

# African Research Review

---

*An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*

Vol. 3 (3), April, 2009

ISSN 1994-9057 (Print)

ISSN 2070-0083 (Online)

---

## **Rejected Ballots and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana's Fourth Republic (Pp. 282-296)**

**Ransford Edward Van Gyampo** - Department of Political Science,  
University of Ghana, P. O. Box LG 64, Legon-Accra, Ghana  
Telephone: 011-233-244-277-274  
Email: [vangyampo@yahoo.com](mailto:vangyampo@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

*Following the successful conduct of the 2008 general elections that led to a peaceful transfer of power from the ruling party to the opposition, Ghana's respect and democratic credentials in Africa and among the international community has further boosted. The nation has received several commendations for the giant strides made towards democratic consolidation. Given the high incidence of rejected ballot papers that however characterizes the conduct of elections in Ghana, it is feared that the giant strides being made towards democratic consolidation may suffer severe set back. At the minimum, democracy is consolidated when elections are periodically held for the people to express their choice as to who should represent and lead them. This paper discusses the incidence of rejected ballots in Ghana since 1992 and argues that the high incidence of rejected ballots that have so far characterized elections in Ghana if not checked, poses a severe threat to the realization of the minimum requirement for democratic consolidation in Ghana. The study also discusses several measures that must be put in place to reduce the phenomenon in a manner that would ensure that the will of the people are clearly expressed and known after the conduct of elections.*

### **Introduction**

Ghanaians have shown their preference for the ballot box than the barrel of the gun in changing their leaders since 1992. Five general elections have been held and in all these elections, Ghanaians have chosen their leaders to

represent them both at all levels of decision making. These elections have generally been described as free, fair, peaceful and transparent. There have also been several improvements in the electoral processes all aimed at ensuring that the people are able to choose their own leaders and express their wishes in a manner that helps the consolidation of Ghana's democracy. There is now an independent Electoral Commission that has replaced the interim one put in place in 1992; there are now transparent ballot boxes replacing the opaque ones that were used in 1992; there are photo identity cards for the electorate that marches their data in the voters register; there are periodic updates of the voter's register to ensure that it contain a clean and up-to-date list; and there are Inter-Party Advisory Committee Meetings instituted by the Electoral Commission to meet with political parties to discuss general issues affecting their interest and the conduct of elections.

Regardless of these measures, the issue of rejected ballots poses a key challenge to the electoral process and Ghana's quest for democratic consolidation. Since 1992, there has been a phenomenal increase in the incidence of rejected ballots during elections making it difficult for the wishes of the electorate to be known. Sometimes, these rejected ballot papers have amounted to huge percentages of the votes in excess of the total number of votes garnered by some political parties. In other instances too, these rejected ballots could have been added to the votes of political parties that lost elections to make them winners.

Although Ghana is getting matured democratically, it is clear that individuals are getting confused with the voting process. The number of rejected ballots recorded in the first round of the 2008 presidential race for instance, was unprecedentedly higher than ever; both in terms of percentages and in terms of figures. According to the Electoral Commission of Ghana, as many as 205,438 ballots were rejected in the 2008 elections which constituted 2.4% of total 8,671,272 votes cast. Hypothetically, the "rejected ballot party" placed third in the 2008 presidential race ahead of Dr. Papa Kwesi Nduom of the Convention People's Party (CPP) who placed third with 113,494 (1.34 %) behind Prof. John Evans Atta Mills of the NDC who placed second with 4,056,634 (47.92%). Indeed, the percentage of the rejected ballots far outstripped the combined performance of Dr. Edward Mahama of the People National Convention (PNC), Emmanuel Ansah Antwi of the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), Thomas Ward Brew of the Democratic Peoples Party

(DPP), Kwesi Amofo Yeboah, an Independent Candidate and Kwabena Adjei of the Reformed Patriotic Democratic (RPD).

In short, if rejected ballots were a political party they could boast of a steady increase in popularity ahead of the smaller parties since Ghana's return to multiparty democracy in 1992. Again, had the rejected ballots been valid, one of the two leading contestants (Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo of the NPP or Prof. John Evans Atta Mills of the NDC) might have won the first round of the elections. This would have saved Ghana additional resources needed to organize a second, not to mention another three weeks of political rivalry and tension between the NPP and NDC.

