

## **HOW TO LOSE AN ELECTION**

### **THE 2016 ELECTIONS: A DESKTOP REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NDC**

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#### **DECLARATION**

In writing this review, declare that the entirety of any interpretation and opinion contained in this review is my own, original opinion; that I had not, prior to its authorship, been encouraged or instigated by any person or organization to write it. For the avoidance of doubt, I declare that I have not been hired by any person or organization to undertake this review. Where I have made reference to or quoted from the work of others, I have endeavoured to acknowledge the source except where, for the sake of confidentiality, I have refrained from specifying the source.

#### **ABSTRACT**

It sounds trite, although true, that in electoral politics, there will always be a victor and a loser.

To the victor, the initial euphoria of winning the elections makes them forget to retrace their steps to find out the real reasons for the victory. This may lead to a dangerous condition of complacency whereby it may be thought that their superior message was the main reason for the victory.

To the loser, the initial shock of having lost completely dis-orientates them. In Africa and other emerging electoral democracies, such a shock may take them through a mourning process which may include, blaming the victor for rigging the elections. As the days wear on, they may begin to look into themselves to find the reasons. Instead maintaining a cool head to undertake a 360 degree self-appraisal, the anger stage may tempt some of them to blame external factors or bogeymen who might have interfered in the electoral process to cause their defeat. They may also direct the knife unto one another, blaming other people within their political grouping for not working hard enough or jumping into bed with the opponents against their own political grouping.

While such things happen, the losers may be less likely to undertake empirical research to understand clearly the real or possible reasons for the behavior of the electorate in not voting for them.

For this reason, I thought of undertaking a desktop review of the 2016 election results in order to establish the extent to which there is a relationship between the electoral figures and the anecdotal claims by NDC functionaries and leaders.

#### **INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Since the 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Ghana, while the victor (the New Patriotic Party) has been busy patting one another's shoulder for a good-job done, the main loser, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), has been going through a dozy mourning process.

Initially, they could not even believe that they had lost the elections. I understand that about twenty minutes before President John Dramani Mahama conceded defeat, some NDC leaders, including people who claim to

be non-NDC but in reality are more NDC power-brokers than most of its leaders, were assuring people that the NDC was winning. “Wait for the Electoral Commission’s results: we are winning”, one of them is reported to have assured a concerned observer of the events.

When President Mahama finally conceded defeat, and the Electoral Commission also came out to confirm the results, they then began looking for reasons. Initially, the spotlight turned unto one Joe Anokye, a Ghanaian who had reportedly worked within the US Space Agency (NASA) in a telecommunication role and who the NPP had reportedly engaged to help them to electronically collate their results. The conspiracy theory was that Mr. Anokye had hacked into the system of the Electoral Commission and had changed the results coming from the polling stations and constituencies. This was the initial belief of several NDC members some of who initially even asked for the Mr. Anokye to be arrested.

As the days wore on, various NDC members began to throw accusations, blaming one another, for being the reasons behind their defeat. Most of the accusations were based on anecdotes, without any empirical basis. In the light of this, the National Executive Committee set up a Committee to find out the reasons for the defeat.

The membership of the Committee is interesting. It includes at least one person who, himself, is supposed to have a keen eye to be the next flag bearer of the NDC. In addition, at least two other persons on the Committee are in the private camp of the aspiring flag bearer. Whether the report will be objective and not skewed in its findings (including the temptation to cast slurs on other potential contestants), will be known when the Committee publishes its “findings”.

It appears that the main methodology of this Committee has been to go round the country to solicit the views of local party executives and activists as to what caused the defeat.

From the various press reports, it looks likely that rather than researching for empirical evidence, the Committee may be tempted to rely on the subjective claims of NDC functionaries, who thought they were left out of the gravy train of election funds.

Press reports are replete with claims and counter claims by various NDC people regarding the “reasons” why the party lost the elections.

Initially, some NDC people pointed accusing fingers at Ex-President Rawlings for the defeat referring to his alleged anti-NDC innuendoes and “smear remarks” about the loss of direction of the NDC leadership while extolling the virtues of the NPP leader. Not long after that, the recrimination moved unto some members of the NDC National Executive. They were accused of keeping campaign monies, instead of distributing them among party branches and “foot-soldiers”. The accused party executives then hit back, claiming to have been sidelined by “Flagstaff House” (an apparent jab at President Mahama and “the people around him”)...

Some of the claims against “Flagstaff House” were interesting. There were claims that “Flagstaff House” funded their separate campaign outside the party instead of funding the party structure. Such critics point to the sudden appearance of hitherto unknown groups, which I will refer to “Mahama groups”, celebrities and other actors and actresses from the Kumasi film industry. It was asserted that funds that could have been used for effective collective campaigning were spent on such groups and individuals, including others such as Madam Akua Donkoh and Osofia (a Nigerian actor who was imported to feature in NDC adverts). In addition to these groups were the pro Spio Garbra camp, who may have been funded from different sources.

However plausible some of these assertions may have been, they bring to the fore serious issues regarding party funding. Where did the party hierarchy expect “Flagstaff House” to get party funds from? One would have thought that it was rather the party structures that were expected to raise funding. It will be very strange, indeed, if the Party structure can say they did not raise any funding at all and only expected the President to raise funds. If they did, what did they do with the money? (This would be the subject of a later discussion).

Soon after, the floodgates were thrown wide open. Everybody who thought they mattered and should have been given a substantive role started throwing accusations. There were also others who, in their guilt, felt that the best strategy to extricate themselves from potential blame was to throw some accusation first.

Among the serious pitfalls of the NDC government admitted by a former NDC government official was the “Bus branding saga” (when the NDC government handed out a contract of GH¢3.6 million to the wife of an NDC functionary to label public transport buses in 2015). According to that government official the bus branding issue was an “avoidable” mistake<sup>i</sup>.

A former Ambassador under the NDC government was also reported to have blamed the defeat on the “unattractive image” of the NDC government.<sup>ii</sup>

A group calling itself Action Movement of the National Democratic Congress also blamed President Mahama’s siblings and his wife for causing the defeat of the NDC.<sup>iii</sup> Among their reasons were:

- That President Mahama had described himself as a ‘a dead goat’ who was impervious to criticism and insults;
- That the President’s wife printed 20 million T-shirts in China when she could have given the job to local printers to provide opportunities for Ghanaians;
- That the President’s brothers were allocated major contracts in the country including contracts “from Airport, Roads, Cocobod, GNPC, ECG , VRA, Ministry of Power and all major contracts in the country.”
- That “If you don’t see JM brothers, you cannot get a contract and if you see them, then you have to pay money before you get the contract, frustrating foreign contractors and companies by taking Ghanaian contractors for granted and creating enemies for the NDC party,”
- That the appointment of the Campaign Coordinator by the President was a misjudgment since the latter was ineffective;

There were other grievances given as reasons for the defeat, some of which were:

- The President did not heed to wise counsel from senior party members but relied on “young, inexperienced handlers”, who “suppressed dissenting views in the run-up to the elections”<sup>iv</sup>.
- Dr. Kwabena Adjei, a former National Chairman of the party, was so peeved that he blamed the NDC loss on the party’s refusal to re-elect him at the last NDC Congress. “Nobody involved me in the campaign; I involved myself...no I wasn’t invited...I tried to get access to the President and I didn’t get access. When I noticed things were going wrong, I tried and tried and tried but I didn’t get access so I mobilized myself...and did what I could do,”.(ibid)
- Party leaders such as Koku Anyidoho, Deputy General Secretary; Anita Desooso, Vice Chairperson; Joseph Bipoba Naabu, NDC MP for Yunyoo; Yaw Boateng Gyan, former National Organizer, all queued up in a chorus that the NDC lost because, the President “sidelined most of the executives and dealt only with the young guys” (ibid)

- Baba Jamal, a defeated NDC MP also stated that the NDC's process for the selection of parliamentary candidates, allowing MMDCEs and Presidential staffers to contest sitting MPs, as well as appointments to sensitive positions of people hitherto "detached" from the party but who, once appointed, treated authentic party members as second-class citizens, accounted for the defeat.

Even a Minister under President Mahama, waded into the blame game. He stated, among other things, that perception of corruption, the opulent lifestyle of government appointees, (except him), "dumsor" the IMF conditionalities, neglect to undertake projects in NDC strongholds, showcasing the Kumasi Central Market in the Volta Region, and improperly articulated campaign messages all combined to cause the NDC's defeat<sup>v</sup>.

The electoral figures speak for themselves. However, it is the analysis of those figures and other objective factors that should be of interest to the non-partisan observer.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW**

The aim of this review is to look at the electoral figures to ascertain the attitude of voters in the 2016 elections. It is also an attempt to interrogate some of the issues of the campaign, some government actions or inactions, and other issues that were generally raised by some members of the body politic before the elections.

This review does not claim to have all the answers behind the loss by the NDC of the elections. However it is hoped that it may assist in raising certain issues that can be properly linked with the attitude of voters. Although some of the issues relating to low voter turnout are already well-known, the review attempts to examine further where these issues were more pronounced and what possible factors may have accounted for those.

For example, to what extent could the "liberation" of campaign funds by NDC Executives (a friend calls it "editing"); or Ex-President Rawlings' utterances be attributable to the NDC losing the elections?

## **REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

This review was conducted by looking at the figures contained in the 2016 presidential and parliamentary election results. Apart from the summary of the results released by the Electoral commission, it was not possible to obtain the detailed results on constituency basis from the Electoral Commission's own website. Up till the time of writing this review, the Electoral Commission has not been able to publish the detailed results on their website; unlike in the 2004 elections and those before it. (It is sad that not even the 2008 and 2012 election results have been detailed by the electoral Commission on their website)

I therefore had to rely on publications from *Ghanaweb*, *Peacefmonline* and *Citifm*. Sometimes, there have been slight differences between the figures of the various publications. However, the differences are not significant in making the observations contained in the review.

I also relied on news items and feature articles from a variety of websites, and publications, some of which have been credited.

There were also random discussions with certain individuals in the period before the elections regarding their standard and quality of living, vis-à-vis government performance, which have also been part of the basis of this analysis. Although these discussions were not conducted along the strict lines of social research methodology, I believe that they are helpful in determining how the voting pattern turned out.

Unlike most social surveys, where outcomes are measured in percentages, I decided to use the raw voting figures. However tedious this type of presentation might seem, it is intended to achieve the effect of making the reader realise how, in numerical terms, the actual votes moved.

There was one assumption in the determination of the voter turnout. Considering that Ghana has no systematic system of recording deaths, which could have enabled the Electoral Commission to accurately eliminate deceased voters from the register, and considering that there has been no new electoral register since 2012, it was assumed that up to 500,000 voters might have been deceased. This figure is generous but it may help in my analysis.

The review has been conducted by comparing the results of elections in 2012 with the 2016 results.

## THE ELECTION RESULTS DATA COLLECTION AND TREATMENT

According to information released by the Electoral Commission, the total number of voters on the electoral register for the 2016 elections was 15,712,499<sup>vi</sup>. In 2012, the total number registered voters was 14,158,890<sup>vii</sup>. These figures show that there was an additional 1,553,609 voters added unto the list in 2016.

However, a look of the voting figures in Table 1 reveal something interesting.

**Table 1.** National turnout of voters for 2012 and 2016

	2012	2016
<b>Total Registered Voters</b>	14,158,890	15,712,499
<b>Turnout of Voters</b>	11,246,982	10,781,917
<b>Did not vote</b>	<b>2,911,90</b>	<b>4,930,582</b>

Whereas in 2012 when the voting population was only a little over 14 million, nearly 3 million failed to vote in the presidential elections, in 2016, when the voting population had increased to nearly 16 million, nearly 5 million registered voters failed to turn out to vote. This means that numerically, less people voted in the 2016 presidential elections than in the 2012 elections. In other words, using the 2012 figures of “refuseniks” (those who stayed away from voting) as a baseline, an additional 2 million people did not vote in 2016.

