

# Candidate Selection and Nomination Methods: A Historical Review and Analysis of Presidential Primaries in Ghana's Fourth Republic, 1992-2020

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes the selection of presidential candidates in primary elections by political parties in Ghana's Fourth Republic. It examines the formal intra-party rules and regulations that govern primary elections for the selection of party presidential candidate, and how this enhances Ghana's democracy. Given that interpretation is central to this paper, exploratory case design is adopted. Drawing from documented material and semi-structured interviews, the results of analysis suggest that the intra-party primary election rules and regulations of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) find expression in the electoral laws as contained in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The results show that there is no much variation in the intra-party rules of the two parties in their selection of presidential candidates. Also, both the NDC and NPP use closed system of primaries (this involved only registered party members who are elected and appointed executives, party appointees and party elders). The only variation is explained in the nomination and filing fees. The results of analysis further explained that the NDC and NPP have both departed from 'National Delegates' Congress System of presidential candidate selection to a 'Nationwide Voting System.' The study also revealed that though, the NDC adopted an open primary system in 2015, it has since reversed to the closed system of primary election in 2019. The study concludes that the ways in which political parties select candidates play a crucial role in shaping political debates and politics in Ghana. The paper therefore recommends that the intra-party politics, primary elections, candidate selection and nomination methods should continue to be conducted within the framework of modern liberal democratic principles anchored in the multi-party democratic framework of Ghana's Fourth Republic.

**Keywords:** primary elections, political parties, democracy, presidential, voting, Ghana

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## **Introduction**

In modern liberal democracy, party primary elections have become one of the most suitable means of broad-based political participation by citizens in candidate selection of political parties (Field & Savelis, 2008; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012; Ramiro, 2013). Also, since the 'Third Wave' of democratisation (Huntington, 1991), political parties, especially in many of the emerging democracies such as those in Africa, have reformed intra-party rules as an indicator of selecting presidential and parliamentary candidates to conform to the basic principles of modern liberal democracy (Ichino & Nathan, 2017; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2016).

In the Ghanaian multi-party democratic system of the Fourth Republic, the intra-party politics of various political parties has so much affinity with broader national political processes to the extent that one can hardly discern Ghana's democratic consolidation without a firm grasp of electoral politics in the context of intra-party primary elections (Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012; Ichino & Nathan, 2016; Dodsworth et al., 2022; Bukari, 2022). Party primary elections such as the presidential primary elections often set out the choices that voters (also called delegates or selectors) have, and determine the candidate as the party presidential candidate for national presidential elections (Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Hazan & Rahat, 2006; Dodsworth et al., 2022; Bukari, 2022).

This paper seeks to assess the formal intra-party rules that govern primary elections for the selection of party presidential candidates, and how this enhances Ghana's democracy. The paper is organised as follows: review of intra-party presidential primary elections, candidate selection and nomination methods in Ghana's Fourth Republic, presidential primary elections, candidate selection and nomination methods of NDC and NPP, and implications of presidential primary elections, candidate selection and nomination methods on Ghana's democracy.

### ***Presidential Primary Elections in Ghana: An Overview***

After almost two decades of military rule, Ghana returned to constitutional rule on 7 January 1993 after the promulgation of the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitutional rule, and elections conducted the same year. Of all the political parties that emerged on the political landscape in Ghana in the Fourth Republic, it is the NPP and the NDC that have been consistent in holding primaries to select their presidential and parliamentary candidates. The few exceptions were in 1992, 1996 and 2000 when the NDC did not hold primaries to elect its presidential candidates. Towards the 2000 multi-party presidential elections, for example, the NDC set aside the use of primaries to elect its presidential candidate. Instead, Professor J.E.A. Mills was declared in the famous "Swedru declaration" in 1998 by its founder (J.J. Rawlings) as the presidential candidate of the party (Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012). Since then, the NDC has reverted to the use of primaries to elect its presidential candidates for presidential elections in Ghana. The table below shows how the NDC elected its presidential candidates for national presidential elections since its formation on 28 July 1992.

