

POLI 444

ELECTORAL POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY IN GHANA

SESSION 12 : THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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SESSION OVERVIEW

- In this session we focus on the seventh and latest electoral cycle in the Fourth Republic, the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. Ahead of the elections there were significant changes in the election management body, the Electoral Commission, which came with its own set of issues. Again the ruling NDC went into Election 2016 with a presidential candidate who was seeking his second full term, while his party was seeking a third consecutive term. On its part, the major opposition NPP was presenting the same presidential ticket for a third consecutive time. Election 2016 also had the potential for a third alternation in power in 16 years. We shall explore in details all these dynamics and the intriguing outcome that emerged and draw some lessons for the future.

SESSION OUTLINE

The key topics to be covered in this session are:

- Topic 1: **CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODY**
- Topic 2: **THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**
- Topic 3: **THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION**
- Topic 4: **LESSONS FROM THE 2016 ELECTIONS**

READING MATERIALS

- Frempong, A. K. D (2017) *Elections in Ghana (1951-2016)*, Tema: Digibooks Ghana Ltd.
- Ninsin, K. A., ed. (2016) *Issues in Ghana's Electoral Politics*, Dakar: CODESRIA
- Ayee, J. R. A (2017) "Ghana's Election of 7 December 2016: A Post-Mortem", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 24, No.3, pp. 311-330

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, students should be able to:

- Understand clearly the changes that were effected in the membership of the Electoral Commission ahead of Election 2016
- Explain the dynamics and outcome of the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections
- Appreciate the impact of Election 2016 for future elections in Ghana

Topic one

CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION AHEAD OF THE 2016 ELECTIONS



BACKGROUND TO THE CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

- As earlier discussed in Session 9, the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) was set up by the PNDC government to conduct the 1992 referendum, presidential and parliamentary elections that ushered in the Fourth Republic.
- In July 1993, the Electoral Commission Act was passed by the First Parliament of the Fourth Republic as provided for in the 1992 Constitution and which had conducted all the elections from 1996 to 2012
- Interestingly, there was one commissioner who had been part of all the six elections up to 2012. Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, was first a Deputy Chairman of the INEC.
- In the new EC, Afari-Gyan was in 1993 appointed the substantive Chairman, a position he held till his mandatory retirement at 70 years in the middle of 2015, a few years after the 2012 presidential election petition

APPOINTMENT OF NEW EC CHAIR AND OTHER MATTERS

- In June 2015, incumbent President Mahama in accordance with the constitutional provisions appointed Charlotte Osei, then chair of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)
- Significantly, she became Ghana's first female head of the EC
- Her shift from chair of NCCE to chair of EC raised issue as to whether it would not affect the permanence of the two positions as envisaged by the 1992 Constitution. In addition, opposition parties also argued about the political neutrality of the new EC chair
- In gender terms, the composition of the EC ahead of Election 2016 was five females (including the Chair) and two males, compared to four males (including the Chair) and three females in 2012.
- This was the first time the EC was female dominated in addition to the Chair, there were a Deputy Chair and three other female commissioners as shown below:

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION AHEAD OF ELECTION 2016

Name	Gender	Position
Charlotte Osei	Female	Chairperson
Sulley Amadu	Male	Deputy Chairman
Georgina Opoku Amankwaa	Female	Deputy Chairperson
Paulina Adobea Dadzawa	Female	Member
Ebenezer Aggrey Fynn	Male	Member
Sa Adatu Maida	Female	Member
Rebecca Kabukie Adjalo	Female	Member

APPOINTMENT OF NEW EC AND OTHER MATTERS (CONT'D)

On assumption of office, the new chair and the EC introduced some innovations, some of them cosmetic or controversial and the manner in which they were implemented brought the EC into confrontation with various stake holders

- The adoption of a new logo for the EC
- The appointment of a 5-member committee to collate views for or against a new electoral register
- The mass disqualification of presidential aspirants for administrative lapses on the nomination forms

On the positive side:

- The increase in the number of polling stations, the use of different inks for thumb printing and finger marking, as well as double biometric identification machines at each polling station saw to a far more orderly voting in 2016 compared to 2012