A lot of questions may arise out of this situation. For example, does this indicate that there is an increasing number of people who are losing confidence in the current electoral system? If they are not and if it is the NDC and NPP that they did not want, at least, they had the option to vote for the other parties. Interestingly, apart from the PNC which suffered a reduction in their 2012 votes, the remaining smaller parties only had marginal increases. (It must be noted here that the NDP did not contest in 2012)



**Table 2 Results of Presidential Elections**

<b>PARTY/CANDIDATE</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>GAIN/LOSS</b>
Nana Akufo-Addo [NPP]	5,755,758	5,263,286	<b>492,472</b>
John Dramani Mahama [NDC]	4,771,188	5,573,572	<b>-802,384</b>
Paa Kwesi Nduom [PPP]	106,092	64,267	<b>41,825</b>
Convention Peoples Party (CPP)	25,552	20,109	<b>5,443</b>
People's National Convention [PNC]	22,298	24,621	<b>-2,323</b>
National Democratic Party [NDP]	16,935		
Jacob Osei Yeboah INDEPENDENT)	15, 911	15,156	<b>755</b>
Henry Herbert Lartey (GCPP)		38,250	
Kwasi Addai		8,909	

In the euphoria following the elections, various commentators and NPP supporters have described the magnitude of NPP win as a massive confidence vote for, and endorsement of the NPP. In reality, the figures in Table 2 above reveal that the NPP presidential candidate received only 492,472 votes more than what the party received in 2012.

On the other hand, a whacking 802,384 people who voted for the NDC candidate in 2012, refused to vote for them in 2016. It means that if the NDC (in 2016) had held their vote in 2012 (5,573,572), the margin of NPP win, in the 2016 elections, even with the increased vote of 5,755,758 would have been just over 200,000 votes. The NPP may be advised to note that the apparent margin of almost 1 million votes' difference between them and the NDC in 2016 may not tell the whole story.

For the NDC, it raises the question as to why so many people walked away from them in spite of their main campaign messages of “massive infrastructural development” and “#Changing Lives, #Transforming Ghana”. (More about this later).

## **THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE**

The situation in the parliamentary sector was not very different from the Presidential one. In most cases, it was the same trend. In some other cases, the shifts were even more remarkable. A consideration of some of the constituencies and regions would be useful.

### **Volta Region**

In the Volta Region, generally acknowledged as a solid stronghold of the NDC, the NDC secured less votes in 2016 than it obtained in the 2012 elections.

**Table 3.** Volta Region voting pattern for 2012 and 2016

PARTY	2016	2012	Gain/-LOSS
NDC	555,523	650,397	-94,874*
NPP	150,602	128,824	21,778**
<b>NDC MAJORITY</b>	<b>404,921</b>	<b>521,573</b>	<b>-116,652</b>

*Note;*

*\*Net votes lost by NDC in the Volta Region between 2012 and 2016*

*\*\*Net votes gained by NPP in the Volta Region between 2012 and 2016*

Whereas the NDC obtained 650,397 votes in this region in 2012, its votes reduced to 555,523 in 2016. This means that 94,874 people who voted for NDC in 2016 did not vote for the party in 2016. On the other hand, the NPP increased its votes of 128,824 in 2012 to 150,602 in 2016. To expand further, it can be seen that the NDC margin of win of 521,573 in 2012 reduced to 404,921. For the NDC, this represents a real loss of 116,652 votes in the Volta Region alone.

It must be pointed out that in some constituencies in the Volta Region, although not as many people voted for the NDC, they did not vote for the NPP either. A few examples may illustrate the point.

**Table 4.** Voting pattern in selected constituencies (Volta Region)

CONSTITUENCY	2012			2016		
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Afadjato South	3,784	22,029	-18,245	3,133	19,486	-16,353
Agotime-Ziope	1,935	14,485	-12,550	510	11,614	-11,104
Akatsi North	1,971	10,879	-8,908	1,379	11,482	-10,103
Akatsi South,	1,388	21,588	-20,200	850	16,916	-16,066
Biakoye	9,092	19,714	-10,622	6,716	18,152	-11,436
Krachi West	7,196	10,645	-3,449	5,016	9,644	-4,628
Nkwanta North	12,762	21,659	-8,897	12,248	20,283	-8,035
Central Tongu	3,769	26,127	-22,358	2,423	25,955	-23,532
North Tongu	2,522	33,422	-30,900	1,086	26,560	-25,474
North Dayi	2,991	13,724	-10,733	467	12,348	-11,881
South Tongu	4,517	32,785	-28,268	3,595	31,978	-28,383

*Note:*

- *Negative figures under “MARGIN” represent an NDC margin of win*
- *Positive figures represent NPP margin of win*

Even in the above-mentioned constituencies, although the NPP vote was reduced in 2016 as compared to 2012, the NDC vote was reduced in all those constituencies. It means that although many did not vote for NDC, they did not vote for the NPP either. Indeed, in a few places such as Agotime-Ziope, and North Dayi, the NPP vote virtually collapsed. In Agotime Ziope, the rebel NDC member, who stood as an Independent candidate, came second with 3,229 while the NPP candidate came fourth with only 3.06% of the valid votes cast.



The question the NDC should ask itself once again, is why did potential NDC supporters stay at home? In North Tongu, a rebel NDC member, who stood as Independent, beat the NPP candidate to third place with 7,376 votes.

**Table 5.** Regional voting figures for 2012 and 2016

	2012			2016		
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
<b>REGIONAL TOTAL FOR EACH PARTY</b>	128,824	650,397	-521,573	150,602	555,523	-404,921
<b>REGIONAL TOTAL FOR BOTH PARTIES</b>	<b>779,221*</b>			<b>706,125*</b>		

*Note:*

- Negative figures under “MARGIN” represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures represent NPP margin of win

Although new voters were added unto the register in 2016, less people (706,125) voted for the two parties than in 2012 (779,221).<sup>viii</sup>

Whereas the NPP improved on their 2012 performance with 21,778 additional votes, the NDC lost 94,874 votes of their 2012 tally in 2016.

It is worthy of note that unlike in 2012, when the NPP won no seat in the Volta Region, they won one in 2016 (Krachi East) where they overcame a deficit of 3,088 votes to beat the NDC by 47 votes.

In the following constituencies, the NPP improved on their 2012 performance.

**Table 6.** Constituencies where NPP improved on their 2012 voting figures

CONSTITUENCY	2012			2016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN (A-B)	NPP	NDC	MARGIN (D-E)
Adaklu	896	11,825	-10,929	1,048	10,337	-9,289
Ho West	3,014	32,623	-29,609	3,385	27,204	-23,819
Hohoe South	6,358	40,486	-34,128	6,462	35,437	-28,975
Buem	5,404	19,031	-13,627	5,896	14,799	-8,903
Akan	6,293	8,396	-2,103	9,730	13,941	-4,211
Anlo	3,599	32,654	-29,055	6,823	22,216	-15,393
Keta	1,272	33,570	-32,298	1,665	28,143	-26,478
Ketu North	8,153	33,825	-25,672	15,596	25,260	-9,664
Ketu South	4,122	77,837	-73,715	18,643	48,723	-30,080
Kpando	2,307	19,243	-16,936	3,058	17,318	-14,260
Krachi East	10,405	13,493	-3,088	14,551	14,504	47
Krachi Nchumuru	8,769	14,049	-5,280	10,856	11,833	-977
Nkwanta South	8,465	13,870	-5,405	8,903	21,691	-12,788

*Note:*

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win

- *Positive figures represent NPP margin of win*

With 81% share of the valid votes cast, 2016 represents the worst performance of the NDC in the Volta region since 1992. (See Table 7 below for the comparison).

**Table 7** *Historical performance (Valid Votes) of the NDC (%) in the Volta Region. (Presidential)*

1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
95%	86%	84%	82%	85%	81%

## Central Region

It can be seen from the table below that in several constituencies in the Central Region, the NPP vote greatly appreciated in 2016 with a corresponding depression of the NDC vote. As a result, the NDC lost in several constituencies where they had been victors in 2012.

Apart from 4 constituencies in the region where the NDC retained their seats, albeit with reduced majorities, the NPP won the remaining 19 seats with increased majorities.

Although the total number of votes obtained by both parties in 2012 and 2016 was stable, (only 13,017 more in 2016), the NPP vote in 2016 increased dramatically while the NDC vote suffered a reduction. In 2012, the NDC secured an overall majority with a margin of 36,983 votes over the NPP. However, this margin was massively overturned in favour of the NPP in 2016 by a thumping 86,900 votes.

This may be indicative of a direct switch from NDC to NPP in the Central Region.

A few spectacular results may be worthy of mention here. In Agona West, the NPP overturned an NDC majority of 4,769 in 2012 to an NPP majority of 9,347. In Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese, the NPP overcame an NDC majority of 8,250 in 2012 by securing a 1,276 majority in 2016. In Gomoa West, an emphatic margin of win of 8,314 for the NDC in 2012 was negated by the NPP in 2016 with an NPP winning margin of 1,737.

**Table 8.** *State of play in Central Region*

	2012			2016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese	17,045	25,295	-8,250	22,245	20,508	1,737
Agona East	18,002	22,654	-4,652	18,513	19,789	-1,276
Agona West	25,397	30,166	-4,769	32,770	23,423	9,347
Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam	21,462	24,752	-3,290	21,903	25,601	-3,698
Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa	21,087	23,705	-2,618	23,760	23,330	430
Assin Central	16,347	13,202	3,145	17,979	10,618	7,361
Assin North	12,281	14,338	-2,057	15,553	10,751	4,802
Assin South	19,834	17,903	1,931	23,308	15,683	7,625
Awutu-Senya East	31,054	26,884	4,170	34,656	24,373	10,283
Awutu-Senya West	18,487	23,032	-4,545	28,867	25,664	3,203
Cape Coast North	19,558	21,189	-1,631	19,475	16,309	3,166
Cape Coast South	19,206	22,150	-2,944	19,718	20,456	-738
Effutu	19,334	15,977	3,357	22,964	12,628	10,336

	2012			2016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Gomoa Central	11,385	15,719	-4,334	14,178	12,858	1,320
Gomoa East	15,419	18,538	-3,119	17,654	15,010	2,644
Gomoa West	19,310	27,624	-8,314	22,741	21,004	1,737
Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem	13,147	13,178	-31	15,960	21,95	-5997
Mfantseman	29,476	31,837	-2,361	26,747	26,021	726
Hemang Lower Denkyira	13,147	13,178	-31	15,043	10,338	4,705
Twifo-Atii Morkwaa	15,150	19,410	-4,260	21,231	14,887	6,344
Upper Denkyira East	21,020	17,319	3,701	22,212	16,297	5,915
Upper Denkyira West	14,111	10,192	3,919	16,881	10,655	6,226
<b>VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY</b>	<b>411,259</b>	<b>448,242</b>	<b>-36,983</b>	<b>473,441</b>	<b>386,541</b>	<b>86,900</b>
<b>VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES</b>	<b>859,501</b>			<b>872,518</b>		

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures represent NPP margin of win

**Western Region**

In the 2012 elections, the NDC won 18 out of the 26 parliamentary seats in the region. In 2016, the NDC could only secure 10 seats with the NPP winning the remaining 16 seats. Apart from the Mpohor-Wassa East constituency where the NDC improved on their 2012 performance, in all the other constituencies, the NDC vote fell below their 2012 achievement. (Even in spite of their improved performance in Mpohor-Wassa East, the NPP still won the seat with an increased margin).

In all the other constituencies, the vote of the NDC shrunk. Notable among them was Ahanta West, where an NDC margin of win of 1,044 in 2012 was overturned by the NPP, who won with a margin of 16,812. Again in Jomoro, an NDC winning margin of 12,021 in 2012 was reversed by an NPP victory with a margin 4,453. Similar performances could be seen in Prestea-Huni Valley and Sefwi Wiawso.