**Table 1: NDC Presidential Candidate Selection between 1992 and 2020**

Year	Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage Obtained
1992	Jerry John Rawlings	National consensus/unopposed	Popular acclamation
1996	Jerry John Rawlings	National consensus/unopposed	Popular acclamation
1998	Professor John Evans Atta Mills	Swedru declaration/unopposed	Popular acclamation
Delegate Congress: 21 December, 2002; Total Delegates:1400			
2002	Professor John Evans Atta Mills	1116 votes	79.71%
	Dr. Kwesi Botchwey	194 votes	1.85%
Delegate Congress: 21 December, 2006; Total Delegates:1673			
	Professor John Evans Atta Mills	1,362	81.4 %
2006	Dr Ekow Spio-Garbrah	146	8.7%
	Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu	137	8.2%
	Mr Eddie Annan	28	1.7%
Delegate Congress: 9 July 2011; Total Delegates:3125			
2011	Professor John Evans Atta Mills	2771	96.9%
	Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings	90	3.1 %
2012	Vice President Mahama (took over from Mills as President on 24 July 2012 after his death in the afternoon of that day)	National consensus/unopposed	Popular acclamation
Open Presidential Primaries (All NDC registered card members): 22 November 2015; Total NDC registered members (selectorates): 1, 286, 728			
2015	President Mahama	1,199 118	95.10%
Limited Presidential Primaries (Only NDC executives, MPs, Ex-MPs, all former NDC appointees): Total delegates (selectorates): 225,521			
	Ex-President Mahama	21,487	95.23%
	Professor Joshua Alabi	34034	1.52%
2019	Mr. Alban S.K Bagbin	2304	1.04%
	Goosie Tanoh	2091	0.93%
	Mr. Ekwo Spio-Garbrah	1447	0.65
	Sylvester Mensah	934	0.42
	Alhaji Nurudeen Alhasan	520	0.23

**Source:** Authors' calculation (based on available data from NDC) 2020.

The NPP, as a political party, unlike the NDC, has an unbroken historical record of intra-party presidential primary elections since the beginning of Ghana's Fourth Republican democratic dispensation in 1992. The NPP has conducted presidential elections since 1992 to elect its presidential candidate for national elections. The party was initially built on two traditions in 1992 with varied interests in the leadership question. Initially starting as Danquah-Busia tradition, the NPP later incorporated tradition to become Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition.

Historically, Simon Diedong Dombo (the leader of the then Northern Peoples Party) was not part of the Danquah tradition until after the passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in 1957 (C.A., 38), which banned all political parties formed along ethnic, religious and regional lines. Following the passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, the opposition parties came together to form the United Party (UP). It was the formation of the UP that led to the final crystallization of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition.

The NPP is an offshoot of the UP tradition, a tradition that was anchored to three pillars (Danquah, Busia and Dombo traditions), known collectively as Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition. Though the NPP is an offshoot of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition, references to its historical tradition in the Fourth Republic were silent about the Dombo tradition. Hence, references and discourses on the NPP basically focused on the Danquah-Busia tradition, though its presidential candidate in the 2000 election, J.A. Kufuor, selected Aliu Mahama, a northerner, as his running mate. It was in its seventeenth anniversary as a political party on July 24, 2009, that the NPP formally outdoored the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition. Since then, references and discourses on the historical roots of the NPP accommodated the Dombo tradition.

Since its formation on July 24, 1992, the NPP had successively held primaries to elect its presidential candidates to contest in multi-party presidential elections in Ghana. The table below shows the NPP's elected presidential candidates for national presidential elections since its formation.

**Table 2:** *NPP Presidential Candidate Selection between 1992 and 2020*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Number of votes</b>	<b>Percentage Obtained</b>
29 August 1992 National Delegate Congress: Total Number of Delegates (1,998)			
<b>1992</b>	Albert Adu Boahen	1121	56.60%
	Dr. Dsane Selby	343	17.30%
	J. A. Kufour	326	16.5%
	Dr. Safo-Adu	149	7.50%
	J. A. Addison	32	1.60%
	John Kwame Koduah	9	0.50%
Peter Ala Adjetey Withdrew			
20 April 1996 National Delegate Congress: Total Number of Delegates (1,996)			
<b>1996</b>	J. A Kufour	1,034	51.99%
	Albert Adu Boahen	710	35.70%
	J.H Mensah	110	5.53%
	Dr.Jones Ofori Atta	69	3.47%
	Dr. Kwame Safo-Adu	42	2.11%
	Dr. Dsane Selby	24	1.21%
23 October 1998 National Delegate Congress: Total Number of Delegates (1,993)			
<b>1998</b>	John Agyekum Kufuor	1,286	64.60%
	Nana Akufo-Addo	628	31.64%