TOPIC 2

- THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



BACKGROUND TO THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

- As discussed in Session 11, the losing NPP did not accept the outcome of the 2012 presidential election until after the eight-month long petition at the Supreme Court.
- In 2014, the NPP again nominated Akufo-Addo to bid the presidency for the third consecutive term and he quickly re-nominated his running mate for the two previous election, Mahamadu Bawumia.
- Late 2015, the NDC re-nominated incumbent President John Mahama to seek his second full term and with his re-nomination his his Veep, Amissah-Arthur, 2016 was in effect turned into a re-contest of 2012 between the two major parties and their presidential tickets
- Several other parties who had previously contested selected their presidential tickets in the election year; among them: PNC, CPP, PPP, GCPP, DPP, UFP & RDP. In addition were three others whose bids had been rejected in 2012: NDP, GFP & IPP and three others who were making their bids for the first time: All people's Congress (APC), United Progressive Party (UPP) and United development System Party (UDSP) Also among the aspirants were the 2012 independent candidate and another making his debut

BACKGROUND TO THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (CONT'D)

- The general expectation therefore was that 2016 would produced the highest number of presidential tickets. Indeed at the start of the nomination process as many as 23 aspirants (including 16 parties & 7 independents) picked forms and 17 of them filed their nominations
- In an unprecedented manner the EC diaqualified 13 of them for lapses in the filling of the nomination forms, some of them allegedly bordering on criminality. The four tickets initially approved were NDC, NPP, CPP and one independent
- The disqualified aspirants contested their cases in various courts until the Supreme Court ordered the EC to give the disqualified one day to correct their mistakes. At the end of that exercise three were re-accepted to contest (PNC, PPP & NDP); two withdrew from the race (UPP & RPD), while the rest were disqualified again (GCPP, APC, IPP, GFP, UFP, UDSP and an independent. Details of the seven tickets which contested were as follows

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL LIST

PARTY	PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	RUNNING MATE
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (NDC)	JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA	P. K. BEKOE AMISSAH-ARTHUR
NEW PATROTIC PARTY (NPP)	NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO	MAHAMADU BAWUMIA
PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONVENTION (PNC)	EDWARD NASIGRI MAHAMA	EMMANUEL AMENUVOR ANYIDOHO
CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY (CPP)	KOBINA IVOR GREENSTREET	NANA GABBY NKETIA
PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP)	PAPA KWESI NDUOM	BRIGITTE DZOGBENUKU
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP)	NANA KONADU AGYEMAN-RAWLINGS	KOJO MENSAH SOSU
INDEPENDENT (IND)	JACOB OSEI YEBOAH	DANIEL WILSON TORTO

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL: THE OUTCOME

- The 2016 presidential election was decided in a single round and generally disastrous for the ruling NDC:
- The national vote was: Akufo-Addo (NPP)-53.9%, Mahama (NDC)-44.4% (a margin of 9.5%) with and aggregate 1.7% for the five other contestants
- In this re-contest, Akufo-Addo improved his national vote by 6.2% from 47.7% in 2012, while Mahama dipped by 6.3% from 50.7%
- In regional terms, Akufo-Addo won in six regions (up from two): Ashanti- 75.7%, Brong Ahafo-54.3%, Central-53.2%, Eastern-63.9%, Greater Accra-51.8% & Western-53.9% and in the four regions he lost: Northern-42.3%, Upper East-34.2%, Upper West-36.6% & Volta-15.8%. He improved in each of the 10 regions over 2012
- For Mahama, he won in four regions (down from eight): Northern-

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE OUTCOME (CONT'D)

- Akuffo-Addo won all the four swing regions that have always voted for the winning party at the presidential level and changed parties after every two terms: Brong Ahafo, Central, Greater Accra & Western
- Of the 275 constituencies, Akuffo Addo won 153 across eight regions: Ashanti-44, Brong Ahafo-19, Central-20, Eastern-26, Greater Accra-20, Northern-10, Upper West-2 & Western-12; with none in Upper East & Volta
- On his part Mahama won the remaining 122 across all the 10 regions: Ashanti-3, Brong Ahafo-10, Central-3, Eastern-7, Greater Accra-14, Northern-21, Upper East-15, Upper West-9, Volta-26 & Western-14
- In a number of constituencies across five regions the NPP won for the first time at the presidential level: Ashanti-1 (New Edubiase), Brong Ahafo-1 (Jaman North), Central-1 (Twifo-Ati-Morkwaa), Greater Accra-1 (Adenta) and Western-1 (Jomoro)