**Table 9.** *State of play in the Western Region*

CONSTITUENCY	2,012				2,016		
	A	B	C		D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN		NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Ahanta West	20,099	21,143	-1,044		30,596	13,784	16,812
Aowin	21,030	30,035	-9,005		20,780	22,385	-1,605
Suaman	5,464	9,588	-4,124		6,173	6,185	-12
Bia East	4,935	13,497	-8,562		4,995	11,128	-6,133
Bia West	14,257	30,632	-16,375		11,589	25,401	-13,812
Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai	32,016	29,940	2,076		33,145	29,901	3,244
Ellembelle	18,067	26,344	-8,277		20,875	23,425	-2,550
Jomoro	9,630	21,651	-12,021		18,694	14,241	4,453
Juabeso	10,783	19,432	-8,649		15,604	17,233	-1,629

CONSTITUENCY	2,012				2,016		
	A	B	C		D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN		NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Mpohor-Wassa East	7,114	6,333	781		14,241	6,947	7,294
Evalue-Gwira	13,157	15,359	-2,202		14,002	12,416	1,586
Prestea-Huni Valley	31,209	39,808	-8,599		36,444	32,073	4,371
Sefwi Akontombra	12,558	18,926	-6,368		11,922	11,626	296
Bodi	7,626	18,586	-10,960		9,992	13,996	-4,004
Sefwi Wiawso	26,926	31,993	-5,067		31,736	26,105	5,631
Effia	19,863	14,269	5,594		20,315	11,995	8,320
Kwesimintsim	15,179	9,901	5,278		20,382	8,260	12,122
Essikado-Ketan	24,442	16,767	7,675		24,041	14,412	9,629
Sekondi	14,735	13,641	1,094		16,839	11,075	5,764
Takoradi	25,958	15,899	10,059		27,169	11,223	15,946
Shama	17,154	18,406	-1,252		20,165	15,190	4,975
Tarkwa-Nsuaem	37,816	33,135	4,681		42,594	24,044	18,550
Amenfi East	24,457	26,134	-1,677		26,851	21,597	5,254
Amenfi West	16,829	26,435	-9,606		17,336	23,673	-6,337
<b>VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY</b>	<b>431,304</b>	<b>507,854</b>	<b>-76,550</b>		<b>496,480</b>	<b>408,315</b>	<b>88,165</b>
<b>VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES</b>	<b>939,158</b>				<b>904,795</b>		

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures represent NPP margin of win

Although total valid votes for both parties were slightly less in 2016 (953,243) than in 2012 (989,749) (a difference of 36,506), the NPP's overall winning margin over the NDC in 2016 was a whopping 93,419.

The question is: what was it that caused this virtual avalanche in the Western Region? It is worthy of note, that the NPP won in constituencies such as Sefwi Wiawso and Akontombra, although since the inception of the fourth republican constitution, the NPP had never, until now, won in these constituencies.<sup>ix</sup>

### Ashanti Region

In the run-up to the 2016 elections, the NDC set itself a target to obtain one million votes in the Ashanti Region. Later in the year, the NDC raised the target to 1.5 million votes.<sup>x</sup> In the 2012 elections, the NDC secured 612,616 votes in the Presidential elections while they obtained 595,078 votes in the parliamentary elections. In 2016, the NDC obtained 497,235 votes in the Presidential and 505,535 in the parliamentary elections.

They performed worse than they did in 2012 and were nowhere near achieving the original one million vote target. The irony is that in the Presidential vote, the NDC did not even achieve half of the target they set for themselves. While in the parliamentary vote, they just achieved half of the original target.

As can be seen from Table 10 below, the total number of valid votes for both parties was about equal in 2016 as against the 2012. However, the winning margin of the NPP in 2016 was higher than in 2012.

The increased margin shows that the NDC vote in Ashanti in 2016 collapsed to the advantage of the NPP.

The voter turnout in the Ashanti Region was not spectacular, as compared to their performance in 2012. Only 95,210 extra people voted for the NPP in 2016 (Parliamentary) relative to their 2012 performance. The reason for the wider margin over the NDC was because 89,543 people who voted for the NDC in 2012 did not vote for the NDC in 2016.

**Table 10.** 2012 and 2016 voting in the Ashanti Region

	2,012			2,016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
<b>VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY</b>	<b>1,478,747</b>	<b>595,078</b>	<b>883,669</b>	<b>1,573,957</b>	<b>505,535</b>	<b>1,065,864</b>
<b>VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES</b>	<b>2,073,825</b>			<b>2,079,492</b>		

Table 11 below shows the constituencies in the Ashanti Region where the total valid votes for the two parties in 2016 were less than votes attained in 2012.

**Table 11.** 2012 and 2016 voting in Ashanti compared

	2,012			2,016			VALID VOTES- BOTH PARTIES 2012	VALID VOTES- BOTH PARTIES 2016
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN		
Adansi-Asokwa	15,796	14,157	1,639	16,459	12,389	4,070	29,953	28,848
Fomena	13,812	6,382	7,430	14,823	4,180	10,643	20,194	19,003
Ahafo Ano North	18,418	18,841	-423	18,895	14,479	4,416	37,259	33,374
Odotobri	27,526	6,226	21,300	23,255	4,005	19,250	33,752	27,260
Asante-Akim South	31,151	19,190	11,961	32,526	16,133	16,393	50,341	48,659
Atwima-Kwanwoma	46,367	10,107	36,260	42,264	13,659	28,605	56,474	55,923
Atwima-Mponua	33,961	24,872	9,089	33,723	22,450	11,273	58,833	56,173
Manso Adubia	26,368	8,326	18,042	24,074	7,112	16,962	34,694	31,186
Asawasi	31,013	43,917	-12,904	33,490	39,095	-5,605	74,930	72,585
Manhyia South	35,152	6,890	28,262	35,958	5,043	30,915	42,042	41,001
Juaben	22,323	7,064	15,259	23,115	5,530	17,585	29,387	28,645
Asokwa	54,904	12,647	42,257	55,564	9,812	45,752	67,551	65,376
Bantama	49,054	8,667	40,387	50,717	6,344	44,373	57,721	57,061
Nhyiaeso	45,389	12,304	33,085	47,743	9,606	38,137	57,693	57,349
Oforikrom	58,812	29,393	29,419	62,659	21,611	41,048	88,205	84,270
Old Tafo	43,561	13,454	30,107	44,066	11,704	32,362	57,015	55,770
Subin	47,779	16,058	31,721	47,406	11,591	35,815	63,837	58,997
Manhyia North	36,775	13,439	23,336	36,299	10,955	25,344	50,214	47,254
Akrofuom	10,249	7,484	2,765	9,693	7,155	2,538	17,733	16,848

	2,012			2,016			VALID VOTES- BOTH PARTIES 2012	VALID VOTES- BOTH PARTIES 2016
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN		
Obuasi East	24,212	15,381	8,831	27,715	10,604	17,111	39,593	38,319
Obuasi West	31,101	16,253	14,848	32,049	11,587	20,462	47,354	43,636
Offinso South	33,666	15,533	18,133	32,496	13,942	18,554	49,199	46,438
Nsuta-Kwamang	19,270	10,913	8,357	14,792	8,382	6,410	30,183	23,174

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures represent NPP margin of win

## Northern Region

The figures from the Northern Region present a slightly different scenario from most parts of the country.

Out of the 31 constituencies, 26 of them recorded more votes for the two parties in 2016 than in 2012. That is different from the situation in several other constituencies in other regions where the combined valid votes for both parties in 2016 were less than the 2012 ones.

In constituencies such as Nalerigu, although the NDC improved on their 2012 vote from 17,038 to 23,150 in 2016, the NPP increased theirs further from 19,888 in 2012 to 27,501. That is how they snatched the seat from the NDC. This was the same in Nanton. However, in other constituencies such as Salaga South, Gusheigu, Wulensi, Saboba and Savelugu, the NDC lost the seats because of a depression in their votes.

The overall net improvement of 93,134 valid votes in the Northern Region for both parties over their 2012 performances in an election where turnout was low in several constituencies, is worthy of attention.

There were definitely local factors in some of the constituencies which affected the voting outcome. These will be discussed in my Observations later in this review.

**Table 12.** *State of play in the Northern Region*

	2,012			2,016				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
CONSTITUENCY	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	2012	2016
Bole Bamboi	8,292	14,642	-6,350	5,711	17,326	-11,615	22,934	23,037.00
Bunkpurugu	10,829	10,149	680	14,590	14,306	284	20,978	28,896.00
Yapei-Kusawgu	16,371	17,038	-667	14,242	23,364	-9,122	33,409	37,606.00
Chereponi	11,680	10,565	1,115	11,681	13,211	-1,530	22,245	24,892.00
Salaga North	3,462	6,772	-3,310	3,037	6,363	-3,326	10,234	9,400.00
Salaga South	15,138	17,393	-2,255	12,707	12,660	47	32,531	25,367.00
Nalerigu	19,888	20,308	-420	27,501	23,150	4,351	40,196	50,651.00
Gusheigu	18,439	18,776	-337	23,150	18,479	4,671	37,215	41,629.00
Daboya Mankarigu	6,672	8,275	-1,603	8,589	9,208	-619	14,947	17,797.00
Sagnarigu	6,935	29,508	-22,573	7,888	26,898	-19,010	36,443	34,786.00
Yunyoo	4,318	9,591	-5,273	6,659	7,031	-372	13,909	13,690.00

	2,012			2,016				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
CONSTITUENCY	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	2012	2016
Tatale Sanguli	7,037	7,001	36	7,027	9,371	-2,344	14,038	16,398.00
Karaga	13,107	15,648	-2,541	10,798	15,820	-5,022	28,755	26,618.00
Damongo	7,041	9,518	-2,477	8,139	10,263	-2,124	16,559	18,402.00
Kpandai	16,221	13,794	2,427	19,044	18,301	743	30,015	37,345.00
Bimbilla	30,521	17,034	13,487	29,827	17,918	11,909	47,555	47,745.00
Wulensi	11,524	12,551	-1,027	14,950	11,061	3,889	24,075	26,011.00
Saboba	12,733	13,409	-676	14,345	9,738	4,607	26,142	24,083.00
Nanton	8,667	10,369	-1,702	11,346	10,451	895	19,036	21,797.00
Savelugu	15,083	18,946	-3,863	13,334	12,590	744	34,029	25,924.00
Sawla-Tuna-Kalba	9,863	13,451	-3,588	8,301	17,209	-8,908	23,314	25,510.00
Tamale Central	23,761	39,545	-15,784	25,230	38,531	-13,301	63,306	63,761.00
Tamale North	5,577	10,885	-5,308	5,329	21,280	-15,951	16,462	26,609.00
Tamale South	16,395	53,320	-36,925	18,932	52,235	-33,303	69,715	71,167.00
Tolon	18,113	15,699	2,414	21,782	20,725	1,057	33,812	42,507.00
Kumbungu	8,523	18,285	-9,762	8,405	18,777	-10,372	26,808	27,182.00
Walewale	19,328	15,192	4,136	26,431	23,851	2,580	34,520	50,282.00
Yagaba-Kubori	8,123	7,175	948	8,294	10,990	-2,696	15,298	19,284.00
Mion	9,380	9,931	-551	10,127	15,954	-5,827	19,311	26,081.00
Yendi	22,961	14,228	8,733	27,158	23,964	3,194	37,189	51,122.00
Zabzugu	7,037	6,826	211	7,027	9,371	-2,344	13,863	16,398.00
<b>VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY</b>	<b>393,019</b>	<b>485,824</b>	<b>-92,805</b>	<b>431,581</b>	<b>540,396</b>	<b>-108,815</b>	<b>878,843</b>	<b>971,977</b>
<b>VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES</b>	<b>878,843</b>			<b>971,977</b>				

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures under Columns C and F represent NPP margin of win

### Brong Ahafo Region

The pattern of voting in the Brong Ahafo Region was similar to those in Western, Ashanti and Central Regions. From an NDC winning margin of 8,750 in 2012, the party lost the overall regional vote to the NPP (Parliament) in 2016 by a margin of 76,419 votes in favour of the NPP.