	Kofi Apraku	52	2.820%
	Mr Kwame Kodua	8	0.44%
	Malik Alhassan Yakubu	7	0.35%
	Joseph Henry Mensah	3	0.15%
<b>2003</b>	Special National Delegate Congress: 6 June 2003		
	President J. A. Kufour	National consensus/unopposed	Popular acclamation
	23 December 2007 National Delegate Congress: Total Number of Delegates (2,293)		
	Nana Akufo-Addo	1,096	47.97%
	Mr Alan Kyerematen	738	32.30%
	Alhaji Aliu Mahama	146	6.39%
	Mr Yaw Osafo-Mafo	63	2.76%
	Mr Daniel Kweku Botwe	52	2.28%
	Papa Owusu Ankomah	34	1.49%
	Mr Hackman Owusu-Agyeman	28	1.23%
	Dr Kwame Addo Kufuor	22	0.96%
	Professor Mike Oquaye	20	0.88%
<b>2007</b>	Mr Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lampsey	20	0.88%
	Dr Kofi Konadu Apraku	19	0.83
	Prof. Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng	12	0.53
	Mr Boakye Kyerematen Agyarko	10	0.44
	Mr Felix Kwesi Owusu-Adjapong	9	0.39
	Mr Kwabena Agyepong	9	0.39
	Dr Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah	6	0.26
	Dr Kobina Arthur Kennedy	1	0.04
	7 August 2010 National wide Delegates Election: Total Number of Delegates (106,590)		
<b>2010</b>	Nana Akufo-Addo	83,517	78.89%
	John Alan Kwadwo Kyerematen	21,226	19.91%
	Isaac Osei	1,194	1.12%
	Professor Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng	428	0.40%
	Mr. John Kwame Kudua	225	0.21%
	18 October 2014 Nation Wide Delegates Election: Total Number of Delegates (115,000)		
<b>2014</b>	Nana Akufo-Addo	117, 413	94.35%
	Alan Kyerematen	5,908	4.75%
	Francis Addai Nimo	1,128	0.91%
<b>2020</b>	President Nana Akufo-Addo	National Executive Council (NEC) consensus	National Executive Council (NEC) acclamation

**Source:** Authors' calculation (based on available data) 2020.

### ***Theory and Framework***

Several theories explain intra-party primary elections by scholars, but this study is largely influenced by Rahat and Hazan's (2001) analytical candidate selection framework. The analytical framework categories candidate selection methods into five dimensions: candidacy (who is eligible to run), the selectorate (who is eligible to vote), selection/electorate (voting versus appointment), decentralisation, and gender and diversity. The framework analyzed the formal party rules, methods and characteristics to determine the ways in which presidential primary elections and quality of democracy in Ghana are complementary or contradictory, if at all. The focus is on the NDC and NPP because they are the only two political parties that have won elections and formed government under the 1992 multi-party democratic dispensation.

### ***Design, Methods and Sources of Data***

The study is designed to explore selected key informants and party executives' perspectives on presidential primary elections of the two major parties in Ghana's Fourth Republic. Given the fact that processes of interpretation and sense-making, as well as the particularities of the context are central to this study, the choice of an interpretive approach and an exploratory case study methodology seemed to be the most appropriate one. This study fits into the exploratory case study methodology often designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data was collected from a wide range of sources. The study made use of documented material and semi-structured interviews with key informants and party executives at both National and Constituency levels. The interviews were conducted in both NDC and NPP headquarters and constituency from September, 2019 to December, 2019. In this study, categories of participants included senior officials of NDC and NPP and some leading political experts in Ghana. Finally, the study relies on some descriptive analysis of parliamentary and presidential primaries conducted under the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

