskers "extend to the most extreme data point which is no more than 1.5 times the length of the box away from the box. One point is an outlier, which is outside the whisker interval.

Here we find that the median political preference for each ethnic group falls in line with our predicted expectation. That is to say,

Ethnicity	Election results :		ANOVA Median (strength of preference for NPP over NDC)	Meanings (Comparison of Anova Median with election results)
	Parl. Const.	Pres. Indiv.		
Akan	75% (NPP)	57.5%(NPP)	3.2	A positive correlation with strength of preference for the NPP as expected, and correlating with election results (further explanation in knowledge review and Appendix B).
Ashanti	92.3% (NPP)	86%(NPP)	3.6	A positive correlation with strength of preference for the NPP as expected, and correlating with election results (further explanation in knowledge review and Appendix B).
Ewe	100% (NDC)	86% (NDC)	-2.6	A negative correlation with strength of preference for the NPP as expected, and correlating with election results (further explanation in knowledge review and Appendix B).
Fante	68% (NDC)	53.8%(NDC)	1.2	A negative correlation with strength of preference for the NPP. This is an unexpected result; nonetheless, one never knows what to expect (further explanation in knowledge review and Appendix B).
Ga	63% (NDC)	54.4% (NDC)	-1.2	A negative correlation with strength of preference for the NPP as expected, and correlating with election results (further explanation in Appendix B).
Northern er	80% (NDC)	63.1% (NDC)	-1.2	A negative positive correlation with strength of preference for the NPP as expected, and correlating with election results (further explanation in knowledge review and Appendix B).

In this way, we find that though ANOVA results do not show a large significant correlation between Ethnicity and strength of party preference, we see that individuals, given their ethnicity, fall along the political party preference spectrum in the anticipated pattern.

Given this, using a direct comparison, we evaluate the strength of preference for political parties between the Ashanti's/the Akans responses and that of the Ewe/the Northerners, to see if the two ethnicities are polarized between themselves.

A t test comparing the Ashanti's/the Akans responses and that of the Ewe/the Northerners was significant at t[64] = 2.74, with p=.0079.

This provides evidence for the divide between these ethnic groups in their preference for the two competing major parties. That is to say, even if the rest of the ethnic groups fail to show clear preference for one of the major parties, these two groupings do and oppose each other in their preference.

Section D results

1) Do "more and more voters look beyond tribe" in choosing a president? Yes or no?
 45 - no
 65 - yes

It is the case that while 41% of the population felt that the country still fell prey to ethnocentrism, the remaining 59% believed that the country was progressing and leaving 'bad habits' behind. This idea of progress can be seen in the wide range of answers given by different subjects of different ethnic groups (result 8, see box chart above), despite the anticipated biased result. Nonetheless, it is the case that the median subject fell exactly as expected on a biased scale in the right direction (supporting the anticipated party for that ethnic grouping); this result then is an adequate reflection of the small steps the country is making in the right direction, given the beliefs of the populace, despite stubbornness on a good number of peoples part.

2)"The 2008 elections, the Ashanti region voted 72.4% in favor of NPP's Nana Akufo-Addo while the Volta region voted 82.9% in favor NDC's John Atta-Mills." Do these figures support the idea that "more and more voter's look beyond tribe" in choosing a president? Yes or no?
61 - no
47 - yes
2 - no answer

This question was to test the strength of the belief of individuals given the first question, with evidence that seemed to imply existing ethnocentrism. Given this, 1.7% of the population who denied ethnocentrism in the beginning admitted to some level of ethnocentrism within the country. 55.5% of the population stood fast to their belief, qualifying this case as an 'exception,' with another 1.7%, giving no answer.

3i) Do you agree or disagree that Ghanaians tend to politicize every issue?
16 - no
94 - yes

Here we find that 85.5% of the population believed that issues facing the country were often skewed in a political light i.e. the responsibility was often accorded to parties, and not observed objectively. The remaining 14.5% of the population thought this was not the case, with some giving the explanation that it was the politicians that politicized the issues and not the people.

3ii) Do you agree or disagree that they fail to take an objective analysis (biased along party lines) as to what is appropriate when?
27 - no
81 - yes

Interestingly, 73.6% of the population believed that individuals were biased in relation to their party preference, with 26.4% disagreeing. Like the consistency found in the support for an ethnic bias between belief and results, the belief in the existence of a party bias is consistent with result 2 and 3; here, we identified 72.7% of the population expressing clear party orientation, and displaying polarization: a like of one party and a dislike of the other. Given these party preferences, we find that individuals are consistent in belief and action i.e. they are skewed towards their party/subjective opinions, as opposed to objectively analysing the issues at hand.

4i) Do you agree or disagree that a radical change in the mindset of the people is needed?
4 - no
106 - yes

Here 96.4% of the population believed that a change was needed in the mindset of the Ghanaian population. This is consistent with the idea that 85.5% of the population display a politically oriented bias, and 41% of the population vote with ethnicity in mind.

4ii) Do you agree or disagree that Ghana has to come first?
 4 - no
106 - yes

96.4% of the population said Ghana should come first.

5) When a person votes in an election, what should he or she think about? What is best for the nation as a whole, ethnic group, and/or person's self-interest?

101 - Nation
9 - Self-interest
0 - Ethnic group

Contrary to what one would predict in a clientelist state, only 8.2% believed that voting in an election would help fulfill some self-interested goal. Individuals were of the perspective that the Nation is what is most important to consider when voting. In generalizing these results, we find there is an inherent contradiction with the expressed beliefs by 85.5% of the population that individuals display a politically oriented bias and 41% of the

population vote with ethnicity in mind (Section D question 1 and 3b). One would expect objective analysis of political parties and policies if the Nation was the forefront of one's concern, with no political or ethnic bias factoring into one's consideration (given that the reasons presented for such biases in the political and historical review have nothing to do with the good of the nation). Here we find the figures are mismatched; a possible case of a Bias Blind-spot, with individuals identifying biases in everyone but themselves. This result, however, is consistent with the 96.4% expressed belief that Ghana should come first in individuals thinking (Section D question 4).

Discussion

Given the results above, we can attempt to answer many of the questions this research sought to explain with regards to the failure of traditional political science models to explain the Ghanaian situation in the 2008 elections, in light of the assumed distribution of voters along the linear political scale: amassed bimodally at the extreme of the political spectrum.