**Table 13. Voting Totals in Brong Ahafo Region**

	2,012			2,016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
<b>VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY</b>	476,134	484,884	-8,750	517,520	441,101	76,419
<b>VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES</b>	<b>961,018</b>			<b>958,621</b>		

A look at almost all the individual constituencies, where NDC won, reveals reduced turn-outs in 2016 as compared to 2012. They ALSO reveal a depression in NDC votes even in places where NDC won. These were Asunafo South, Asutifi South, Kintampo North, Kintampo South, Pru East, Sene East and Sene West. The only exception was in Banda where the NDC vote in 2016 appreciated by 522 over their 2012 performance.

**Table 14.** *Reduction in votes for the NDC*

	2,012			2,016		
CONSTITUENCY	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Asunafo South	18,995	21,770	-2,775	18,091	20,618	-2,527
Asutifi South	12,820	16,077	-3,257	12,026	15,855	-3,829
Kintampo North	17,504	22,761	-5,257	17,610	22,407	-4,797
Kintampo South	11,467	15,552	-4,085	14,210	15,266	-1,056
Pru East	3,430	15,906	-12,476	8,749	13,512	-4,763
Pru West	8,278	9,465	-1,187	10,698	10,740	-42
Sene East	4,937	10,343	-5,406	4,694	9,936	-5,242
Sene West	6,721	12,511	-5,790	8,747	10,229	-1,482

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures under Columns C and F represent NPP margin of win

Among the seats that the NPP retained in 2016, they improved on their 2012 performances. The only exceptions were in Berekum West, Dormaa Central and Sunyani West where their performances were below the 2012 achievement.

**Table 15.** *Appreciation in NPP votes*

	2,012			2,016		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN
Asunafo North	28,404	26,820	1,584	31,681	24,000	7,681
Asutifi North	15,112	14,285	827	15,955	12,970	2,985
Atebubu-Amantin	16,964	11,413	5,551	19,218	18,151	1,067
Berekum East	22,687	16,517	6,170	23,057	15,848	7,209
<b>Berekum West</b>	<b>10,406</b>	<b>7,280</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>10,289</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>2,429</b>
<b>Dormaa Central</b>	<b>22,631</b>	<b>19,687</b>	<b>2,944</b>	<b>22,277</b>	<b>19,372</b>	<b>2,905</b>
Dormaa East	13,712	9,907	3,805	14,637	8,490	6,147
Jaman North -	14,920	14,718	202	14,715	13,216	1,499
Jaman South	22,835	16,123	6,712	24,616	12,777	11,839
Nkoranza North	10,254	9,534	720	11,606	9,353	2,253
Sunyani East	42,478	25,141	17,337	38,009	14,549	23,460
<b>Sunyani West</b>	<b>22,620</b>	<b>22,153</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>29,215</b>	<b>17,689</b>	<b>11,526</b>
Tano North	18,529	14,789	3,740	19,815	13,801	6,014
Wenchi	20,878	18,660	2,218	21,127	17,110	4,017

**Note:**



- *Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win*
- *Positive figures under Columns C and F represent NPP margin of win*

The general reduction in overall NDC votes accounted for the overall NPP majority in the region.

## **Eastern Region**

The Eastern Region presented an interesting state of affairs. In August 2016, the NDC formed a “task force” to split the votes in the Eastern Region equally between them and the NPP. It was called “Agenda 50/50”. As close as two days before the elections, on 5 December 2017, the Vice-President upped the ante to 60%<sup>xi</sup>. Incidentally, it was the Vice-President who again declared an increase in the Ashanti Region target to 1.5 million. Just as in the Ashanti Region, the target was not achieved.

Just as in the other regions, the combined valid votes for both the NPP and NDC in 2016 were down on their 2012 performance.

However, considering that the Eastern Region is a stronghold of the NPP, the NDC lost only two seats and gained one. Upper Manya Krobo, the seat lost by the NDC, had had its problems, particularly since several people in the constituency thought that there was no one to speak for them regarding the lack of social amenities in the constituency<sup>xii</sup>. It looked more like a protest vote against the incumbent MP since President John Dramani Mahama won in that constituency. It is noteworthy that since 1996, the NDC had always won this seat until 2016. Table 16 also shows that the NDC’s votes in Lower Manya Krobo dwindled; they managed to retain the seat with only 327 votes unlike in 2012, when the NDC’s winning margin was 8,186.

There were other constituencies where, in spite of the NPP winning the seat, less people voted for them than in 2012. They include Abuakwa North, Abuakwa South, Atiwa West, Ayensuano, Fanteakwa North, Fanteakwa South and Mpraeso.

On the other hand, the NDC improved on their 2012 performances in Akim Oda and Asuogyaman. Indeed, the NDC in Asuogyaman turned out to be an island in a sea where NDC appeared to be losing votes almost everywhere else. Not only did they improve on their 2012 performance, but the NPP vote reduced, causing the NDC to win the seat from the NPP.

**Table 16 . State of play in the Eastern Region**

	<b>2012</b>				<b>2016</b>		
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>NPP</b>	<b>NDC</b>	<b>MARGIN</b>		<b>NPP</b>	<b>NDC</b>	<b>MARGIN</b>
Abetifi	20,766	11,764	9,002		23,432	7,975	15,457
Abirem	17,347	14,515	2,832		19,208	12,217	6,991
Abuakwa North	18,812	12,309	6,503		17,838	11,754	6,084
Abuakwa South	29,330	8,205	21,125		28,449	7,697	20,752
Achiase	14,395	8,503	5,892		14,659	6,339	8,320
Afram Plains North	6,762	18,956	-12,194		4,795	18,121	-13,326
Afram Plains South	7,348	14,946	-7,598		9,376	11,479	-2,103
Akim Oda	18,972	6,315	12,657		21,131	6,892	14,239
Akim Swedru	8,865	3,533	5,332		11,458	4,056	7,402
Akuapim South	12,720	8,694	4,026		14,049	8,417	5,632
Akwapim North	26,828	15,588	11,240		26,655	6,949	19,706
Akwatia	19,914	20,471	-557		21,433	15,905	5,528
Asene, Akroso, Manso	17,881	11,765	6,116		21,138	9,746	11,392
Asuogyaman	20,750	18,650	2,100		18,668	20,493	-1,825
Atiwa East	16,449	6,480	9,969		17,399	4,962	12,437
Atiwa West	17,176	5,984	11,192		16,980	4,519	12,461
Ayensuano	21,893	16,878	5,015		18,536	14,820	3,716
Fanteakwa North	11,798	10,825	973		11,380	9,472	1,908
Fanteakwa South	11,683	6,560	5,123		11,274	5,726	5,548
Kade	27,506	17,168	10,338		33,442	14,088	19,354
Lower Manya Krobo	16,181	24,367	-8,186		19,383	19,710	-327
Lower West Akim	26,663	18,225	8,438		27,056	18,011	9,045
Mpraeso	22,417	8,792	13,625		21,491	8,505	12,986
New Juaben North	19,970	8,911	11,059		20,379	8,736	11,643
New Juaben South	38,030	24,925	13,105		40,446	19,918	20,528
Nkawkaw	35,769	16,503	19,266		38,218	13,130	25,088
Nsawam, Adoagyiri	24,074	21,663	2,411		27,159	18,888	8,271
Ofoase-Ayirebi	19,025	13,659	5,366		17,797	8,196	9,601
Okere	15,165	9,680	5,485		16,235	6,410	9,825
Suhum	24,046	23,658	388		25,328	20,762	4,566
Upper Manya Krobo	8,904	15,924	-7,020		13,920	10,544	3,376
Upper West Akim	14,973	18,736	-3,763		16,661	17,091	-430
Yilo Krobo	14,510	26,581	-12,071		15,978	23,507	-7,529
<b>TOTAL FOR EACH PARTY</b>	<b>626,922</b>	<b>469,733</b>	<b>157,189</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>661,351</b>	<b>395,035</b>	<b>266,316</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR BOTH PARTIES</b>	<b>1,096,655</b>				<b>1,056,386</b>		

## Greater Accra Region

The situation in the Greater Accra Region followed much along similar patterns as in most parts of the country. Apart from 5 constituencies, the NDC parliamentary vote did not reach their 2012 levels. The 5 constituencies are: Domeabra-Obom, Ashaiman, Ada, Ningo-Prampram and Shai Osudoku. The table below shows the constituencies where reductions on 2012 figures were more than 5,000.

**Table 16**

	2,012			2,016			NDC-LOSS AS COMPARED TO 2012
CONSTITUENCY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	
Ablekuma Central	45,265	46,606	-1,341	46,884	40,686	6,198	5,920
Ablekuma North	53,115	34,534	18,581	54,698	26,813	27,885	7,721
Ablekuma West	36,975	26,153	10,822	34,376	20,976	13,400	5,177
Anyaa -Sowutuom	51,196	29,536	21,660	54,165	23,304	30,861	6,232
Ayawaso Central	33,074	32,439	635	33,726	27,180	6,546	5,259
Ayawaso West Wuogon	31,807	30,116	1,691	32,591	22,534	10,057	7,582
Dade Kotopon	34,533	50,016	-15,483	40,126	38,504	1,622	11,512
Odododiodoo	26,269	45,967	-19,698	26,671	36,606	-9,935	9,361
Okaikwei South	25,255	28,568	-3,313	33,820	21,944	11,876	6,624
Abokobi-Madina	34,845	41,441	-6,596	40,283	31,650	8,633	9,791
Dome-Kwabanya	63,373	35,366	28,007	63,488	29,392	34,096	5,974
Ledzokuku	42,038	52,554	-10,516	45,259	43,092	2,167	9,462
Madina	34,845	41,441	-6,596	40,283	31,650	8,633	9,791
Tema West	39,950	39,005	945	44,579	29,742	14,837	9,263

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures under Columns C and F represent NPP margin of win

Conversely, the NPP improved on their 2012 figures in all these constituencies except in Ablekuma West.

The extent of NDC loss in Greater Accra can better be appreciated by looking at the full report of all the constituencies. This is tabulated below.