### ***Analysis of Candidate Selection and Nomination Methods of NDC and NPP in Ghana's Fourth Republic***

#### ***Candidacy: Who can run in the NDC and NPP Intra-Party Presidential Primary Elections?***

The intra-party primary elections often set out the choices that voters' (delegates/the selectorates) have, and the outcome of such elections determine the presidential candidate of a party to be voted for as president in the national elections (Rahat & Hazan 2001; Hazan & Rahat, 2006). The intra-party organisation of presidential primary election or delegates' congress to select a presidential candidate by various political parties in Ghana under the Fourth Republican democratic dispensation has always been conducted in line with the Article 55(5) of the 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution of Ghana. Political parties have also developed their constitutions, and the provisions contained in these constitutions are consistent with the national electoral laws of Ghana regarding the selection of presidential and parliamentary candidates for the purpose of national elections. Also, for determination of candidacy under the laws of Ghana, Article (62) of the Constitution of Ghana states that:

A person shall not be qualified for election as the President of Ghana unless: a) he is a citizen of Ghana by birth; b) he has attained the age of forty years; and c) he is a person who is otherwise qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament, except that the disqualifications set out in paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) of clause (2) of the Article 94 of this Constitution shall not be removed in respect of any such person by a presidential pardon or by the lapse of time as provided for in clause (5) of that article (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992: 53). Further, Article 63(1) of the Constitution states that: "A person shall not be a candidate in a presidential election unless he is nominated for election as President by document which: a) is

signed by him; b) is signed by not less than two persons who are registered voters resident in the area of authority of each district assembly; c) is delivered to the Electoral Commission of Ghana on or before the day appointed as nomination day in relation to the election; and d) designates a person to serve as Vice-President (ibid, 1992, pp 53-54).

As spelt out in the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, a person seeking to contest in any public election in Ghana as a presidential candidate on a ticket of a political party or as an independent candidate must satisfy, among other things, the provisions of Article (62) and (63) of the 1992 Constitution. In line with the provisions of these Articles, any party member seeking to contest presidential primary election of any party in Ghana, such as the NDC and NPP or as any other party, must first meet the requirement of national electoral laws, as contained in the Constitution and or as provided for by the Electoral Commission of Ghana, as well as the requirement of the Party Constitution of the respective political parties.

The NDC, as a political party, often issues guidelines, which are designed to guide the conduct of primary elections for the selection of presidential candidates for national presidential elections in Ghana in line with the 1992 Constitution, and in accordance with Articles 40 and 42 of the party's Constitution. In the 2020 presidential primary, for example, the NDC's guidelines required presidential candidates to meet Articles 62 and 94 of the 1992 Constitution. The guidelines also stipulated that a contestant for presidential primaries should be a registered member of the party for at least ten years; that the contestant must show evidence of contribution to the party over the period; that contestants must buy a nomination form at GH¢ 20, 000.00; that a contestant must be proposed by three (3) persons and seconded by five (5) others who are either current or former constituency executive committee members of good standing, current or former regional executive committee members who are in good standing, or current or former members of the National Executive Committee who are in good standing; that a contestant or the aspirant must also be endorsed by at least two (2) persons who should be branch executives of the party from each constituency in Ghana; that a candidate must pay GH¢400,000.00, later reduced to GH¢ 300,000.00, upon submission of completed documents to contest in the presidential primaries (Guidelines for the election of NDC presidential candidate for the 2020 General elections, 2020).

The NPP has similar guidelines regarding the selection of presidential candidates on the ticket of the party since the beginning of Ghana Fourth Republican dispensation in 1992. An Aspiring Presidential Candidate (APC), after satisfying the national electoral laws of Ghana, and the party Constitution, "shall procure Nomination Forms after payment of non-refundable application fee of Twenty Thousand Ghana Cedis only (GHC20,000) in Bankers Draft in favour of the New Patriotic Party National Headquarters, Accra" (NPP, 16 January 2020).<sup>1</sup> Also, "... to successfully file his/her nomination filing nomination, an APC shall pay a non-refundable filing fee of Two Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHC200,000) in Bankers Draft in favour of the New Patriotic Party National Headquarters, Accra. A Presidential Vetting Committee (PVC) shall be established to examine and vet the candidature of every aspirant for the presidential nomination of the party to ensure that such person qualifies to contest for the office of the President of the Republic of Ghana" (NPP, 16 January 2020).<sup>2</sup> After satisfying the provisions of Articles (62), (63) and (94), as provided for in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and that of NPP Constitution and guidelines issued for the purpose of presidential primary

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<sup>1</sup> Press conference by the NPP to outline the rules and regulations for the conduct of the party's parliamentary primaries in constituencies where the party has sitting members of parliament as well as rules and regulations for presidential primaries for the 2020 general elections

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

elections, an APC is eligible to contest for the position of presidential candidate on the ticket of NPP since 1992 in Ghana.