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL OUTCOME (CONT'D)

There were a number of interesting precedents set by the 2016 presidential outcome:

- John Mahama became the first incumbent president to lose re-election in the Fourth Republic
- Election 2016 became the first of the three alternations in power that was won in a single round a not a run-off
- Akufo-Addo by his victory made history as the first son to be elected president like his father in the Second Republic
- In 2016, the same presidential ticket (presidential candidate & running mate) presented three consecutive times won the presidency: Akufo-Addo & Bawumia
- For the first time in the Fourth Republic, Election 2016 produced a president whose first name was not 'John' like his three predecessors

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL OUTCOME (CONT'D)

- In some other respects, the 2016 presidential outcome repeated aspects of the electoral history of the Fourth Republic:
- For seven times, four regions (Brong Ahafo, Central, Greater Accra & Western) have all voted for the eventual presidential winner
- Thrice, those same four regions, assuming the status of swing regions have induced alternations in power
- For the third time, the NPP won presidential election with the support of the same six of the 10 regions
- For a second time in an opposition candidate won the presidential election on his third consecutive attempt
- Thrice, an incumbent party failed to win presidency for a third consecutive term

THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY CONTEST

- One interesting feature of the 2016 parliamentary contest was that, of the 275 MPs at the end of the Sixth Parliament, nearly a third (79) of them across all the 10 regions were not in the 2016 race: 27 of them did not seek another term, as many as 50 were primary losers, while the other two withdrew after winning their primaries
- Ten parties contested with their unequal strengths as usual: NDC & NPP were the only two which contested all the 275 seats. The eight others contesting varied numbers of seats were PNC, CPP, PPP, NDP, DPP, GCPP, UFP & UPP.
- Three of the independent contestants were independents, three others were party incumbent protesters, a few former party MPs seeking comeback while the large majority were debutant party primary losers

THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY RESULTS

- The parliamentary outcome confirmed the dire circumstances of the NDC in 2016 and had other interesting dimensions of its own:
- For the first time all the parliamentary seats were shared between NPP-169 (up by 47) and NDC-106 (down by 42)
- For the first time since 2004, the NPP won seats in all the 10 regions: Ashanti-44, Brong Ahafo-20, Central-19, Eastern-27, Greater Accra-21, Northern-13, Upper East-3, Upper West-5, Volta-1 & Western-16, with a majority in six of them
- The NDC won seats in the 10 regions as usual but generally with reduced numbers: Ashanti-3, Brong Ahafo-9, Central-4, Eastern-6, Greater Accra-13, Northern-18, Upper East-12, Upper West-6, Volta-25 & Western-10
- The PNC lost its sole Builsa South seat to NDC, while CPP lost the Kumbungu seat it won in 2013 by-election back to the NDC

THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY RESULTS (CONT'D)

- For the first time since 1996, there was no independent winner
- All the three independent incumbents seeking re-election lost out back to the NDC in Tamale North, Jirapa & Akan
- All the three party incumbents who went independent in protest also lost in Tatale-Sanguli, Sefwi, Lawra & Akontombra, but each cause the defeat of their party replacements
- There were 16 seats across the 10 regions that the NPP won for the very first time: Ashanti-1 (New Edubiase), Brong Ahafo-1 (Atebubu-Amantin), Central-2 (Ekumfi & Twifu-Ati-Morkwaa), Eastern-1 (Upper Manya), Greater Accra-1 (Bortianor-N-Amanfro), Northern-2 (Salaga South & Savelugu), Upper East-2 (Tempane & Zebilla), Upper West-3 (Nandom, Sissal East & Sissala West), Volta-1 (Krachi East) & Western-3 (Jomoro, Sefwi Akontombra & Sefwi Wiawso)

THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY RESULTS (CONT'D)