**Table 17. Voting pattern in Greater Accra**

	2,012			2,016			
CONSTITUENCY	A	B	C	D	E	F	I
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	**NDC LOSSES
Ablekuma Central	45,265	46,606	-1,341	46,884	40,686	6,198	-5,920
Ablekuma North	53,115	34,534	18,581	54,698	26,813	27,885	-7,721
Ablekuma South	23,506	33,540	-10,034	26,495	31,927	-5,432	-1,613
Ablekuma West	36,975	26,153	10,822	34,376	20,976	13,400	-5,177
Anyaa -Sowutuom	51,196	29,536	21,660	54,165	23,304	30,861	-6,232
Ayawaso Central	33,074	32,439	635	33,726	27,180	6,546	-5,259

	2,012			2,016			
CONSTITUENCY	A	B	C	D	E	F	I
	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	NPP	NDC	MARGIN	**NDC LOSSES
Ayawaso East	13,887	26,647	-12,760	13,599	23,407	-9,808	-3,240
Ayawaso North	15,281	24,475	-9,194	14,644	22,144	-7,500	-2,331
Ayawaso West Wuogon	31,807	30,116	1,691	32,591	22,534	10,057	-7,582
Bortiano Ngleshie Amanfrom	22,826	23,014	-188	26,034	19,405	6,629	-3,609
Dade Kotopon	34,533	50,016	-15,483	40,126	38,504	1,622	-11,512
Domeabra-Obom	2,666	10,404	-7,738	3,710	14,301	-10,591	****
Klottey Korle	34,847	36,122	-1,275	29,122	33,609	-4,487	-2,513
Odododiodoo	26,269	45,967	-19,698	26,671	36,606	-9,935	-9,361
Okaikwei North	27,176	25,255	1,921	28,083	23,617	4,466	-1,638
Okaikwei South	25,255	28,568	-3,313	33,820	21,944	11,876	-6,624
Okaikwei Central	27,667	20,403	7,264	28,505	17,630	10,875	-2,773
Adenta	30,526	35,139	-4,613	33,952	32,588	1,364	-2,551
Ashaiman	32,650	47,154	-14,504	35,697	52,400	-16,703	****
Ada	1,824	19,749	-17,925	3,162	32,520	-29,358	****
Sege	10,673	13,792	-3,119	11,342	13,269	-1,927	-523
Ningo-Prampram	17,122	21,178	-4,056	13,588	23,860	-10,272	****
Abokobi-Madina	34,845	41,441	-6,596	40,283	31,650	8,633	-9,791
Dome-Kwabanya	63,373	35,366	28,007	63,488	29,392	34,096	-5,974
Weija	32,861	26,899	5,962	34,216	25,087	9,129	-1,812
Amasaman	21,761	29,724	-7,963	27,665	27,933	-268	-1,791
Trobu-	46,446	27,886	18,560	48,948	26,348	22,600	-1,538
Krowor	29,700	32,520	-2,820	32,463	30,357	2,106	-2,163
Ledzokuku	42,038	52,554	-10,516	45,259	43,092	2,167	-9,462
Madina	34,845	41,441	-6,596	40,283	31,650	8,633	-9,791
Kpone-Katamanso	29,700	33,598	-3,898	27,001	30,541	-3,540	-3,057
Shai-Osudoku	6,991	18,089	-11,098	6,518	20,114	-13,596	****
Tema Central	26,948	14,360	12,588	28,334	12,937	15,397	-1,423
Tema East	30,075	30,072	3	31,782	27,757	4,025	-2,315
Tema West	39,950	39,005	945	44,579	29,742	14,837	-9,263
VALID VOTES FOR EACH PARTY	1,037,673	1,083,762	-46,089	1,095,809	965,824	129,985	-
VALID VOTES FOR THE 2 PARTIES	2,121,435			2,061,633			
TOTAL VOTES LOST BY NDC IN 2016 USING 2012 FIGURES AS A BASE				140,662			

**Note:**

- Negative figures under Columns C and F represent an NDC margin of win
- Positive figures under Columns C and F represent NPP margin of win
- Column I represent NDC net losses in 2016 as compared with their 2012 votes
- \*\*\*\* Represents constituencies where NDC improved on 2012 figures

The above regions have been used as samples to show the pattern of voting throughout the country.

The table below shows the extent of NDC losses and NPP gains (Presidential) in 2016 compared to the 2012 voting.

#### LOSSES AND GAINS - PRESIDENTIAL

**Table 18.** Summary of the loss of votes on a region by region basis are indicated below

	NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS				NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY		
REGION	2016	2012	PERFORMANC E AGAINST 2012		2016	2012	PERFORMANC E AGAINST 2012
	A	B	C		D	E	F
			=(A-B)				=(D-E)
Ashanti	497,235	612,616	-115,381		1,647,274	1,531,152	116,122
Brong Ahafo	421,451	511,244	-89,793		510,501	469,909	40,592
Central	405,262	492,374	-87,112		496,668	430,135	66,533
Eastern	397,549	483,998	-86,449		678,482	655,462	23,020
Greater Accra	946,048	1,125,751	-179,703		1,062,157	1,009,787	52,370
Northern	521,850	570,602	-48,752		398,384	383,263	15,121
Upper East	273,193	274,019	-826		157,607	120,814	36,793
Upper West	153,338	186,134	-32,796		96,762	83,098	13,664
Volta	629,398	734,641	-105,243		135,077	111,149	23,928
Western	514,181	582,193	-68,012		455,838	468,517	-12,679
	TOTAL NDC LOSS AS AGAINST 2012 FIGURES		-814,067		TOTAL NPP GAIN AS AGAINST 2012 FIGURES		375,464

*Note:*

- Negative figures under Column C represent NDC shortfall between 2012 and 2016 votes
- Figures under Column F represent NPP gain between 2012 and 2016. Pls check Western Region NPP lost – it is negative.....

Sources of data: <http://ghanaelections.peacefmonline.com/pages/2016> and

<http://ghanaelections.peacefmonline.com/pages/2012/>

#### OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Less people turned out to vote in 2016 than 2012, although nearly 1.5 million voters were added unto the 2012 register.
2. The totality of the figures show that the performance of the NDC in 2016 was below that of 2012.
3. It can also be seen that the net gains of the NPP were marginal.
4. The reason for the apparent massive difference between the total votes of the NDC and the NPP in 2016 is that more potential pro-NDC voters did not vote.
5. It should be a concern to the NDC that throughout the country, including traditionally NDC strongholds, the votes for the NDC went down in 2016.

## WHY DO POLITICS?

The question the NDC ought to ask itself is why so many of their potential supporters decided to walk away from them in 2016. The indication also appears that not many of the people who voted with their feet went directly to their opponents. The fact, that in spite of the increase in the number of voters by an additional 1.5 million, less people overall, voted in 2016 than in 2012 should be a pointer to the possibility that the NDC might have done something wrong. If that were so, what are they?

In considering this, the NDC needs to purge itself of any possibility of a continuous mindset of self-righteousness and bluster; but rather utilize the factors as some form of mirror which they can hold to their faces in private, to identify their imperfections, and then endeavour to reduce those imperfections in order to avoid repeating them.<sup>xiii</sup>. Otherwise, they would be condemned to repeating those very inadequacies that made their supporters turn their backs on the party in 2016.

It would be difficult to point to any one particular reason for the loss of the NDC in 2016. It might be safer to assume that it was more of a combination of various factors that brought about the loss.

It is true that for most politicians, the quest for personal or group glory is a principal motivation for vying for political power. In Africa these days, this motivation has been reinforced by the desire to take advantage of the state machinery to make money for themselves. However, the mark of a good politician is the ability to strive to find an answer to what is it, in an electoral political system, that will motivate people to vote for them.

Firstly, one should ask oneself, why would people like to involve themselves in political activity even if, for a vast number of the adult population, it only involves voting every four years for any of the candidates who puts themselves forward, either individually or through registered political parties. Based on that, one should ask oneself why anyone would decide to vote for party A or party B, or not vote at all.

Aristotle, one of the pioneers of political thought, attempted to provide an answer when he wrote that politics “comes to be for the sake of life, and exists for the sake of the **good life**”<sup>xiv</sup>. (*emphasis mine*). So why would a voter vote for one party or the other if their vote would not make any difference to their everyday quality of life?

In an apparent avowal of that same point, Amilcar Cabral, the great revolutionary leader of Guinea Bissau, also stated that politicians should “always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.”<sup>xv</sup>

There are social classes in every society. For each social class, their impetus to opt for one political party or the other depends on how closely their aspirations coincide with those of the party. While the lower classes would choose the political party that is more likely to create the enabling environment for them to have food, shelter, clothing, good health and education, the upper classes (since they already have food, shelter, etc.), are more interested in issues such as freedom of speech, human rights, etc.

In other words, however cleverly politicians try to churn out statistics to show how the headline economy is booming and how they are improving the lives of the people, the ordinary people would ultimately decide for themselves whether the conditions, so eloquently put forth by politicians, create opportunities to secure for themselves, adequate food, shelter, clothing, health and education of their children. If such conditions appear to them not to be fulfilled, they would ask themselves, “Why bother?”

One must also add, though, that the deliberate attempt by the upper classes to dismiss the existence of social stratification in Africa along economic lines, has gradually made several African societies psychologically fall into the decay of tribal politics. This situation suits the politician, because when he is attacked for trying to wreck the nation, he quickly wraps himself in the tribal flag and mobilises his tribesmen to prepare for “war”. Because of that, tribes have become more important than the nation-state. It is therefore not strange to find several members of the lower social classes voting for the upper class members of their tribe, (with whom they share no common economic interests) and the only thing that binds them together is the notion of tribal affinity.

## **Possible Reasons for NDC Loss**

As has been stated elsewhere above, it is difficult to point to one factor for the NDC loss. While it is likely that in some cases regional factors, could have accounted for the lack of motivation to vote for the NDC, there could also have been other national or, indeed, local community factors involved.

The following issues are being raised, not in any order of importance. However, it is for the NDC to determine whether any or all of them could have influenced the voting or the decision not to vote.

### **Some National Factors**

#### **The “Feel Good” Factor**

Whatever way one would want to look at it, there was a strong feeling of social deprivation which affected several households and individuals in the country. One may not be able to accurately measure it; but it was on people’s lips everywhere as we approached December 7 in 2016. It looks as if the only ones who did not see it or hear it were those in government and leading advocates of the ruling NDC.

There was a feeling that there were no job opportunities; an issue which, rightly or wrongly, was blamed on the government. It ought to be remembered that Ghana has no structured system of recording employment and unemployment figures. In this wise, the measurement of this issue has relied on anecdotal claims of unemployment and individual economic hardship.

President Kufuor nearly broached this issue when he was asked in 2009 by AfricaWatch Magazine about why he thought the NPP lost the 2008 elections. His answer was revealing of the inner thoughts of the typical Ghanaian politician. President Kufuor expressed shock at the outcome of the elections. According to him, with the “massive infrastructural projects” that the NPP had undertaken: the roads, the schools rehabilitation, etc, they had thought that, all that was needed was “a little bit of propaganda”. That is why he was shocked that Ghanaians didn’t vote for them.

He was partly right. What he and the NPP had missed was something intangible, that would make the general population feel good about themselves. He had forgotten the eight-month depressing power outages in 2007; he had forgotten the general economic and social hardships that the population had been suffering (which he and his Ministers dismissed as the result of the people's laziness), he had forgotten the cries of pervasive corruption, the display of opulence and ostentation and the grabbing of government lands and bungalows by leading members of the NPP.

The same illness appeared to have afflicted the NDC during the 2016 elections campaign. As they touted "massive infrastructural developments" as the principal campaign message.

#### **"Infrastructure"? What infrastructure?**

Infrastructural development is good. But they need to be linked with the everyday living conditions of the people so that they will be able to enjoy them. The questions that people were asking were "what is the use of a hospital or health facility if I cannot pay my hospital bills? What is the use of a new school building if I cannot pay the school fees?" For the farmer, they would ask: "What is the use of a designer road system (inter-change) in the city when the access road to transport my farm products to the town is in a dilapidating state and almost impassable?"

#### **Floating Voters Matter**

A floating voter is one who does not have a strong commitment to any particular political party. A floating voter will vote for a party after weighing any of the parties, their integrity, or whether that party, on balance, should be voted for because it is performing well or is not behaving as "badly" as the other ones. In a situation where there are two dominant parties, a floating voter may even decline to vote at all if he/she feels strongly dissatisfied with either party.

There may even be cases in which a "semi-detached" sympathizer of a particular party may vote for a third smaller party rather than switch over to the other major party if they think the more favoured party is behaving "badly".

Floating voters are not an organized group; and at any one time, they may be spread among the parties and the demographics. They constitute a small part of the total voting population – between 7% and 9%.<sup>xvi</sup>

In Ghana, this has been the situation with Greater Accra, Central, Brong Ahafo and Western Regions. The fact that since 2000, the results of most elections have been close (with two run-offs), means that, to a large extent, the floating voters are those who largely determine the final outcome. Anyone dismissing the existence of floating voters does so at their own peril.

#### **The Montie 3**

In the wake of the debate about whether President Mahama should grant pardon to the "Montie 3", following the Supreme Court conviction of those people for contempt, there were those who cautioned that the President should not wade into the matter. This caution was given because it was thought that it would offend the sensibilities of floating voters. However, there was a strident rebuff from the supporters of a Presidential pardon. They argued that there is nothing like a floating voter in Ghana. They therefore called on the President to satisfy the core NDC voters by using his powers under Article 72 of the Constitution to free them.