Firstly, we analyze the distribution of biases/preference for parties found in the research, and this tell us that, though there exists a polarized state, with a population amassed bimodally away from the center, the population does not rest on the extremes of the political spectrum. The graph is shown below:
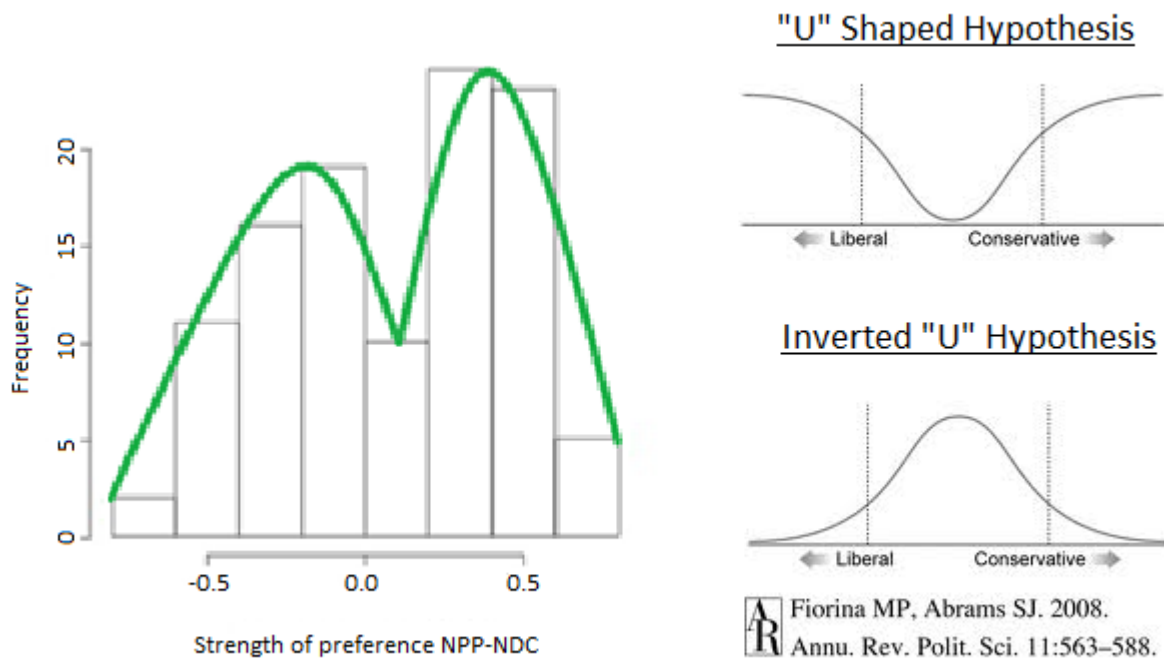
The left graph (obtained from results 4) shows the distribution of preferences among the subjects examined along the political spectrum. Here, we found an "m" shaped pattern that, unlike the "U" hypothesis shown to the right, tells us that the middle ground is not completely deserted in the Ghanaian political spectrum; there exist those crucial middle-of-the-road voters for which politicians would seek to centralize their policies to win over. Furthermore, the 'm' shaped pattern tells us that, though there are extremist on each end of the political spectrum, they do not

make up the vast majority of the voters; in fact, like the "inverted U" hypothesis, though less acute, extremists make up the minority in the population. Hence, we identified that the majority of Ghanaian voters rest equidistant from the center, falling exactly in line with their party politicians: moderate in their opposing views. The implications of this on earlier noted problems are detailed below.

Given the expectations of the Smithies model (2008) (see Appendix D), one would anticipate that extremists would choose to abstain from the political process rather than participate in elections, as they would be too disgusted at parties compromising on their policies, thereby forcing politicians to keep away from the center. Rather, we saw a good turnout of the voting population at elections, and this was contrary to our expectation. Given this new model, we find that there exist a relatively small extremist population, and as such, it is plausible that they did abstain from the election completely and we didn't miss them. They could be accounted for in the 27.1%[31] of the population that did not turn out to vote. Given this situation, it is not odd that parties moved towards the center on policy issues to capture a larger proportion of the vote, rather than keep to their divergent ideologies.

Our basic assumption was hinged on the fact that there was a high level of tension within the populace when the announcement of results was to be proclaimed. Hence, this threat of revolution, hinted at a dangerous kind of polarization of the populace, and yet we saw the continuance of democratic rule. The explanation for this, we can now say, is that there were far too few extremists to actually disrupt the political mechanism. The number of individuals who turned up with arms at the Electoral Commission in Accra, or those who barricaded the Radio Gold Station, or those who carried weapons and harassed voters during the election, all numbered too few to effectively force the country into civil strife over such close election results. It could have happened if the majority were pushed further from the center and a little more out towards the edges of the political spectrum, but this was not the case. As such, though 49.77% of the voting population was disappointed with the government that came to power, they were not

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[31]Figure deduced from Ephson, Ben, *Ben Ephson on the 2008 Elections*, Media Graphics & Press Limited, Accra, 2009

so disappointed by this outcome that the new opposition could actively encourage revolt; the majority does not rest far enough from the center to attain such results.

Another argument for the lack of revolution could be presented: the passivity/apathy of the Ghanaian population. Youry Petchenkine (1993) tells us in '*Ghana: In search of Stability'* that, as a result of the weak connection made between voting and subsequent government policies, the Ghanaian population is passive. It is the case that after general elections, relations between candidates and the people who had voted for them disappears; MPs are little concerned with their election pledges but rather focused on amassing personal fortunes and as such, ignore their supporters. This leads the average Ghanaian to become indifferent to the elections.[32] This is to say, rather than looking at the extremist for a source of revolution, we could look to the general populace who were to apathetic with government to become the platform of the revolution. Regardless of who won, individuals expected that their government to disappear from their day-to-day relations in time, and as such, were not willing to sacrifice their lives in a revolution. Though this argument could apply to the 27.27% (see results 4: 35% by Ephson) identified swing voters within the country, it would not apply to the remaining 72.73% (65% by Ephson) of the population who displayed clear party preferences and loyalties. Nonetheless, this argument, in combination with the argument above, helps us understand why we saw the continuation of peaceful democratic rule.

Nonetheless, regarding the class distribution of voters along the political scale with a majority lower class and a minority upper class that would predict the installation of a left wing government, and the bare victory of .23% that the NDC government (left) received, we find party preference to be the main cause. As results 6 and 8 show, there is no correlation between occupation (a determinant of class) and bais/party preferences shown, rather there is a highly significant effect of the party, even when occupation is added to the regression. Thus there are probably other factors that promulgate the support of the party, of which occupation is not one. So despite there being a large population of lower class individuals within the country, it is the case that income/occupation does not figure into the political decisions of voters, but rather the party itself. Here, we can recall the historical ethnic and political biases (see knowledge review)

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[32]Petchenkine, Y, *Ghana In Search of Stability* 1957-1992, Praeger, London, 1993 Pg 218

associated with each party as a reason by which the population supports a party and is kept on opposite sides of the political spectrum.