- There were as many as nine formerly defeated MPs who staged comebacks mostly in the three regions in the North: Northern-4 (Chereponi, Nareligu-Gambaga, Saboba & Yagaba-Kubori), Upper East-1 (Navrongo Central), Upper West-3 (Jirapa, Nandom & Wa East) and Western-1 (Evalue-A-Gwira)
- In three instances, the winners were carpet baggers, who had previously lost in seats other than the ones they won in 2016: Greater Accra-2 (Domeabra-Obom & Madina) & Northern-1 (Kumbungu)
- There were 37 female winners, the highest in the country's history spread unevenly across nine regions: Ashanti-5, Brong Ahafo-2, Central-6, Eastern-5, Greater Accra-10, Northern-1, Upper East-1, Volta-5 & Western-2, with none from Upper West.
- While 24 of the female winners were NPP, the other 13 were NDC

THE 2016 ELECTIONS: ACCOUNTING FOR THE OUTCOME

For the Presidential Election, a number of factors worked against the NDC:

- The NDC as a party seeking a third consecutive term suffered from the general yearning for change among the electoral. Its situation was further complicated by the fact that while the party was seeking a third term, its presidential candidate was seeking his second
- The ruling party under-estimated the devastating impact of the power crisis on Ghanaians and assumed that after achieving some stability in the election year all would be forgotten
- The NDC over-emphasized its so-called unprecedented infrastructural development and did little about the hardship and lowering of living standards of the majority of the populace
- The ruling party somehow alienated portions of the voters in most of the swing regions
- The NDC's campaign relatively lacked focus and was more based on personal attacks and politics of insults than issue
- While the NDC appeared united at the top, there were serious cracks below

THE 2016 ELECTIONS: ACCOUNTING FOR THE OUTCOME (CONT'D)

- The NDC failed to deal with the several corruption related issues that emerged. Rather there was ostentatious wealth and impunity
- In spite of these challenges, the NDC and its presidential candidate were falsely over-confident and made audacious predicts about their success

A number of other factors worked in favour of the NPP:

- The NPP's third attempt with the same presidential tickets won it some sympathy
- Somehow the confusion at the NPP's national executive level, ironically, induced solidarity at the grassroots
- The NPP's defeat at the 2012 presidential petition hardened its resolve to be more vigilant at the polling stations in 2016
- Much of the dirt thrown at the person of the NPP flagbearer did not stick since they were over-flogged issues and his reaction to the Supreme Court verdict somewhat changed the perception of him as a 'war-monger'
- The strength that Akufo-Addo demonstrated on the campaign trail, in spite of his age and alleged ill-health, was simply infectious

THE 2016 ELECTIONS: ACCOUNTING FOR THE OUTCOME (CONT'D)

- The NPP conducted a much issue-based and focused campaign couched in catchy phrases as ‘one constituency, one million dollar’, ‘one district, one factory’ ‘one village, one dam’, etc and its Free SHS policy was better explained than before
- NPP running mate Bawumia played a crucial role in the campaign with his incisive analysis of the economy had devastating effect on the NDC as its own running mate Amissah-Arthur had to play catch up.
- More than their NDC counterparts the wives of the NPP contenders, Rebecca & Samira got involved in the campaign

In addition, at the **parliamentary level:**

- The NPP general managed its primary and post-primary healing of wounds better than NDC. While the NPP managed to get several defeated aspirants to rescinding their decision to go independent, the NDC sacked several of the m

THE 2016 ELECTIONS: POST-ELECTION POLITICS

- Nana Akufo-Addo assumed the presidency, the fifth in the Fourth Republic, on 7 January 2017, with Mahamadu Bawumia as the new Vice President
- In forming his government, adopted most of the existing ministries (including, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Interior, Finance, Education, etc) restructured a few (Water Resources, Works & Housing), revived others (Railway Development, Aviation) and most significantly introducing new ones (Inner Cities & Zongo Development, Business Development, Regional Reorganization & Development, Monitoring & Evaluation)
- Akufo-Addo ended up forming the largest government of 110 ministers (substantive & deputy)
- A number of former NPP ministers & MMDCEs from the Kufuor era, sitting MPs, losing candidates, non-contestants and party executives were all appointed