They were so adamant that even when Mr. Tony Lithur, (the lawyer who was part of the team that successfully defended the President in the Supreme Court in the wake of the NPP election petition) cautioned against a pardon, he was called names by some NDC adherents.

Having the power to pardon convicted persons does not mean that it should be used anyhow. This is because there are people who are watching. It may send a signal to independent observers that the President was encouraging impunity; more so since it looked like the President was delivering a slap to the face of the judiciary. It may also give the impression that the President acquiesced to the actions of the perpetrators.

The President did not grant pardon but his decision to remit the sentences was not based on a sound political judgement. Some people were nauseated when after the remission, the NDC hierarchy draped themselves in the garment of apparent arrogance with statements such as “the President doesn’t owe anybody any explanation”.<sup>xvii</sup>

The General Secretary of the NDC stated something that was considered cheeky and arrogant. He was reported to have advised the NPP to “rejoice over the President’s conduct since that could boost their fortunes at the December polls”. Well it appeared to have made a contribution to their defeat at the polls. Floating voters do not dignify arrogance and impunity, especially coming from those in power. To digress a little bit, the NPP would have to watch out for the early display of such impunity, in the forms of how their Delta Forces, Invisible Forces and other forces have been invading the offices of officials appointed by their own government, and evicting them; as well as springing-out of their members on trial from law courts (in jail-break style). If there were elections today, these are some of the issues floating voters are likely to take account of.

### **The Dumsor and High Electricity Prices**

The erratic cuts in electricity supply, which lasted for almost nearly four years, would not have been endearing to the floating voter. The one during the NPP time in 2007, which lasted for eight months, was definitely a factor in the 2008 defeat of the NPP although by the time of the 2008 elections, the problem had subsided.

For people who were having sweaty nights, not being able to iron their clothes, not knowing when the lights would come on for domestic and commercial purposes, etc. to be told that “If we do not want dumsor and we genuinely want reliable sustainable power, then we should be ready to pay more,”<sup>xviii</sup> However true such statements would have been, they appeared insensitive to them, especially among the floating voters.

Subsequently when the high tariffs came, there was still no “reliable sustainable power”. It wasn’t just the hairdressers, barbers and tailors who were not getting power to do their small businesses, industry too was suffering; and the general population could not ignore the cacophony of grumbling. Once he or she has been left in the loneliness of the polling booth, the floating voter could hardly have forgotten these.

### **The arrogance of government officials and functionaries**

As stated earlier, the floating voter, being non-partisan, does not hold in high esteem, politicians, especially those in power, who appear to give the impression that they walk on more hallowed ground than anyone else.

In the days before the 2016 elections, there were instances of haughty language from some NDC officials and political appointees. The politician should know that while appearing arrogant when in opposition could be looked upon as a sign of assertiveness and self-confidence; that same attitude, when in government, would be frowned upon.

During the campaign, the author encountered two people from the Volta Region who vowed to go to the region to campaign against the NDC because of something that the then Chief of Staff had said. While responding to admonitions from some people in the Volta Region that they would not vote the NDC because the party had taken them for granted, the then Chief of Staff was reported to have likened the relationship between the NDC and the Volta Region to that of husband and wife; with the NDC being the husband. He was quoted as saying: “Nobody can take good care of our “wives” i.e. the Volta region, than the original “husbands”, which is the NDC”. And he was reported as adding “If you are with your wife and you are doing something that she is not happy about, you need to go back to your in-laws and say daddy my wife is not happy, you could provide her with the basic necessities including schools, roads, hospitals, but would still not be happy. The best thing to do under the circumstances is to go back to your in-laws to say, daddy please tell me what my wife is not happy about so I could change”.<sup>xix</sup>

The two gentlemen from Volta Region took these statements as condescending to the people of the region; hence their threat to campaign against the NDC in the Volta Region.

In July 2015, a school headmistress in the Eastern Region found herself at the end of what was considered to be a tongue-lashing from the wife of the then Vice-President when the former requested for chalk for her school. It was not so much the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady’s refusal to ask the government to provide chalks that was at issue, but the way she responded to the request.

She was reported to have said “The Head teacher has shocked me...she said you lack chalk and log books...I am very shocked that you are today asking me about chalk...how much is a box of chalk?...I won’t give you chalk today, I won’t give you chalk tomorrow...” Then she reportedly went on, “Secondly, you talk about log books and school uniforms, I think we have spoilt you, so parents don’t want to even buy school uniforms...head teacher eii, find another means of helping yourself...”.

Then there was the case of an NDC MP, who in the midst of public concerns over the introduction of a 27% tax on fuel, reportedly told Ghanaians, that “if users of private vehicles can’t afford to buy fuel to service their cars due to the introduction of new taxes, nothing stops them from joining ‘trotro’( a privately-run ramshackle mini-bus transport system) to work”.<sup>xx</sup> He was quoted as having added “In UK, not everyone has a car. Many use public transport. Even if we charge 30% on fuel and you can’t pay, just park your car. Once you want to use your private car, then you have to pay”.

*What our “Honourable” MP did not say was that in the UK, there are readily available government-franchised decent buses and a network of trains for public use.. In London, the government authority that governs this network is called “Transport for London” .<sup>xxi</sup> But when government people don on the cloak of arrogance in the face of public criticism, it is clear indication that they have lost the plot and the argument.*

Then there was the case of Moses Asaga, who, as Chief Executive of the National Petroleum Authority, criticized Ghanaians for affording \$60,000 luxury cars but were complaining about a “minor” increase in the prices of fuel. He was reported to have stated: “Now you buy a \$60,000 BMW but you don't want to pay 6 dollars per litre [fuel] for it. The majority of the people are living now in the cities. The number of private cars constitute about 60-70 per cent. The kind of cars we use in Ghana, you can't believe it is Ghana.... When it comes to fuel, I think Ghanaians are being hypocritical.”<sup>xxii</sup>

One cannot conclude without mentioning the blatant show of arrogance (tinged with a sense of intolerance) from the then Security Adviser to President Mahama, Brigadier-General (rtd) Nunoo-Mensah. In the wake of complaints in the general population about difficult living conditions, he was reported to have snapped at workers: “Every Tom, Dick and Harry gets up and is calling for a strike. If you don't want the job, Ghana is not a police state, take your passport and get out of this country..... If you can't sacrifice like what some of us have done, then get out. If the kitchen is too hot for you, get out”.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Such postures were not likely to endear the NDC government to the hearts of floating voters. How can anyone tell the citizens to leave the country? To where? And Brigadier-General Nunoo –Mensah cannot be said to be one of the “young inexperienced people around the President”. There were many examples of such temperaments which could have made any floating voter sick to the stomach. Asking citizens to leave their own country were the sort of things that were done only in the medieval ages. The only modern example was when Hitler deported German Jews or gassed them.

A former leading student activist (now in the legal profession), who was deeply involved in the 1977/78 student struggle against the General Acheampong military regime, remarked: “NDC leaders and appointees are shitting all over the place, and they expect us to applaud them for that”.

### **Austere Socio-economic Life and Feeling of Unemployment among the Youth**

Ghana has no structured way of collecting figures on employment and unemployment. The only way Ghanaians measure unemployment is the unscientific method of some innate gut-feeling that there is widespread unemployment. Once this is generally accepted, almost everybody buys into it and turns it into a fact. It could also be measured by how much the feeling is that young people consider that without some form of patronage, or family or political connection, they are not likely to be employed.

When such a general feeling is accepted, opposition political parties latch unto it as a fact, while government officials point to some casual employment on building sites as evidence of “massive employment”. The few employment opportunities therefore tend to be highly politicised with the relatives of leading politicians and recognized active ruling party supporters getting job opportunities during recruitment exercises in the public sector, especially the armed forces, police, immigration, fire services, and the Ghana Revenue Authority.

In the last five years of the NDC government, the feeling of unemployment became pronounced and the cry about general hardships became strident even among “foot soldiers” of the ruling party.

The situation was not helped by increases in the prices of goods and services, particularly increased tariffs on utilities and fuel. Contrary to the assertion of Moses Asaga, and the “Honourable” NDC MP, fuel price increases affect not only the users of private cars, but also users of commercial transportation, including “trotro”.

The level of requests among party faithfuls for stipends from MPs and government appointees could be an indicator of the level of poverty.

## Sectoral Issues

### Cocoa Farmers and the Pesticides/Agro-chemicals

One of the issues that one could hear cocoa farmers complain about was the politics surrounding the supply of pesticides and the mass spraying of cocoa farms. There were claims that the system had broken down completely. While prior to the latter part of 2013, fertilizers and pesticides used to be supplied to the farmers mainly through District Chief Executives (some of who sold them to commercial traders), in 2014, the Cocobod decided to distribute them through the district cocoa officers.

Curiously the new system appeared to have worsened the hitherto faulty system. A Joyfm investigation in December 2014 revealed how instead of direct distribution to the farmers by the cocoa extension officers, chemicals such as Confidor and Ridomil found their way to the shops of local agro-chemical sellers who sold them at a premium to farmers<sup>xxiv</sup>. Ridomil became so hard to get and expensive that some of the farmers nicknamed it “cocaine”.

Some of these chemicals were reported to have been diverted and smuggled to neighbouring countries, to the extent that farmers around the Ghana –Cote d’Ivoire border would go to Cote d’Ivoire to purchase supplies.

Table 19 below shows that in 2015/2016 crop year, cocoa production had reduced from its peak in 2010/2011 of 1,012,839 tonnes to 778,044 tonnes.<sup>xxv</sup>

**Table 19** Cocoa production in Ghana

<b>CROP YEAR</b>	<b>ASHANTI</b>	<b>BRONG AHAFO</b>	<b>EASTERN</b>	<b>CENTRAL</b>	<b>WESTERN</b>	<b>VOLTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2010/11</b>	<b>168,916</b>	<b>101,302</b>	<b>78,928</b>	<b>76,863</b>	<b>583,589</b>	<b>3,241</b>	<b>1,012,839</b>
2011/12	134,295	76,511	67,713	71,760	525,237	3,833	879,349
2012/13	137,379	88,034	75,912	71,540	458,107	4,495	835,467
2013/14	156,902	87,116	80,692	85,446	483,279	3,481	896,916
2014/15	136,134	81,896	68,415	70,690	380,469	2,650	740,254
<b>2015/16</b>	<b>133,462</b>	<b>74,943</b>	<b>75,787</b>	<b>75,870</b>	<b>415,302</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>778,044</b>

The denial of cocoa inputs was reported to have incensed several farmers. Interestingly, this was blamed on government, as rumours spread that it was politically powerful people at or around Cocobod who were diverting the products. Their grumblings were not loud, but deep. And it appeared that they expressed their views on Election Day when several thousands of them stayed at home or went to their farms rather than go out to vote.

It ought to be considered that, apart from the Volta Region, (which produces the least amount of cocoa), the NDC lost in all the other cocoa growing regions.

If anyone doubts the line of reasoning that several cocoa farming communities voted with their feet, they should have a look at Table 19, which contains results at polling stations within the Sefwi Wiawso constituency. To understand the extent of despondency, a comparison has been made against 2012 voting patterns at those polling stations.