***The Selectorate: Who can vote in the NDC and NPP Intra-Party Presidential Primary Elections?***

In Ghana, Article (42) of the 1992 Constitution of Fourth Republic has defined the right to vote, indicating that “every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years (18 years) of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda” (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992). Also, since the beginning of the Fourth Republican dispensation in 1992, all registered political parties have adopted the ‘delegates’ system for the selection of presidential and parliamentary candidates. This system gives exclusive right to vote to registered party members who are branch executives, constituency executives, regional executives, national executives and other prominent party members and/or current and former government appointees on the ticket of a party, if in government.

In the case of the NDC, the definition of a delegate in the primary elections is spelt out in Articles (40), (41) and (42) of NDC Constitution and Article 7 (Clauses 27-32) and Article 13 (Clauses 2-6) of the Party’s Constitution. The electoral college of the NDC for the election of presidential candidate in the primary election include the following:

Every branch executive committee member of the party elected or co-opted; every constituency executive committee member of the party, elected or co-opted; every regional executive committee member of the party, elected or co-opted; every national executive committee of the party, elected or co-opted; every member of the party’s parliamentary group; fifteen (15) representatives of each external chapter including the youth organiser and the women organiser; five (5) representatives of the Tertiary Educational Institutions Network (TEIN) with each region; two (2) of whom should be women; the members of the Council of Elders at the national and regional levels; past Presidents and Vice Presidents who are members of the party; each founding member of the party; Former Ministers and Former Deputy Ministers of state who are Members of the party; Former Members of Parliament who are members of the party; former presidential staffers who are members of the party; former Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCs) of the party; former Ambassadors and High Commissioners who are members of the party; and former Members of the Council State who are members of the party (NDC, 1 December 2018).<sup>3</sup>

In the case of the NPP, in line with Article 13(2)(6) of the NPP Constitution as amended, the following are the rules and regulations that governed the conduct of the 2020 Presidential primaries of the party:

“The party’s presidential candidate shall be elected by the following delegates; all Members of the National Council; all voting Members of the National Executive Committee; all voting Members of the Regional Executive Committees; all voting Members of the Constituency Executive Committees; Electoral Area Coordinators; The five (5) Polling Station Executives in each Polling Station; Fifteen (15) Members of the National Council of Elders to be elected from amongst themselves; Fifteen (15) Patrons to be elected from amongst themselves; All NPP Members of Parliament; Past National Officers; Three (3) representatives of each of the special organs of the Party; Twelve (12) delegates from every external branch; Founding Members who are signatories to the registration documents of the Party at the

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for the election of NDC presidential candidate for the 2020 General elections



Electoral Commission; One Tertiary Students Confederacy of the NPP (TESCON) representative from each recognized tertiary institution; and All Party card bearing Ministers and Deputy Ministers; and all MMDCEs....”(NPP, 16 January 2020).<sup>4</sup>

### ***Voting Procedures versus Appointment: How are NDC and NPP Presidential Candidates selected?***

The voting procedure in presidential primary elections of NDC and NPP, as well as other minorities' parties of the Fourth Republican constitutional democracy of Ghana, finds expression in the national electoral laws of Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Voting procedure at elections and referenda in Ghana is spelt out in the national electoral laws as contain in the 1992 of Ghana, which state:

Article 49 (1) states that: At any public election or referendum, voting shall be by secret ballot. Clause (2) of the article also states that: Immediately after the close of the poll, the presiding officer shall, in the presence of such of the candidates or their representatives and their polling agents as are present, proceed to count at that polling station, the ballot papers of that station and record the votes cast in favour of each candidate or question. Also, Clause (3) states that: The presiding officer, the candidates or their representatives and, in the case of referendum, the parties contesting or their agents and the polling agents if any, shall then sign a declaration stating (a) the polling station; and (b) the number of votes cast in favour of each candidate or question; and the presiding officer shall there and then, announce the results of the voting at that polling station before communicating them to the returning officer (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992).