Following from this, when we note that 20-40% of voters (27.27% identified in our research, see result 4) are identified as floating voters (voters with no party loyalties), leaving 80-60% (73.74%) of voters as loyalist, we can ask the reason for this persistence. Though biases help us identify who will support what and why, it does not tell us why individuals continue to support the same parties even when parties apparently fail to keep to their promises and greatly ameliorate the living conditions of the majority of the populace. Robert Jervis tells that if " (the politician) undertakes an exchange in which he (the politician) gives the actor (the populace) more than he (the politician) needs to and / or receives less than he (the politician) has the power to exact, the actor (the populace) is likely to conclude that the other(the politician) has a positive stake in his well-being. He (the populace) may believe that the other(the politician) cares about him for intrinsic reasons (altruism)"[33] Now recall Ghanaians work in a clientelist state (see knowledge review) and as such do not hold many expectations for their government. They expect them to be corrupt and think only of their pockets, while giving them the least of the least on a basis of whom they are and where they come from. So in a situation whereby those in government do not keep everything to themselves, and allow some of the benefits of the state to affect those areas that serve as its clientele, we find that the populace comes to believe that their politicians do care about them, in not withholding everything from them (though we could argue that the populace should care about what is withheld and not what is given). In giving back in little pieces, the government manages to secure a level of loyalty from the populace, who accepts the little given as concern over their well-being for intrinsic reasons. In this way, specific ties of affection or general belief that one helps others, or even that the politician is guided by instrumental calculations, taking into consideration the important long-run interests in common, allow the populace to infer that the politicians behavior did not depend on conditions that are likely to change quickly, and so they will continue to expect friendly behavior from politicians in the future, and continue to lend them their support.

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[33]Jervis, Robert, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. *1976*: *Princeton* University Press, *Princeton*, N.J. pg 43

At this point, we can ask of the possibility of eradicating these political biases to allow for a more democratic system of government, were policy is the actual decider of votes. The existence of floating voters leads one to believe in the possibility, unless we temper this expectation with the belief that many of these voters come from regions that have no strong ethnic or political historic ties with any of the existing parties. This situation seems dimmer when we take into consideration that age has no correlation with bias (see result 7). That is to say, the youth is not growing out of the biases left by their predecessors and continue to choose along a party preference lines. Moreover, from section D results, we can identify a bias blind-spot, which prevents individuals from acknowledging their own biased preferences. That is to say, while 91.8% of subjects professed that the nation came first when they voted in election (Sec.D, Q.5), 85.5% (Sec.D, Q.3i) of the population believed Ghanaians in general to display a politically oriented bias. The math would show that there is an inherent contradiction in the logic of the figures above. Some individuals, though professing to be behind the nation, must be politically biased without objectively noting so. And if one cannot identify the problem to begin with, then there is one cannot begin to correct the problem. These results thereby predict that these politically oriented biases are here to stay. Nevertheless, it was the case that 59% of the population believed that the country was progressing and leaving ethnic biases behind, with only 55.5% regarding the most objectively biased regions as 'exceptions' to the rule (Sec.D, Q1&2). This result is more consistent with the view that 91.8% of subjects believed the nation to come first in their thinking. So despite all, we still hope for progress.

Nonetheless, the very work of this paper dims the prospects of seeing change anytime soon. The existence of political bias was found using methods that have been found to be mechanisms of attitude preservation. That is to say, the research sought to find out if individuals would fail to see that new information might contradict beliefs; it examined if information seen as discrepant to an individual had its validity explicitly rejected; it noted if individuals discredited the source in denying information presented; it observed if individuals attempted to preserve old beliefs by admitting puzzlement with what they had heard; and if individuals, presented with information they could not discredit, bolstered their own views to decrease the impact of the information presented. In this way, the research, in identifying biases among the population, by noting any of the above mentioned tendencies with regards to selective exposure, belief overkill and biased

assimilation, innately noted the mechanisms by which the population maintained their biased beliefs. Having undermined the information presented to them in the course of the research, searching for weaknesses to devalue opposing claims, and presenting significant bias scores, we find that the population is less likely to lose their biases, given the active engagement of mechanisms that preserve belief. Ghanaians, then, could be accused of self-deception and manipulation of their beliefs in order to maintain their pre-established politically biased beliefs, impeding the change we would like to see.

Conclusion

Robert Jervis in his work, '*Perception and Misperception in International politics,'* tells us that "Perceptions of the world and of other actors diverge from reality in patterns that we can detect and for reasons we can understand (Jervis, 1976)." The basis on which we would establish this divergence is through identification of wishful thing, defense mechanisms and other motivated distortions of reality. It is these motivated biases that lead individuals to draw inferences from highly ambiguous evidence in a confusing and confused setting. In looking at the Ghanaian political system from a historical and ethnic view point we can identify why people vote the way they do. One would expect that if individuals were to become fully aware of the corruption and excesses of the state, then, despite their historical or ethnic ties, they would abandon their loyalty to one party for another. Nonetheless, this is not always the case. Though 20-40% of individuals may be identified as floating voters (individuals with no party loyalties), it appears that the remaining 60-80% are stuck in their ways. In this paper I have presented evidence that it is the case that many of the populace hold biases which affect the manner in which they vote. These biases when identified, allowed us to see the polarized nature of the populace, with a -.79 (see results 3) correlation in the views of supporters and opponents. Nonetheless, unlike previously assumed, we found that there does exist a good number of individuals who occupy the middle ground and few extremists at the endpoints of the political spectrum, thus allaying our fears that revolution could result from the existing polarization identified. Nonetheless, we find that the biases identified do not bode well for changes in the political mindset of the Ghanaian populace anytime soon, as they reflect in themselves mechanisms by which these pre-existing beliefs are maintained.