**Table 20.** *Results of a sample of polling stations in the Sefwi Wiawso constituency*

<b>FARMING VILLAGES IN SEFWI WIAWSO CONSTITUENCY</b>				<b>2012</b>		<b>2016</b>	
	<b>POLLING STATION CODE</b>	<b>POLLINGSTATION NAME</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>NDC</b>	<b>NPP</b>	<b>NDC</b>	<b>NPP</b>
1.	A200801	D C Prim Nsuonsua	Farming Village	664	<b>358</b>	244	327
2.	A200802	D C Prim Anglo	Farming Village	873	<b>504</b>	349	341
3.	A200803	Cocoa Shed Ayilekrom	Farming Village	204	<b>110</b>	52	93
4.	A200901	Meth Prim Punikrom	Farming Village	1038	<b>604</b>	339	397
5.	A200902	D C Prim Punikrom	Farming Village	998	<b>518</b>	384	456
6.	A201004	D C Primary Keteboy	Farming Village	578	<b>342</b>	285	210
7.	A201005	D C Prim Swanzu	Farming Village	342	<b>164</b>	138	161
8.	A201101	D C Primary Tanoso	Farming Village	552	<b>312</b>	191	327
9.	A201102	D C Primary Nyamegyeso	Farming Village	627	<b>435</b>	318	157
10.	A201201	D C Prim Datano	Farming Village	918	<b>546</b>	351	382
11.	A201202	D C J H S Datano	Farming Village	742	<b>440</b>	286	380
12.	A201203	D.C. School Domeabra	Farming Village	664	<b>409</b>	338	221
13.	A201701	D.C Primary Camp North	Farming Village	968	<b>456</b>	314	332
14.	A201702	D.C JHS Camp South	Farming Village	531	<b>273</b>	244	315
15.	A201703	D.C Primary Kramokrom	Farming Village	128	<b>58</b>	40	56
16.	A201704	Cocoa Shed Kramokrom	Farming Village	17	<b>4</b>	6	8
17.	A201801	D C Prim Sui	Farming Village	1064	<b>600</b>	571	407
18.	A201802	Cocoa Shed Attorkrom	Farming Village	574	<b>321</b>	243	153
19.	A201903	D C Prim Adowoano	Farming Village	344	<b>183</b>	134	145
20.	A201904	Cocoa Shed Paradise	Farming Village	423	<b>217</b>	198	190
21.	A202003	Cocoa Shed Abodum East	Farming Village	844	<b>403</b>	265	442
22.	A202004	R C Prim Abodum West	Farming Village	618	<b>286</b>	224	385
23.	A202101	Rc Primary Futa	Farming Village	836	<b>420</b>	351	329
24.	A202203	D C Prim Akoti	Farming Village	592	<b>315</b>	200	274
25.	A202301	D C Prim Ntretreso	Farming Village	599	<b>331</b>	254	236
26.	A202302	D C Prim Aboanidua	Farming Village	303	<b>160</b>	132	145
27.	A202303	Cocoa Shed Bedi	Farming Village	324	<b>188</b>	161	131
28.	A202401	R C Prim Amafie	Farming Village	913	<b>452</b>	366	434
29.	A202402	R C J H S Amafie	Farming Village	741	<b>450</b>	352	301
30.	A202403	Cocoa Shed Aboboyaa	Farming Village	413	<b>240</b>	173	205
31.	A203001	Cmb Shed Kojina	Farming Village	985	<b>482</b>	266	324
32.	A203002	Rc Prim Kojina	Farming Village	515	<b>271</b>	209	266
33.	A203003	Anglican Primary Essakrom	Farming Village	1060	<b>572</b>	368	328
34.	A203101	D C Primary School Aboagyekrom	Farming Village	822	<b>425</b>	366	262
35.	A203102	D C Primary School Tanokrom	Farming Village	794	<b>384</b>	339	246

This is a constituency that NPP had never won since the inception of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic in 1992; until 2016. Taking into account that the NPP would have majorities in the more cosmopolitan urban towns, such as the Sefwi Wiawso town itself, it is not surprising that the NPP won in 2016. A look at the Sefwi Wiawso township polling stations shows the voting pattern in the main town.

**Table 21** *Results in Sefwi Wiawso Township*

SEFWI WIAWSO CONSTITUENCY			2012		2016	
POLLING STATION CODE	POLLING STATION NAME	URBAN AND RURAL	NDC	NPP	NDC	NPP
A200101	INFORMATION SERV. CENTRE WIAWSO	WIAWSO TOWN	208	255	157	287
A200103	NAKAMS SCH WORKSHOP	WIAWSO TOWN	234	279	146	312
A200201	NAKAMS SCHOOL WIAWSO	WIAWSO TOWN	238	410	163	485
A200202	OLD COMMERCIAL BANK WIAWSO	WIAWSO TOWN	88	106	87	140
A200301	POST OFFICE SEFWI WIAWSO	WIAWSO TOWN	195	280	141	335
A200302	RC JHS WIAWSO	WIAWSO TOWN	246	336	161	433
A200401A	ANGLICAN PRIMARY SCHOOL WIAWSO (A)	WIAWSO TOWN	195	274	136	371
A200401B	ANGLICAN PRIMARY SCHOOL WIAWSO (B)	WIAWSO TOWN	195	294	124	389

There could have been other factors. For example, rumours were rife that there was massive vote-buying (of GH¢50 per voter) by NPP in the Constituency. Considering the results of the farming villages, even if this were true, it did not explain why at several polling stations, even in the farming villages, the NPP's figures went down. In any case, before a committed supporter would accept payment to vote for your opponent, it should point to a dissatisfaction about something. Moreover, the NPP candidate would have had to spend at least GH¢1.6 million to obtain the 31,836 votes he secured.

### **Cocoa Road Saga**

There are other possible reasons why cocoa farming villages could not have been happy. The government had set up a Cocoa Road Fund to rehabilitate cocoa roads. Some in the farming communities grieved about how the fund was being used to rehabilitate what could best be described as highways and urban township roads with bitumen instead of restoring the access roads from their villages to the major towns.

With a little bit of homework or research, the NDC would have realised that even in the rural areas where the party usually enjoys greater support, the pockets of urban areas within those rural areas tend to support the NPP. Opting to do town roads with Cocoa Road Fund while virtually abandoning the primary access roads to/from the farming villages and hamlets would not have endeared the party to the villagers. A villager lamented about how central government always thinks they know best.

### **Intra-Party Recriminations and Faulty Biometric Register**

The way in which, in 2016, the NDC managed its parliamentary candidate selection was a bone of contention. Some sitting MPs, who for various reasons appeared to have lost favour with party overlords in Accra, were horrified to see contestants "imported" to contest their seats. There were complaints about how the so-called biometric register was compiled which some alleged, included NPP supporters "rented" to vote against them at the primaries.

The party magnates had wrongly assumed that ordinary NDC supporters would willingly vote for anyone elected at the primaries. When some of the sidelined sitting MPs decided to contest as independent candidates, the General Secretary of the party would visit those constituencies and denigrate people who were still their MPs. In some cases, the vituperations of the General Secretary angered some of the personal supporters of the ex-communicated MPs. They voted for the rebels as independent candidates instead of voting for the official party candidate. Subsequently, the NDC lost in the following constituencies where there were rebel NDC MPs who stood as independent candidates: Salaga South (N/R), Bunkurugu (N/R), Saboba (N/R), Savelugu, ((N/R), Akontombra (W/R), Wa West (UW/R), Lawra (UW/R) and Tempene (UE/R)

These showcase how the NDC failed in the art of conflict resolution. A defeated independent candidate was overheard saying: “They say no one is bigger than the party in the constituency. That may well be so; but when I took away my ‘smallness’, you (the NDC) couldn’t win the seat”. The NDC should have learnt something that the hunter learnt long time ago, that when the hunted animal runs away, it doesn’t serve any purpose to insult it.

In some constituencies, the NDC primaries were characterized by such intense insults among the candidates, that when the primaries were over, the winning candidate was already so woefully wounded and discredited that he or she became a lame duck.

## **The Campaigning**

### **The Message**

For a party in government, the best campaign message should be about how government policies and practices have improved the real living conditions of the general population.

In the midst of lamentations about general hardship, people’s inability to meet everyday life-needs, the increasing prices of basic products and services, the scantiness of job opportunities, the widespread belief of the “insolence of office” and the apparent arrogance of some government officials and party functionaries, the complaints about the opulent lifestyles of government officials, the belief of pervasive corruption, the apparent indecision of the government to pursue people owing the government, the noticeable diversion of cocoa pesticides and other chemicals , etc, any party in government would struggle to put any other substantive message across, if at all there was any.

What appears to have been left in the arsenal of the NDC spokespersons was shouting down NDC critics; which in itself was likely to reinforce the perception of arrogance of power and impunity.

It is remarkable that the NDC, which before the 2008 elections, stood on the moral high ground and harangued the NPP government about corruption, five years later, found itself on the defensive, when allegations of corruption were made against them, especially from the hitherto “corrupt” NPP.

Without much of concrete deeds to alleviate the genuine sufferings of Ghanaians; which should have made a material difference to the everyday lives of the general populace, the NDC picked on “massive infrastructural projects”, which, although would be beneficial to the country in the long run, could not be linked with the current prevailing economic and social livelihoods of the people who were going to vote. Otherwise why would voters in Sefwi Asafo in the Sefwi Wiawso constituency of the Western Region vote against the NDC in 2016, when one of the designer community secondary schools was at an advanced stage of construction in the town? And why did the neighbouring Sefwi Asawinso (a hitherto NDC stronghold)



vote (or did not vote) the way they did, when they had been provided with a brand new kindergarten and two dormitory blocks in the secondary/technical SHS for boys and girls?

**Table 22.** *Voting patterns in Sefwi Asafo and Asawinso (2012 and 2016 compared)*

POLLING STATIONCODE	POLLINGSTATION NAME	2012		2016	
		NDC	NPP	NDC	NPP
A202501	GUEST HOUSE ASAFO	508	313	401	432
A202502	COCOA SHED ASAFO	490	268	342	379
A202601	NANA KWARTENG'S HOUSE ASAFO	185	141	128	200
A202602	D C SCHOOL ASAFO (B)	328	153	414	461
A202603	POLICE STATION ASAFO	670	197	453	337
A202801A	PBC ASAWINSO (A)	299	132	167	200
A202801B	PBC ASAWINSO (B)	315	132	176	178
A202802B	COMMUNITY CENTRE ASAWINSO	493	269	291	400
A202803A	SDA CHURCH ASAWINSO (A)	330	243	197	344
A202803B	SDA CHURCH ASAWINSO (B)	301	248	196	293
A202804	D C PRIM SCHOOL AKWASIADA EKROM	222	37	111	77
A202901A	D C PRIMARY SCHOOL ASAWINSO (A)	353	179	258	261
A202901B	D C PRIMARY SCHOOL ASAWINSO (B)	332	171	230	228
A202902A	CMB SHED ASAWINSO (A)	291	194	158	272
A202902B	CMB SHED ASAWINSO (B)	305	176	187	230
A202903A	METH PRIM ASAWINSO N03 (A)	318	225	189	259
A202903B	METH PRIM ASAWINSO N03 (B)	334	215	176	276
A202904B	METH PRIM.ASAWINSO	438	260	283	365

### Campaign Strategy

The NDC established a campaign team to plan and supervise the execution of the campaign. The team would have been expected to energise the party structures to the grassroots levels and adequately equip them to carry the message of the party to the entire country. They would also have been expected to manage communication and project the achievements of the party in government. Furthermore, they would have been expected to provide logistics to ensure the readiness of the party structures during the campaign period and on Election Day.

In effect, they would have been expected to coordinate and implement the operations. Having considered the performance of the government, they would have been expected to summarise the successes of the party/government into bite-size but understandable catchphrases.

The campaign team was out-doored at the beginning of July 2016, only five months before the elections. One would have thought that, at least one year before the elections, such a campaign team would have been in place, even if not out-doored.

The NDC adopted two slogans: “Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana”. To what extent did these two slogans sit well with the current realities of the living conditions of people in Ghana? Which lives were being changed and in what way? The fact that several traditional supporters of the party did not go out to vote would suggest that the slogans were hanging somewhere in the air, unrelated to the everyday lives of several people.

Secondly, the campaign team appeared not to have policy guidelines on discipline. For example, within a moment of the NPP saying something, some party executive, not being a member of the campaign’s communication team would shoot out a response, oftentimes in a knee-jerk manner. Everyone who thought they mattered in the party had their own independent communication strategy. It is strange that after the elections, some people in or around the party (for reasons best known to them) sought to heap the blame on the Minister of Communications and communicators. They blamed them for not “selling” the President enough although in reality, it was the party’s campaign team that was supposed to adopt and implement strategies to “sell” the President in a manner consistent with partisan campaigns.