THE 2018 POST-ELECTION POLITICS

- Ex-two term MP and former Second Deputy Speaker, Mike Oquaye, was elected Speaker assisted by third term NPP MP for Bekwai, Joseph Osei-Owusu as First Deputy and longest serving NDC MP for Nadawli-Kaleo and previously minority & Majority Leader, Alban Bagbin, as Second Deputy
- Sixth term NPP MP for Subin and immediate past Minority Leader became the new Majority Leader with two-term NPP for Dome-Kwabenya, Sarah Adwoa Safo as his Deputy
- Fourth term NDC MP for Tamale South, Haruna Iddrisu, became the Minority Leader, with fourth term NDC MP for Ketu North, James Klutse Avedzi as his Deputy
- In his first year in office President Akufo-Addo implemented his long-cherished Free Senior High School (SHS) programme
- That same year he triggered the constitutional processes for the creation of new regions after receiving six petitions and the process is at its final stage when those areas are to vote in a referendum

THE ELECTION 2016: POST-ELECTION POLITICS (CONT'D)

- Similarly after receiving petitions against the EC chairperson and her two deputies, the President triggered the constitutional processes leading to their dismissal and the appointment of new chair person and two deputies
- On its part, the NDC went into self retrospection, formed the Kwesi Botchwey Committee to collate the causes for the 2016 defeat and make recommendation forward.
- In intriguing situation is that after organizing a series of unity talks, ex-President John Mahama had declared his intention to seek the flagbearership of his party.
- Would that result in a third contest between Akufo-Addo and Mahama in 2020? While a victory for Mahama in 2020 would be a history comeback, a defeat at either the party primary or the presidential election would dent his status as an Elderly Statesman

TOPIC 3:

- **LESSONS FROM THE 2016 ELECTIONS**



LESSONS FROM ELECTION 2016

A number of interesting lessons emerge from Election 2016:

- While like 2000 and 2008, Election 2016 confirmed a two-term tenure for an incumbent party, it at the same time introduced the fact that an incumbent president is not automatically guaranteed a third term
- Election 2016 after producing the first one-term president, raises issues about his political future
- Again like in 2000 and 2008, 2016 proved that incumbency is not always an advantage and can indeed be a burden
- What should incumbent parties do to win a third consecutive term?
- Unlike 2000 and 2008, Election 2016 proved that alternation in power can be achieved in a single presidential round

LESSONS FROM ELECTION 2016 (CONT'D)

- The four swing regions of Brong Ahafo, Central, Greater Accra & Western continue to relish in their status as 'kingmakers'
- Election 2016 also confirmed the increasingly dire circumstances of third parties in Ghana. Their aggregate presidential vote was 1.6% and none of them could win even a single parliamentary seat
- Like in 1996, independent contenders could not win any parliamentary seat
- Presidential Election 2016 produced a historic first female presidential candidate but coming from a third her performance was not impressive
- Election 2016 also confirmed that female running mates could make impact only if nominated by one of the two dominant parties
- While 2016 produced the highest number of 37 female MPs, that was only 13.5% of the 275-member Parliament and still below half of the UN-mandated 30% threshold for women

REFERENCES

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What major change took place in the membership of the Electoral Commission ahead of the 2016 elections?
- Identity any one controversial measure the Electoral Commission took ahead of the 2016 elections.
- Indicate any one measure by the Electoral Commission that contributed to the orderly 2016 election day.
- Why the 2016 presidential election said to be a re-contest of 2012?
- In 2016, why incumbent President Mahama was seeking his second term, his party, the NDC, was seeking a third term. Explain.
- What was unique about the NPP presidential ticket in 2016?
- What precedent did the NDP presidential candidate Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings set by contesting the 2016 presidential election?
- What precedent did the independent contestant Osei Yeboah set in 2016?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

- What contribution did the four swing regions make to the outcome of the 2016 presidential election?
- Identify any one precedent that incumbent President Mahama set by his defeat in 2016
- How did the independents fare in the 2016 parliamentary election?
- What was unique about the performance of the third parties in the 2016 ?
- Name any three seats the NPP won for the first time in 2016
- Identify any one way in which incumbency became a disadvantage for the NDC in the 2016 elections
- Identify any one factor that favoured the NPP in the 2016 presidential contest
- Show how the power alternation in 2016 different from 2000 & 2008
- Indicate any one lesson from the 2016 elections