Nonetheless, in searching for progress, we can examine results produced by this study with the observations noted by Youry Petchenkine in his work on Ghana in 1993. Petchenkine noted that the rather passive attitude of Ghanaians to general elections largely reflected the low level of political consciousness and the inability to understand the fine points of political struggle. It was the case that most voters found it difficult to understand the different party platforms, given that some planks were confusing or very similar, while others did not care, and voted based on tribal or religious affiliations of the candidate. These they found to be more important than the

candidates politics. Moreover, all parties that won generally in the past had broken their election promises, not leading to a build of trust within the population. He concluded that it was not odd to see parties acting on policies counter to the party manifesto.[34] Many of the points noted continue to be seen today, though one may question the claim that there is "a low level of political consciousness and an inabilitlity to understand the fine points of political struggle." As we have discussed throughout this writing, the western sense of the 'political' and 'democracy,' is not the politics and democracy operating within Ghana today. Like many other African countries, many Ghanaian identify clientelism as the politics and corruption as democracy. It is not that there is a "low level of political consciousness," but rather a coherent understanding of the political system that individuals operate in. What would be the purpose of voting objectively, if one was convinced that party members would only cater to their clientele: one which they did not fall into? Individuals, if not apathetic to the political process in general, seek to ensure that their best interest are secure; though denied by the 91.8% of subjects (Sec.D, Q.5) we find their own, 85.5% (Sec.D, Q.3i), contradicting viewpoint that the population in politically biased (a case of a bias blind-spot). If it could be made so that the systems were changed, that clientelism was erased and true democracy installed in its place, then we would have a basis on which to judge the political consciousness of the Ghanaian people.

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[34] Petchenkine, Y, *Ghana In Search of Stability* 1957-1992, Praeger, London, 1993 Pg 218

<u>Recommendation</u>

A number thing could be done to improve the work conducted and examined in this thesis. Primarily with regard to the research conducted in Ghana, the questionnaire used could be improved such that the biases sought are more clearly identified. In the research, the line between the objective and subjective truth was blurred in many instances, by the nature of the questions asked. More refined and carefully chosen questions would resolve this problem. Moreover, in finding more factual evidence on activities of political parties, the bias of belief overkill could be made more accurate.

In the scoring of research questions, rather than basic yes or no questions, scales of 1-100 could be used to find out just how much each individual falls prey to any kind of bias, especially with belief overkill. For example, a response such as 65% false would reveal less of a bias than a 95% false answer. This would help fine tune bias scores.

One problem that the research fell prey to, which could be anticipated in a re-construction of this test, is outcome bias. Subjects tend to look at past government actions in analyzing manifesto's and promises made by candidates. This may seem appropriate and rational in real life, but derogatory when seeking to isolate belief overkill or biased assimilation/polarization biases in the research. For example a question with a prompt like, "The (NDC) government has said time and again that it cannot sit down unconcerned while its citizens suffer so far as something could be done to either reduce or remove the suffering of the people;" and the question "Do you believe that the NDC government main concern is the suffering of the people?" Individuals tended to answer first with reference to the past performance of government, in saying, "o, look at how they've increased fuel prices," or conversely, "look at how they've reduced the TOR debt" in answering the question, rather than taking the question itself at face value. Questions that can avoid such outcome bias approaches would provide more accurate figures of bias.

In addition, the research should be conducted on a broader scale to involve more regions within the country and a larger subject body. In this way, the research would provide a broader perspective of the happenings within the country and the biases expressed in the population across Ghana as a whole.

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Appendix A

Detailed Analysis of Questionnaire

Section A – Selective Exposure

1) Which Radio Stations do you prefer in this selection?

8. Joy FM - Neutral
9. Radio Gold - NDC
10. Peace FM - NPP
11. Choice FM - NPP
12. Other – Neutral/NDC/NPP - Usually resulted in Neutral responses

2) Which News Paper do you prefer in this selection?

- Daily Guide - NPP
- Daily Graphic - Neutral
- The New Crusading Guide - NPP
- The Heritage - NDC
- The Ghanaian Observer - NPP
- The Crystal Clear Lens - NDC
- The Daily Post - NDC
- The Ghanaian Times - Neutral
- The Enquirer - NDC
- The Chronicle - NPP
- Other - Neutral/NDC/NPP - Usually resulted in Neutral responses

3) Which Television Station do you prefer in this selection?

2. Ghana Television (GTV) - Neutral
3. TV3 - Neutral
4. Metro Television - Neutral
5. Net2 - NPP
6. Other - Neutral/NDC/NPP - Usually resulted in Neutral responses

Section B – Views on Facts and Objective Beliefs (Belief Overkill)

NB: for all questions, "I do not know" counts as an answer. Try to get people to comment.

2.The NPP after the 2000 election

A) The NPP had the vision to repeat the call to peace, reconciliation and unity by setting up the National Reconciliation Commission

    2. Do you believe the NPP had this goal in mind?

Possible Responses + explanations - Expectations

Yes - Neutral

Yes - They wanted to help people/Ghana (BO lenient- Pro NPP)

No - Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

No - This was specifically aimed at hurting their opponents/they wanted political points - Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

Probably (Hesitancy) - Neutral

Two Diverging Answers - Neutral

B) The goal of the National Reconciliation Commission was in confronting the painful truths about the hurts and injustices of the years of political upheaval and lawlessness that Ghana will forgive and be reconciled

    ● Do you or do you not share/believe in this goal?

Yes – Neutral

Yes - They wanted to help people/Ghana (BO lenient- Pro NPP)

No – Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

No - Talking as therapy doesn't work – neutral because objective reasoning in place

Yes - People feel satisfaction after being heard – neutral because objective reasoning in place

C) In *An agenda for positive change*, the NPP promised to the people of Ghana "a change that will be reflected in a lowering of the intolerably high cost of living and a reduction in the depressingly high rate of unemployment, a change that will bring jobs and a living wage for the majority of our people …"

    ● Do you believe that the NPP had this goal for Ghana?

(An outcome bias was noted for this question, as many people wanted to refer backwards in making judgments on this question, and though encouraged not to, it was still reflected more often than not in their answers.)

Yes – Neutral

Yes – they wanted to benefit the community – (BO lenient- Pro NPP)

No – Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

No - they only came for money – Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

3. The AFRC in 1979 (became the PNDC, then the NDC)

A) The AFRC followed the creed that "people dealing with the public, in whatever capacity, are subject good of the community above personal objective,"

    I.   Do you believe the AFRC had this creed?

Yes – Neutral

Yes, qualified with affirmative reasoning – For the NDC (BO lenient– Pro-NDC)

No – Against NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

    II. Do you or do you not share this creed?

Yes – Neutral

No – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

No – Neutral if objective reasoning is given

B) The AFRC engaged in a coup d'etat which overthrew the ruling government in 1979. The coup resulted in the subsequent executions of former heads of military governments, thought to be corrupt.

    ●   Do you or do you not commend this action?

Unnecessary – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

Bad – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC), Neutral if qualified by objective reasoning

Good – For the NDC (BO lenient- Pro NDC)

4.Then 2000 Presidential Elections

A) "The Ghana Legal Literacy and Resource Foundation, an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) which observed the 2000 general elections, … commended the electoral process and described it as "largely free and fair."