It is a misplaced expectation to equate the Ministry of Communications/Information with a party communication machinery. Doing so becomes a tacit admission that the NDC’s campaign communication wing went to sleep, expecting someone else to do their job for them. It is not surprising therefore that everybody was talking anyhow.

The ridiculous stunts of the Nigerian comedian, Osofia, were off-putting and appeared to give the impression that someone thought that Ghanaians are children, who would be impressed by the hollow stunts by some “Jaguar Jokers”.

It would also appear that the NDC was more interested in razzmatazz than substance. The parading of a few nurses to take selfies with the President in Offinso, in the Ashanti Region could only have been designed to pull wool over the eyes of people, at a time when nurses were complaining about the withdrawal of nursing training allowances. That stage-managed stunt was turned into a video clip and was being proudly used to give the impression that the President had “massive support” in the Ashanti Region and also among nurses. It was a clear exercise in self-deception or the deception of the President.

One of the cardinal strategies in electioneering is **name recognition**. Many voters, when in the polling booth, are more likely to thumbprint against the name or the picture of the candidate whose name sticks most in their minds. It is therefore crucial, while projecting your candidate, to make the main opponent invisible. That is why it is not a useful tactic to keep repeating the name of your opponent. By doing so, you are effectively campaigning for him/her.

Many a time, during the 2016 campaign, the name “Nana Akufo Addo” was repeated ad-nauseam by NDC campaigners. “Nana Addo is short”, “Nana Addo should rather be on the Council of State”, “Nana Addo will not look good in military uniform”, etc. etc.

### **How much time and effort was spent on the swing regions?**

Every serious campaigner should know that during an electioneering campaign, greater attention should be paid to swing regions, while at the same time, doing everything to consolidate the core regions. Is that what happened? How many special visits were made by the campaign team to the Greater Accra, Western, Brong Ahafo and Central regions? What ever happened to the “door-to-door” strategy of President Mills?

What we saw were virtually, equally distributed routine campaign tours with heavy-set convoys sweeping across the towns in the midst of the blaring of such music as “Mahama Paper” and “Onaapo”, followed, in the end with a “mini-rally” where party faithfuls were sometimes kept waiting for hours for the President to arrive. The only doors that appeared to have been constantly knocked were those of chiefs who employed the ridiculous pastime of endorsing candidates although, in fact, the chiefs do not control the views of their people.

### **Setting the Agenda or Tagging along Behind the NPP?**

Was it the NDC that was setting the political agenda or they were more or less reacting to the promises of the NPP? However far-fetched and unrealistic their promises were, it looked as if the NPP were the ones that were setting the political agenda with their promises of “One District, One Factory”, “One Village, One Dam”, One Constituency, One Million Dollars”, “A separate Western North region”. All that the NDC campaign team and party executives were busy doing was to tag along and strive to discredit the NPP promises.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Has the NDC Lost Its Soul?**

Some grumpy NDC supporters have sought to blame Ex-President Rawlings for the defeat of the NDC in 2016. It is doubtful whether the fortunes of the NDC overwhelmingly depended on his support or the absence of it. After all, he did not campaign for the party in the 2012 elections; and yet the party won then.

To the extent that he kept raising the issue of corruption and sometimes insinuated that some functionaries of the government could have been guilty of that, he might have swayed a few floating votes. However, his stance could not have been the overwhelming factor for the defeat. After all, the issue of corruption had been brought to the fore so much that, even some NDC faithfuls without having answers, sought to redefine the word “corruption”.

It is reasonable to contend that for many people who chose to identify themselves with the NDC, they had, for a long time, held a view that the NDC, coming out of the 31 December 1981 events, was a party that sought the interests and welfare of the ordinary person in the street, that the NDC stood for the principle of being one another’s keeper, that the NDC was for moral uprightness and openness.

Some of them who are old enough would have remembered the virtues behind statements to the effect that, those who rule this country should realise that they “have a responsibility to this country”<sup>xxvi</sup> and not “to come to power for their own ends”<sup>xxvii</sup>. They would have remembered the 5 January 1982 nationwide broadcast when the Chairman of the PNDC decried the plight of the poor people: “For so many of the adult population of this country over the last few years, ..... there has been for them no point in this life, nothing to look forward to except a continued slaving for others to enjoy. People in the rural areas have slaved away producing cocoa only for officials of State to live in the most comfortable conditions with it. .... We have seen enough of the traditional type of leadership which abandons the people once it is in power ... and we reject it.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

Do current NDC leaders and supporters now realise how the NDC came to appeal to the poor and rural communities? And do they also realise how Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings himself cannot pass the test of the ideals of both June 4, 1979 and 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981?

Current leading members of the NDC should be asking themselves whether the core propositions that served as the foundation for people's beliefs as to what NDC stood for, were what were prevailing in the party by 2016. NDC leaders should admit that they have been moving away from the essence that endeared them to the hearts of several ordinary people (who also constitute their core vote).

In the darkness and loneliness of their bedrooms, between them and their pillows, NDC leaders should admit that they don't appear to be what they say they are any more. They should be asking themselves "wither are we bound?". In other words, as someone on a Whatsapp platform recently wrote: "Did we go or did we come?". Otherwise, why do they think their core voters are voting with their feet?

For example, how many of the "affordable" houses that were being built for outright sale by the NDC (as contained in the "Green Book") could be afforded by the ordinary worker? Even General Acheampong, before he became decadent, built what was called "low-cost housing" in the rural areas to make it possible for the teacher in those rural areas to obtain housing at affordable rent.



The "affordable" houses. A single bedroom flat costs more than GH¢100,000 payable in 3 months

Many NDC adherents would frown upon political appointees who would take immoderate advantage of their positions to feather their own nests. Some who, sometime ago, leaned towards the NDC could not have forgotten "The Way Ahead" speech on 2 January 1990 when the PNDC Chairman stated: "And perhaps the greatest bitterness is reserved unfortunately for those PNDC appointees and officials who began their task some years back with humility and dedication, sacrificing their personal careers to make life better for their fellow citizens, but who have gradually, over the years, come to take for granted, the few privileges necessary to enable them to devote themselves to their work, and who have extended and stretched those privileges into a lifestyle which is not compatible with revolutionary humility." And he added: "But there are some who have become too arrogant ..... and have come to regard those hard-earned privileges as automatic rights".

Does this ring a bell? The fact that, he himself, later during his time in office, walked away from these ideals but in 2016 tries to recover those cloaks to put them on when he is out of power, does not negate the fact that some of these original ideas had been paramount in the minds of many people who went to the side of the NDC when it was formed in 1992.

In fact, the NDC started losing its soul long time ago, during the time Ex-President was at the helm of affairs in this country. After initially letting the man in the street believe that his government was for them, he, not long after, started to rein them in, abolished the grassroots' own organisations and replaced them with "Committees for the Defence of the 'Revolution'", neutered their enthusiasm and turned the masses into gaping sycophants. This sycophancy and praise-singing has now become an entrenched culture in the NDC. Instead of the much loved "probity and accountability" mantra, he sold state enterprises to his wife's NGO. He didn't rest there, he even took millions of US Dollars from murderous tyrants such as President Sanni Abacha of Nigeria, whom he defended when everyone else was condemning him.

It has taken a long time for the people to awake from their slumber. However, President Rawlings thinks he still can twist the ordinary man in the street, who initially supported him, around his fingers. The fact that a whole swathe of ordinary people, including those selling "pure water" and phone credits on the streets, now support the NPP instead of the NDC, should tell him how much the NDC is steadily becoming just "one of those parties." People continue to cheer him more for his dramatic antics than anything else. They would equally do so for Super OD of Osofo Dadzie fame.

When one looks at the trend of Presidential election results since 1996, one can see how close the results have been. President Rawlings may therefore be advised not to delude himself into thinking that the "masses" will follow him at the snap of his fingers. That is why it does not have to take Ex-President Rawlings to remind people that the NDC, by 2016, had become different from what some hitherto, pro-NDC people had taken the party to be what they had thought it was. It has taken some people a longer time to awake from the slumber; and some are still in the Rawlings trance; thinking he is still a demi-god. However, the numbers of such people are dwindling by the year, as more people awake from the daze.

For some among the NDC supporters, who are awakening, rather than switch to the other side of the political divide, they might have decided to stay at home away from the ballot boxes in 2016. This could mean they have not given up completely on the NDC. And it is up to the NDC, as a party, to reach out for some integrity.

Many first time voters were about ten years old when the NDC returned to power in 2009. They really had not known any other government apart from the NDC. If anything at all, they would only have had vague memories of life under the NPP under President Kufuor. They would therefore have naturally come to the conclusion that all the cries about "no jobs" and "corruption" are things that can be attributed only to the NDC. Many of them therefore had no motivation to vote for the NDC.

What appears to be happening in the NDC could be akin to a period in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, when "a time came when there was no one who remembered the old days before the Rebellion, except Clover, Benjamin, Moses the raven, and a number of the pigs."<sup>xxix</sup>

It seemed that when Ex-President Rawlings made his speech at the launch of the NDC campaign in Cape Coast in August 2016, cautioning the NDC not to be like the NPP, he was, perhaps unwittingly, re-echoing the concluding events in the *Animal Farm* when the neighbouring human being farmers came to have drinks and a game of cards with their former enemy pigs (who were now the Masters on the *Animal Farm*). As the rest of the poor animals watched the party from the safety of the windows, they realised that the "Comrade" pigs had developed extra chins, just like the humans: some had five, some had four while others had three.

“The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which”.

Since the NDC now appears to be like the NPP in terms of its attitude to economic and social relations, it should come as no surprise if some people would also not find any difference between the two. And in the absence of a proper pro-people party, many may choose to stay at home rather than go out to vote.

It is difficult to successfully pull the wool over the eyes of people indefinitely with razzmatazz. If a party, from the point of view of its “natural” supporters, does not deliver concrete results that will inure to the interests and demonstrable benefit of the general voting population, the people will eventually catch on with the camouflage. Then they might, most probably, vote with their feet. Up till a point, the party may succeed in cajoling the people to sleep with some play-acting, laced with sweet words. In time, when they get the true picture that they are being taken for a ride they will be unforgiving. As a Ghanaian saying literally goes: “When the fool finally wises up, the game collapses”.

## Just One Lesson

For the NDC to become credible again in the eyes of many of its sympathisers, including those who may consider giving them the benefit of the doubt, they may need to come to terms with what might have made people walk away from them, and re-invent themselves to prove to people that they are a changed party, ready to dig deep into their souls to restore the ideas which made people buy into their message.

If you promise people, you must fulfil the promise or clearly do things that will make people believe that you are in the process of fulfilling it.

To those among them whose current objective is to use a so-called Committee of Inquiry, or to align with Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings or any other centers of power, to smear their colleagues, hoping that it will propel them into flagbearership positions or other positions of influence, they should remember from the experiences of both Brutus (in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar) and Michael Hesselstine (UK) that “He who wields the dagger, does not wear the crown”.

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<sup>xxiv</sup> Source: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/december-8th/fraudulent-agro-chemical-sellers-trade-free-chemicals-in-elubo.php>

<sup>xxv</sup> Source: [https://cocobod.gh/weakly\\_purchase.php](https://cocobod.gh/weakly_purchase.php)

<sup>xxvi</sup> First broadcast of Flt. Lt JJ Rawlings on 31 December 1981

<sup>xxvii</sup> Second broadcast of Flt. Lt J.J. Rawlings on 5 January 1982

<sup>xxviii</sup> Second broadcast of Flt-Lt. J.J. Rawlings; 5 January 1982

<sup>xxix</sup> George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

## **About the Author**

The author of this review is a follower of political and social events, particularly in Ghana and Africa, but also has an interest in events worldwide. He is the author of the booklet: “*The Ghana 2008 Elections: Growing Pains of a Budding Democracy*” published by FOSDA Publications (2009).