On the election of candidates, Article 50(1) states that:

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, where at the close of nomination and on the day before a public election, (a) two or more candidates have been nominated, the election shall be held, and the candidate who receives the largest number of votes cats shall be declared elected; or (b) only one candidate is nominated, there shall be no election and that candidate shall be declared elected. Also, Clause (2) of the Article 50 states that: Where for the purpose of a public election two or more candidate are nominated but at the close of the nominations and on the day before the election, only one candidate stands nominated, a further period of ten days shall be allowed for nominations of other candidates, and it shall not be lawful for any person nominated within that period of ten days to withdraw his nominations. Further, Clause (3) of the Article, states that: Where at the close of nominations under Clause (2) of this article only one candidate stands nominated, there shall be no election and that candidate shall be declared elected. Finally, Clause (4) of the same Article states that: Where at the close of nominations, but before the election, one of the candidates' dies, further period of ten days shall be allowed for nominations and where the death occurs at any time within twenty-five days before the election, the election in that constituency or unit shall be postponed for twenty-one days (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992).

In line with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Articles (40) and (42) of the NDC constitution state that:

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<sup>4</sup> Press conference by the NPP to outline the rules and regulations for the conduct of the party's parliamentary primaries in constituencies where the party has sitting members of parliament as well as rules and regulations for presidential primaries for the 2020 general elections

If at the close of nomination, only one person files nomination as the party's presidential candidate, that person shall be subjected to a vote of which the person must obtain more than fifty percent (50%) of the valid votes cast. Also, where two (2) persons file their nominations, the person who receives the greater number votes shall be declared elected as the party's presidential candidate and where the votes are equal at any ballot between the two (2) leading candidates, another ballot shall be held. However in pursuant to Article 63 (3) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the NDC presidential guideline also stated that at any ballot between more than two (2) persons, the candidate who receives the greater number of votes shall be declared elected if that person receives a majority (50 % plus 1) of the votes cast. Also in pursuant to Clause (4) of Article (63), NDC guidelines for presidential primary election stated that if no candidate receives this majority, the names of candidates who receive the least number of votes shall be withdrawn, this shall be followed by a run-off between the first two contestants and the contestant with a simple majority votes shall be declared the Party's Presidential Candidate. Further, the guidelines stated that the run-off shall be repeated in the case of a tie election between the two contestants until one of them obtains a simple majority and finally, where there is equality of votes between candidates who receive the smallest number of votes and one of them has to be excluded from the election under sub-clause (iv), there shall be a ballot to determine which of them should be excluded (NDC, 1 December 2018).<sup>5</sup> With regards to voting in NDC primaries, all members whose names appear on the Party's Delegates list are all entitled to cast their vote after verification. For presidential primary election of NDC, unlike the parliamentary primary, proxy voting is not allowed.

Voting procedure by the NPP is also in accordance with Articles (490, (50) and (63) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. In addition, the NPP has its own voting procedure, as prescribed in Article 13(2)(6) of the party's Constitution as amended. It reads:

Where there are more than five contestants for nomination as the Party's Presidential Candidate, a Special Electoral College shall cast their votes by secret ballot for the first five contestants to be short-listed and where there is only one contestant for nomination as the Party's Presidential Candidate, the National Congress shall acclaim his/her nomination as the Party's Presidential Candidate. Also, where a contestant obtains more than fifty percent (50%) of the votes cast, he or she shall be the Party's Presidential Candidate. The guidelines further stated that where, however, no candidate obtains more than 50 percent (50%) of the vote cast, there shall be a run-off between the first two contestants and the contestant with simple majority shall be the Party's Presidential Candidate, and finally, in the event of a tie between the two contestants, the run-off will continue until one contestant obtains a simple majority (NPP, 16 January 2020).<sup>6</sup>

***Centralisation versus Decentralisation: Is the intra-party presidential primary election process of NDC and NPP centralised or decentralised?***