(http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=12513)

    I.   Do you agree or disagree that the electoral process was "largely free and fair?"

Yes – Neutral

No – Disillusionment if for all three questions or shows a bias expressed in the answering of following questions

    II. Do you agree or disagree that the NDC played fair?

Yes – Pro NDC (BO5 strict – Pro NDC)

No – Against NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

    III. Do you agree or disagree that the NPP played fair?

Yes – Pro NPP (BO5 strict – Pro NPP)

No – Against NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

5. The 2008 Presidential Elections

A)"No doubt both NDC and NPP attempted and did rig in this election, but I don't believe anyone was able to rig enough votes to win." (http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/54963)

    I.   Do you agree or disagree that NDC attempted and/or did rig the election?

Yes – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC), Disillusionment if for both questions

No – For the NDC (BO5 strict – Pro NDC)

    II.   Do you agree or disagree that NPP attempted and/or did rig the election?

Yes – Against the NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP), Disillusionment if for both questions

No – For the NPP (BO5 strict – Pro NPP)

    III. Do you agree or disagree that no one was able to rig enough votes to win?

Yes – Neutral

No – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

Present Day Political News

6. Ideology – How the parties describe themselves

A)"The (NDC) government has said time and again that it cannot sit down unconcerned while its citizens suffer so far as something could be done to either reduce or remove the suffering of the people." (The Lens)

    ●   Do you believe that the NDC government main concern is the suffering of the people?

Yes- Neutral/ For the NDC - (BO lenient- Pro NDC)

No – Against the NDC (BO5 strict – Con NDC)

No – Disillusionment if for all four questions

That's what they say - Neutral

B) "According to the former president, the NPP has an enduring tradition; a tradition that will never die; a tradition founded on respect for humanity. Our forefathers chose respect for humanity as the corner stone of our ideology because we believe the human being is central to everything we do." (The Heritage)

    ●   Do you believe that the NPP government main concern is the human being?

Yes- Neutral/For the NPP (BO lenient- Pro NPP)

No – Against the NPP (BO5 strict – Con NPP)

No – Disillusionment if for all four questions

That's what they say - Neutral

C) "The CPP says it is determined to harness the ideals, energies , creativity, aspiration, hopes and fears of the youth to attain political power to guarantee a great future for the young people of the country." (The Heritage)

- Do you believe that the CPP's main concern, if it attains power, is to guarantee a great future of young people of the country?

Yes - Neutral/For the CPP

No – Against the CPP

No – Disillusionment if for all four questions

 That's what they say – Neutral

(Mainly to identify if beliefs extend between major parties)

D) "Spokesman of the PNC said "We look upon Nkurmah/Limann as the foremost patriots and we stretch our arms to all Ghanaians especially the youth and women, to join us in our genuine quest for true political and economic freedom and justice." (The New Crusading Guide)

- Do you believe that the main concern of the PNC is true political and economic freedom and justice?

Yes- Neutral/For the PNC

No – Against the PNC

No – Disillusionment if for all four questions

That's what they say - Neutral

 (Mainly to identify if beliefs extend between major parties)

7. Drugs – Wiki Leaks

A) A December 2007 cable leaked saying "Embassy contacts in the police service and the president's office 'have said they know the identities of the major barons, but the (NPP) government of Ghana does not have the political will to go after them" (The Ghanaian observer)

    I.   Do you agree or disagree that the (NPP) government know the identities of major drug barons?

Yes - Neutral

Yes - with derogatory affirmation Against NPP (BO lenient- Con NPP)

No – For the NPP (BO5 strict – Pro NPP)

II. Do you agree or disagree that the NPP government lacked the political will to fight the drug trade?

Yes - Neutral

Yes - with derogatory affirmation Against NPP (BO lenient- Con NPP)

No – For the NPP (BO5 strict – Pro NPP)

Section C – Views on other's Opinions (not factual, mostly exaggerated) (Baised Assimilation/Polarization)

NB: for all questions, "I do not know" counts as an answer. Try to get people to comment.

1. Performance

A) "The CPP Party Director of Communications believes … that the NDC or NPP … have failed to transform the country from the two decades that they have taken turns to run the affairs of the country. While admitting that the election 2012 will be difficult for the CPP, he said it will be more difficult for the NDC and NPP whose record of bad governance cannot support any arguments for continuity. He said the CPP was poised to bring the change that the youth and nation needed, and will spare no effort to attain that goal" (The Heritage)

    I.   Do you believe or disbelieve that the NDC has failed to transform the country in the two decades that it has taken turns to run the affairs of the country?

Yes – Against the NDC (Con-NDC)

No – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

They did better than the alternative – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

They did okay – Neutral

    II.   Do you believe or disbelieve that the NPP has failed to transform the country in the two decades that it has taken turns to run the affairs of the country?

Yes – Against the NPP (Con-NPP)

No – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

They did better than the alternative – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

They did okay – Neutral

    III.   Do you believe or disbelieve that the election will be difficult for the CPP?

Yes/ No – Neutral if objective reasoning is given

    IV.   Do you believe or disbelieve that the NDC will suffer more?

Yes – Against the NDC (Con-NDC)

No – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

Objective reasoning/Unknown – Neutral

    V.   Do you believe or disbelieve that the NPP will suffer more?

Yes – Against the NPP (Con-NPP)

No – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

Objective reasoning/Unknown – Neutral

B) "Two year into the administration of President Mills has seen tremendous improvement in the economy of this country as the government has been able to achieve what the NPP was unable to achieve within the eight years that they were in office." (The Lens)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Has Mills brought tremendous improvement to the economy of this country? Has he done what the NPP was unable to achieve?

Yes – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

No – Against the NDC (Con-NDC)

Objective reasoning (the time comparison is unjust) – Neutral

C) "What the NPP must come to terms with is the fact that the good people of Ghana gave them an eight-year mandate to address the socio-economic challenges confronting them which they failed miserably necessitating the NPP being booted out of government" (The Lens)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Did the NPP fail Ghanaians in their 8 years of power?

Yes – Against the NPP (Con-NPP)

No – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

Objective reasoning (they tried, they didn't fail completely) – Neutral

D) "In 2008, barely two years ago, president Mills took over from former President Kufour a distressed economy controlled by reckless spending, heavy national debt, rocketing inflation, high fiscal deficit, depleted foreign reserves and rising interest rates. Corruption, drug trafficking, armed robbery and cold blooded execution of Mobilla and Ya Naa were the order of the day." (The Heritage)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Were these the problems facing Mills when he took over?

Yes – Against the NPP (Con-NPP)

No – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

Objective reasoning (problems not limited to any party) – Neutral

E) "The attorney-general and minster for Justice said it took the NDC government several weeks to solve problems NPP left in office... "we had to pay huge debts (incurred) during NPP time, so many contracts were abrogated and we had to pay… so we used the first year to understand the problems and find solutions to the problems so that we lay foundations in year two so you will see developments in year three… about 4000 Ghanaians would be given employment opportunities as contracts will be sub-contracted to Ghanaians." " she assured." (The Heritage)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Do you believe these are the problems the NDC faced? Do you believe that these are the improvements we will see in 2011?

Yes – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

No – Against the NDC (Con-NDC)

Objective reasoning (we have to wait and see) – Neutral

F) "The attorney-general and minster for Justice, has described as disheartening and disturbing, suggestions that the ruling NDC has done nothing since she assumed office two years ago. She says such comments are only propagandist tools meant to steal the conscience of the people who are themselves witnesses to development projects in their respective districts"(The Heritage)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Has the NDC done something these 2 years? Are people trying to change the minds of Ghanaians who can see the progress happening around them?

Yes – For the NDC (Pro-NDC)

No – Against the NDC (Con-NDC)

Objective reasoning (maybe) – Neutral

H) "According to the former president, the NPP has always occupied a unique position in the nation's political scheme of affairs, adding " whenever the people entrust the leadership of the country into our hands, the nation prospers, because we believe in using power to serve the people and not to oppress them." (The Heritage)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Has the nation prospered under the NPP? Have they used their power to serve the people?

Yes – For the NPP (Pro-NPP)

No – Against the NPP (Con-NPP)

Objective reasoning (prospered in some way and not in some) – Neutral

2. Event

B) "The Ledzokuky Constituency of the NPP says an attempt by the ruling NDC to take credit for the construction of a 100-bed general hospital at Teshi in Accra to be commissioned shows how desperate the NDC has become since assuming office…(The NPP challenged) the NDC.. . to stop throwing dust in the eyes of the good people of Teshie"

- What is your opinion on this story? Do you think it is true or false or somewhere in the middle?

True – Against the NDC / For the NPP (Con NDC/ Pro NPP)

False – For the NDC / Against the NPP (Pro NDC/Con NPP)

C) "In their bid to rescue one of their own from facing prosecution for smoking and possession of marijuana, a known NDC goons quartet in Sankore, a suburb in the Brong Ahafo Region,… broke into the Sankore Police Cell to release their pal" (The New Crusading Guide)

- What is your opinion on this story? Do you think it is true or false or somewhere in the middle?

True – Against the NDC (Pro-NDC)

False – For the NDC (Con-NDC)

I don't know / Middle / Objective reasoning - Neutral

3. Drug (Wiki-leaks)

A) "Some individuals in the NPP worked systematically to undermine efforts to fight the drug menace because of their personal interest" (The Ghanaian observer)

- Do you think this commentator is right? Did individuals in the NPP refuse to challenge the drug menace because of their personal interest?

True – Against the NPP (Pro-NPP)

False – For the NPP (Con-NPP)

I don't know / Middle / Objective reasoning - Neutral

C) "The deputy minister of information said that "the NDC government was ready to engage the NPP in detailed discussions on the issue of the Wiki-leaks drug trade and asked that the NPP not to be "embarrassed by its narcotic records" and dart away from the issue" (The Heritage)

- What is your opinion on this issue? Is the NDC right to ask the NPP not to run away from this issue?

Yes – For the NDC / Against NPP (Pro NDC/Con NPP)

No – Against the NDC / For NPP (Con NDC/ Pro NPP)

I don't know / Middle / Objective reasoning - Neutral

4. Opinions

C) "The NPP does not want the government and for that matter the NDC to succeed so will do everything, within its domain to criticize and oppose any good thing that the ruling party might introduce"(The Lens)

- What is your opinion on this issue? Is the NPP trying to stop the NDC from succeeding?

Yes – For the NDC / Against NPP (Pro NDC/Con NPP)

No – Against the NDC / For NPP(Con NDC/ Pro NPP)

I don't know / Objective reasoning (simply politics) - Neutral

D) "Of late, major opposition parties (NPP) are hitting well below the belt. Is this the result of fear? Looking at the excellent performance of Prof. Mills, the gurus of NPP have come to realize that there is no way their party can win the 2012 election except through such dirty tricks and strategies" (The Heritage)

- What is your opinion on this issue? Is NPP attacking NDC because of fear of Mills and 2012 election?

Yes – For the NDC / Against NPP (Pro NDC/Con NPP)

No – Against the NDC / For NPP (Con NDC/ Pro NPP)

I don't know / Objective reasoning (simply politics) - Neutral

E) "Indeed, the NPP has an agenda; that is to make the Government unpopular, and eventually to lose focus and fail to achieve its target." (The Heritage)

- What is your opinion on this issue? Is NPP trying to make NDC unpopular so NDC fails to achieve?

Yes – For the NDC / Against NPP (Pro NDC/Con NPP)

No – Against the NDC / For NPP (Con NDC/ Pro NPP)

I don't know / Objective reasoning (simply politics) - Neutral

Section D – Voting Attitudes and Results

1) "When it comes to choosing a president, Ghanaians seem to be putting more emphasis on ideas and values than in the past. Today, more and more voters look beyond tribe and qualifications in examining candidates' personal and professional qualities and values."

(http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/54963)

● Do "more and more voters look beyond tribe" in choosing a president? Yes or no?

Expectations: People would say no, individuals are ethnically minded and this would be compared against the results from the questionnaire

Secondary Research findings: see tables in Appendix B

2) "In the 2008 elections, the Ashanti region voted 72.4% in favor of NPP's Nana Akufo-Addo while the Volta region voted 82.9% in favor NDC's John Atta-Mills. (http://www.ec.gov.gh/node/134)

● Do these figures support the idea that "more and more voter's look beyond tribe" in choosing a president? Yes or no?

Expectations: People would say yes, individuals are ethnically minded and this would be compared against the results from the questionnaire

3) "Most Ghanaians are noted to be a group of people who tend to politicize every issue in the country without taking an objective analysis as to what is appropriate and what is needed at a particular point in time" (The Lens)

    I. Do you agree or disagree that Ghanaians tend to politicize every issue?

Gage individual opinions: comparison against the results from the questionnaire

    II. Do you agree or disagree that they fail to take an objective analysis as to what is appropriate when?

Gage individual opinions: comparison against the results from the questionnaire

4) "We need a radical paradigm shift of the mindset of the people: An attitudinal change to appreciate and contribute positively to the drive for rapid economic emancipation. In all things, Ghana has to come first" (The Heritage)

    I. Do you agree or disagree that a radical change in the mindset of the people is needed?

Gage individual opinions: comparison against the results from the questionnaire

    II. Do you agree or disagree that Ghana has to come first? If not, who should?

Gage individual opinions: comparison against the results from the questionnaire

5) When a person votes in an election, what should he or she think about? What is best for the nation as a whole, ethnic group, and/or person's self-interest?