The formation and organisation of political parties in Ghana are contained in Article (55) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. For instance, Article 55 (1) states that:

The right to form political party is hereby guaranteed and also Article 55 (2) states that: Every citizen of Ghana of voting age has the right to join a political party..." Further, Clause

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<sup>5</sup> Guidelines for the election of NDC presidential candidate for the 2020 General elections

<sup>6</sup> Press conference by the NPP to outline the rules and regulations for the conduct of the party's parliamentary primaries in constituencies where the party has sitting members of parliament as well as rules and regulations for presidential primaries for the 2020 general elections

(3) of the Article (55) states that: Subject to the provisions of this article, a political party is free to participate in shaping the political will of the people, to disseminate information on political ideas, social and economic programmes of a national character, and sponsor candidates for elections to any public office other than to District Assemblies or lower local government units (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, p 47). On international party organisation in Ghana, the Article 55 (5) of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic states that: The internal organisation of a political party shall conform to democratic principles, and its actions and purposes shall not contravene or be inconsistent with this constitution or any other law (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, p 48).

Scholars have also suggested that “the general assumption among democratic theorists is that the greater the role of the individual party members, the more democratically the party conducts its internal affairs and, additionally the more decentralised the procedure, the greater the possibilities for individual party members to play a role” (Bille, 2001, p. 363). In this regard, Article 55(7a) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana states that:

The party has branches in all the regions of Ghana and is, in addition organised in not less than two-thirds of the districts in each region. Article (9) states that: The members of the national executives committee of a political party shall be chosen from all the regions of Ghana and Article (10) of the Constitution states: Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, every citizen of voting age has the right to participate in political activity intended to influence the composition and policies of the Government (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, p48). Thus, in pursuant to the laws governing the formation and organisation of political parties in Ghana as contain in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, before a political party is registered it must meet the provisions of party formation and organsition as contain in this constitution.

The NDC’s presidential primary election process is centralised. In this regard, in accordance with the NDC’s Constitution, and in pursuant to the party formation and organsition laws of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the party’s guidelines for the presidential primary election state, among things, that:

The General Secretary on the authority of NEC issue notices to all structures of the party on the opening of nominations for the election of a presidential candidate for General elections. The Presidential Nominations Forms of the party are procured at the General Secretary’s office. The party presidential primary electoral committee is often formed at the party headquarters in Accra. The Electoral Commission of Ghana supervises the Presidential Primaries assisted by the party Electoral Committee (NDC, 1 December 2018).<sup>7</sup>

Voting by secret ballot takes place in all the 275 constituencies (as at 2020) plus the NDC party National Headquarters. The nationwide voting procedure of the party was adopted in its reforms in 2015 presidential and parliamentary primary elections. The NDC experimented with a nation-wide open primary system in 2015, which allowed all its registered members to vote. However, given the many challenges that were associated with the open nationwide members voting system, the NDC returned to the delegate system in 1991, a system that gave exclusive right to party executives at constituency, regional and national levels, as well as some key personalities of the party to vote to elect its presidential candidate.

The presidential primary election of NPP is also centralised. The General Secretary on the party’s national steering committee issues rules and regulations for the party’s presidential

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<sup>7</sup> Guidelines for the election of NDC presidential candidate for the 2020 General elections

primaries ahead of the general elections. The party's guidelines for the 2020 presidential primary elections stated, inter alia, that established the party's presidential vetting committee "to examine, and vet the candidature of every aspirant for the presidential nomination of the party to ensure that such person qualifies to contest for the office of the President of the Republic (NPP, 16 January 2020)."

Largely, the NPP used the National Delegates Congress system to elect its presidential candidate. Party delegates from all constituencies in Ghana converged at a designated place for a congress, where the presidential candidate of the party is elected. This was the system used in the election of its presidential candidates in 1992, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2007 and 2020. The only exceptions were the presidential primary elections in 2010 and 2020. In case of the 2010 presidential primary elections, the party adopted a nationwide voting system (where party executives or delegates voted in their respective constituencies including national headquarters of the party as polling stations). In the 2020 presidential primary election, the incumbent president, who was the sole candidate in the party's presidential primaries for the 2020 presidential election, was acclaimed on 27 June 2020.