Gage individual opinions: comparison against the results from the questionnaire

Section E - (Optional)

Age:

Expectations:

The youth/young adults (19 – 30) should be more objective

Adults (30 +) should be less objective given they know more of the history of the different parties and should have more experience with politics in Ghana in general.

Ethnicity:

Expectations:

Akan's would be NPP Pro Biased,

Ga's, Northerners, and Ewe's NDC Pro Biased

Political Party:

Expectations: Political Party alignment consistent with expressed biases

Occupation:

Expectations:

Professional occupations (Doctors, nurses, teachers) should show less biases due to higher education

Trading occupations (hawkers etc) should show more biases due to less education
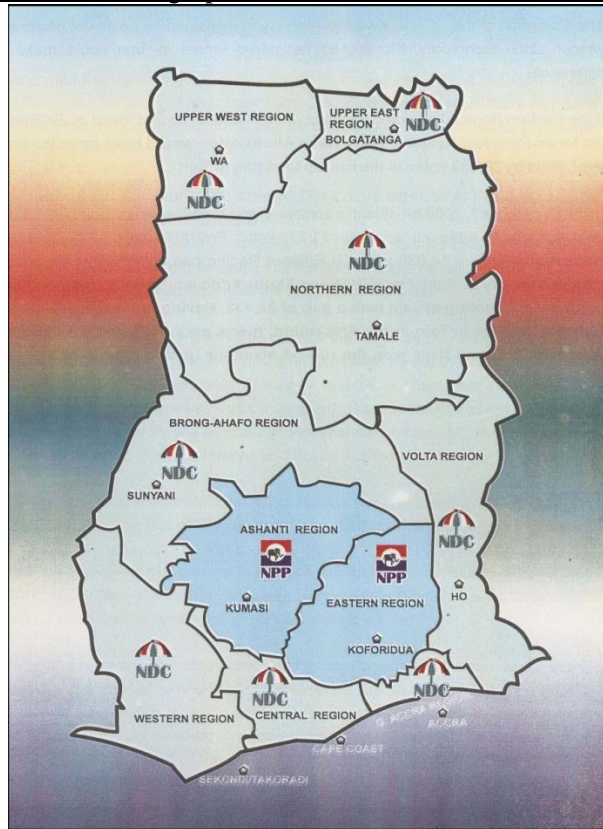
Score Sheet   **File _____**   **Recording**

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Section	Question	Alphab	Roman	NDC Bias		NPP Bias		Other Bias		Neutral
A				pro	con	pro	Con	pro	con	
	1			R/G		P/C				Joy
	2			H/L/DP/E		GD/CG/GO				GR/GT/
	3					N2				T/M/G
B										
	2									
		A								
		B								
		C								
	3									
		A								
			I							
			II							
		B								
	4									
		A								
			I							
			II							
			III							
	5									
		A								
			I							
			II							
			III							
	6									
		A								
		B								
		C								
		D								
	7									
		A								
			I							
			II							
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			III							
			IV							
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	3									
		I								
		II								
	4									
		I								
		II								
	5									
E										
	Age									
	Ethnicity									
	P. Party									
	Occupation									

Major peoples:

Akan 35.4% (excluding Fante)
(Mainly: Ashanti Region, Eastern Region, Partially: Brong-Ahafo Region)
Fante10.9%
(Central Region)

Mole-Dagbon 15.2%,
(Northern Region)
Ewe 11.7%,
(Volta Region)
Ga-Dangme 8.7%,
(Greater Accra Region)

other 20.4%

Region (Pop %)	Ethnicity	Party	Historical Explanation	Pres. Election Indv.	Parl. Election Const.
Ashanti 18.6%	Akan	NDC	No allegiance	14%	
		NPP	Ethnic ties – the leadership of the party is composed of mainly Ashanti's and other Akans	86%	92.3%
Eastern 10.5%	Akan	NDC	No allegiance	42.5%	
		NPP	Ethnic ties– the leadership of the party is composed of mainly Ashanti's and other Akans	57.5%	75%
Brong-Ahafo Diverged 9.3%	Brongs	NDC	No allegiance/ Alternative Party	51.5%	
		NPP	Ethnic ties – nonetheless, historically, the Ashanti's in their bid for expansion conquered and dominated these lands	48.5%	63%
Central 8.2% Swing State	Fante	NDC	No allegiance / Alternative Party	53.8%	68%
		NPP	Ethnic ties – nonetheless, historically, the Ashanti's fought unsuccessfully with the Fanti states, leading to their quick alliance with the British	46.2%	
Western 9.7% Swing State	Nzema	NDC	No allegiance	51.9%	

Region (Pop %)	Ethnicity	Party	Historical Explanation	Pres. Election	Parl. Election
				Indv.	Const
Volta 8.1%	Ewe	NDC	Ethnic ties – the founder of the party is Ewe and Ewe's display strong ethnic solidarity	86%	100%
		NPP	No allegiance	14%	
Upper West 2.6%	Northners	NDC	Alternative party	65.6%	80%*
		NPP	Bad Ethnic relationship – in the past, the Ashanti kingdom demanded slaves for the new European market, and most of these slaves came from now Northern Ghana	34.4%	
Upper East 4%	Northners	NDC	Alternative party	62%	80%*
		NPP	Bad Ethnic relationship - in the past, the Ashanti kingdom demanded slaves for the new European market, and most of these slaves came from now Northern Ghana	38%	
Northern 8.8%	Northners	NDC	Alternative party	61.6%	80%*
		NPP	Bad Ethnic relationship - in the past, the Ashanti kingdom demanded slaves for the new European market, and most of these slaves came from now Northern Ghana	38.4%	
Greater Accra 10.1% Swing state	Ga, others	NDC	No allegiance – though Ga's are known to favor this party.	54.4%	63%
		NPP	No allegiance	45.6%	

Ghana Political History Timeline After Independence

1956 Elections - UGCC, NP, CPP & NLM => CPP victory

1957-8 - Banning of regional, ethnic and religious parties,
Deportation and Detainment acts passed

1960 - Ghana a republic -> CPP's Nkrumah wins presidential elections
CPP becomes the sole party of the state, Nkrumah named president for life

1964 - Ghana becomes a one party state through parliamentary act (one party state)