### ***Gender and Diversity: Is the presidential candidate selection process of NDC and NPP gender and diversity sensitive?***

Fundamentally, the respect for human rights and political equality, regardless of gender and diversity in society, is essential for democratic development. It is for this reason that Article 35 (5) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana stipulated as follows:

The State shall actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana and prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, gender or religion, creed or other beliefs (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992).

In addition, Article 55(4) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana stipulates that "every political party shall have a national character and membership of shall not be based on ethnic, religion, regional or other sectional divisions" (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992).

In accordance with the constitutional provisions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the NDC and NPP have made provisions for gender inclusivity and diversity. Apart from making provisions for the conduct of free, fair and transparent primary elections, the NDC made special dispensations for its female and disabled candidates in the payment of filling fees in 2019, as they were required to pay half of the stipulated GH¢ 300,000.00 filling fees. Similar dispensations were made by the NPP for its youth and physically-challenged candidates to pay fifty percent (50%) of the filling fees of GH¢ 10,000.00.

### ***Presidential Primary Elections: Implications for Democracy***

The implications of intra-party politics of the various political parties since the beginning of Ghana's Fourth Republican democratic dispensation in 1992 on the country's democratic development cannot be underestimated. The presidential primary elections and candidate selection and nomination methods of NDC and NPP, as well as other minority political parties, have contributed significantly to the development of Ghana's constitutional democracy of the Fourth Republic. The process has a number of implications on the constitutional democracy of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

In the first place, presidential primary elections of political parties of Ghana's constitutional democracy since 1992 could lead to changes in the calibre of persons often selected as presidential candidates on the ticket of the various political parties for the national

presidential election in Ghana. This is because potential presidential candidates might be less (or more) representative in terms of education, religion, gender, age, wealth and employment. On the other hand, members that demonstrate very strong loyalty to the political party could stand a good chance of being elected as candidates, a situation which may not auger well for democracy.

Secondly, the intra-party politics and candidate selection and nomination methods of the various political parties of the Ghana's Fourth Republican constitutional democratic journey could also lead to changes in election quality and democracy, as well as constitutional development. This is because the election procedures could create more opportunities for broader political participation of party members, supporters and stakeholders in the democratic processes. The rules and regulations often set out by various parties to guide the candidate selection process could help prevent fraud and manipulation, as well as ensure fairness and decency in the democratic process of the country. Of course, this can only be guaranteed if the rules and regulations governing intra-party primary elections of the NDC and NPP are impartially enforced.

Thirdly, the intra-party primary elections and procedures could widen the political horizons of citizens within the polity, not only the party members and supporters, but also citizens of Ghana. This is because primary elections and candidate selection and nomination methods could lead to changes in voter attitude and/or behaviour in voter participation or political participation of citizens in Ghana. For example, people might become more engaged in politics or become more likely to vote in the national elections depending on the extent to which they appreciate the robustness and fairness of the intra-party election processes.

Fourth, the intra-party politics in general serve as a training ground for future political leaders in Ghana, and this is good for the country's democracy. This means that people could gather necessary knowledge and political experience from the intra-party primary elections. This could heighten citizens' interest in politics, and participate in it with all the zeal they can muster.

## **Conclusion**

The study examined the intra-party politics of the NDC and the NPP on the political landscape in Ghana since 1992. It posited that rigorous internal mechanisms and structures are put in place for presidential primary elections of the NDC and the NPP. Furthermore, the study explained that the conduct of presidential primary elections in the NDC and the NPP are shaped by provisions in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. In addition, the NDC and the NPP have their respective party constitutions and guidelines that define structures and processes for the election of presidential candidates in primary elections. The paper established that, except some few instances, the NDC and the NPP have largely held primaries to elect their respective presidential candidates in all the presidential elections in Ghana. The paper further established that the most common primary systems utilized by the NDC and the NPP over the years are the delegates system and the delegates' congress system, though the NDC experimented with a nationwide voting system by all its members in 2015. Finally, the paper established that, irrespective of the type of voting system utilized by the NDC and NPP to elect their presidential candidates, the intra-party politics and elections have a number of implications on the constitutional democracy of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

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