1964 - NLC overthrows the CPP in military coup

End of the FIRST REPUBLIC — 1968 - Ghana returns to a multi-party state   (multi-party parliamentary democracy)

1969 Elections - PP & NAL - PP victory

1970 - NAL absorbs JP and other minor parties to form a solid southern bloc,
comprised many Ewes and people of the coast

End of the SECOND REPUBLIC — 1972 - Bloodless coup overthrew the PP government
Growing economic hardship fueled the coup conducted by the NRC , (pure military government)

1975 - Reformation of the NRC into the SMC
Given mounting civilian disillusionment due to corruption and economic hardship

End of the THIRD REPUBLIC — 1979 - Military coup by the AFRC
Purging/Execution of senior officers in the SMC and the NRC,

1979 Elections - PNP & PFP => PNP victory (multi-party parliamentary democracy with keen military surveillance)
AFRC became the 'June 4 Movement' with the mission of monitoring the government

End of the FOURTH REPUBLIC — 1981 - Military Coup by the 'June 4 Movement,' now the PNDC (Progressive military government)
Resulted from growing economic hardship and loss of public support for the PNP

Beginning of the FIFTH REPULIC — 1992 - The Constitution of 1992 restored multi-party elections (multi-party parliamentary elections)
The PNDC becomes the the NDC

1992-6 Elections - NDC & NPP => NDC victory

2000-4 Elections - NDC & NPP => NPP victory

2008 Elections - NDC & NPP => NDC victory
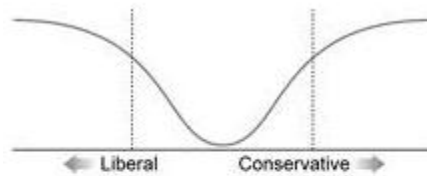
Karla Forjoe   10/26/2008

Terms
- Pure military government - no plans to return to civilian rule
- Progressive military government - plans to return to civilian rule
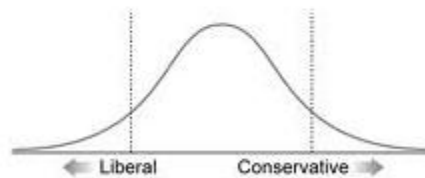
NB
- From 1996 onward many parties have stood for government, but only the two dominant parties are shown on the timeline.
- At present, there are **8 political parties**

## "U" Shaped Hypothesis

Inverted "U" Hypothesis

Fiorina MP, Abrams SJ. 2008.
Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci. 11:563–588.

Hotellings Model

A model proposed by H. Hotelling (Economic Journal 39) of the effect of competition on locational decisions. The model is usually based on two ice-cream salesmen, A and B, on a mile of beach. The cost and choice of ice-cream is the same for each distributor. Buyers are evenly distributed along the beach. The first pattern of market share has the two salesmen positioned so that each is at the centre of his half of the beach and the market is split up evenly. If A now moves nearer to the middle of the beach, he will increase his market share. The logical outcome of this will have both salesmen back to back at the centre of the beach, as long as some customers are willing to walk nearly half a mile for an ice-cream, i.e. that the consumer provides the transport. This analogy indicates that locational decisions are not made independently but are influenced by the actions of others.
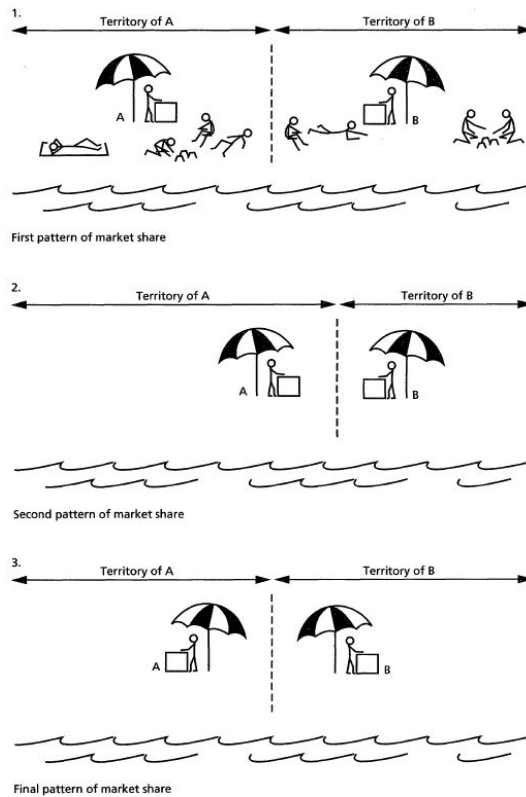
Hotelling model[35]

How did Anthony Downs apply Hotelling's analysis to politics? If there exists only a single issue-space, then all political parties have an incentive to move their positions toward those of the median voter and to claim that their policies represent the middle range of opinion, while characterizing the other side as being to either extreme. It is difficult for third parties to exist in this situation, because any side of the issue-space that has more than one party will have all of its parties defeated if the other side of the issue-space has only one party.

Smithies Model

Arthur Smithies idea of voter alienation: Voter alienation implies that voters will not vote for a party that drifts too far away from their preferences. In an election, people will only vote if the marginal benefit to them of voting exceeds the considerable marginal costs of waiting in line and foregone time. If a party's principles are no longer appealing to a voter from that party's base,

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[35] Hotellings Model, Answers.com, Accessed 5/20/2011 <http://www.answers.com/topic/hotelling-model#ixzz1MvrJZkc2>

then that voter will prefer to stay home. This is what has been happening, for instance, with the Republican Party in the United States, which has increasingly failed to "get out its base."

Introducing voter alienation changes the outcome of a political process in a single issue-space. In a unimodal, symmetric distribution of voters, the two parties will still appeal to the median voter. However, if the mode of the distribution is different from the median (i.e., in an asymmetric, unimodal distribution), then, as a result of alienation, both parties will drift toward the mode, because each will gain more voters from approaching the mode than are lost from alienation. In a multimodal distribution, it is possible for each party to try to reach a different mode. In a bimodal distribution, for instance, the two major parties might capture each of the modes, alienating the voters in between them. There is therefore room for a third party to come in and appeal to the voters in the center between the two modes; such a third party might even win the election, although this is not a foregone conclusion. This kind of distribution of voters is also conducive to parties being substantively different in their positions on the issue. (Wolfram (2008))[36]

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[36] Wolfram, Gary. Lectures on Public Choice Economics. Hillsdale College. Hillsdale, MI. October -November 2008 in **Stolyarov, The Hotelling-Downs and Smithies Models of Voting, Public Choice Economics Study Guide, 2008,** <http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1194002/the_hotellingdowns_and_smithies_models.html>