The existing literature on elections in Ghana focuses on how the elections were conducted, the political parties and personalities involved, their message, the outcome, the socio-economic status of the people who voted for the different parties as well as the reasons for the electoral victories (Ayee, 2001; Oquaye, 2003; Jonah, 2005). Others have also highlighted how much it costs and the sources of fund for the conduct of elections, the role of efficient and impartial bodies like the Electoral Commission in the conduct of elections in Ghana as well as the threats posed to democratic consolidation and the conduct of free and fair elections by incidence such as the exploitation and abuse of incumbency; poor, unco-ordinated and confusing voter education that culminates in spoilt ballots, etc (Jeffries, 1998; Asante, 2009). Issues regarding rejected ballots and the threat it poses to democratic consolidation in Ghana have either not featured in the existing literature or have been merely treated as appendages in some of the works. Hence the real causes and solution to the phenomenon of rejected ballots have not been given much attention. This study therefore fills in the gap in the available literature by discussing and analyzing in detail the issue of rejected ballots in all the elections held in Ghana since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992. The study would also attempt to un-earth some of the causes of the problem and advance measures that can help reduce the phenomenon to the barest minimum. This would help to ensure that Ghana's democracy does not relapse into authoritarianism but rather consolidated in a manner that ensures that the wishes and aspirations of the masses are made known and expressed after election results are declared. There can be no meaningful discussion of democracy consolidation if the real choice and wishes of the people cannot be expressed or made known in elections.

To achieve the stated objectives of the paper, the election results of Ghana from the Electoral Commission (1992 to 2008) were used in determining the percentages of rejected ballots in all the elections. Also, data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Ghana was used to compare the rates of rejected ballots in areas or regions identified as having high illiteracy rates by the census report. This is because, to a large extent, there is a correlation between illiteracy and the high incidence of rejected ballots. This would be shown in the later part of the paper. Moreover, the Director of Elections of the Electoral Commission in Ghana, Mr. Albert Arhin as well as the Director of Public Education for the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Ms Fanny Kumah was interviewed to ascertain the causes of the phenomenon. Again, since the physically disabled in Ghana have a challenge when it comes to proper voting, the Administrator of the Ghana Society for the Physically Disabled, Alexander Tetteh would be interviewed. Finally, Mr. Kwesi Jonah, a renowned Ghanaian political analyst of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) was also interviewed about the phenomenon, its causes and how it could be reduced.

This source of data collection used, agreeably, may not tell the whole story about the phenomenon of rejected ballots, particularly the causes. This is because the study fell short of conducting interviews among the very people whose ballots were rejected. It was simply difficult to identify them. The source however provides important hints and highlights, (albeit not adequate) the phenomenon of rejected ballots which can be a useful information and tool in the fight to ensure that the will and wishes of the people are always expressed and made known after election results are declared.

### **Rejected Ballots Defined**

Before we progress, it is important to be clear in our mind as to what constitutes rejected ballots to avoid confusion. We would therefore proceed to answer the question “What is a rejected ballot?”. According to Herbert and Edwards (2007), the term “rejected ballot” refers to a ballot paper that cannot be counted for one or more of a range of reasons. These are: the ballot paper does not have an official mark; the voter has cast more votes than they are entitled to (termed ‘over-voting’); the voter has made writings or marks by which they can be identified; the voter has left the ballot paper blank or has marked or thumb-printed it in such a way that it is not clear for whom they intended to vote (Herbert and Edwards:2007). In this paper, our usage of the term “rejected ballots” would be operationalized to fit the definition given by

Herbert and Edwards (2007). We now turn our attention to the concept of democratic consolidation by answering the question "What is democratic consolidation". The next section of this paper reviews the concept.

### **Democratic Consolidation**

Democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, in a way that makes it unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an external shock (O'Donnell, 1996). Schedler (1998) also sees, democratic consolidation as embracing the following: popular legitimation; the diffusion of democratic values; the neutralization of anti-system actors; civilian supremacy over the military; elimination of authoritarian enclaves; party building; the organization of functional interests; the stabilization of electoral rules; the routinization of politics; the decentralization of state power to assure popular participation of the bulk of society in the political process; the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy; judicial reforms; etc. For Gasiorowski and Power (1998), democratic consolidation connotes an acceptable qualitative improvement in democratic practices.

At the very minimum, democracy requires the existence of free, fair, and recurring elections allowing the citizenry of a country to choose representative leaders. While elections are a fundamental prerequisite of democratic consolidation, the presence of a functioning electoral system does not automatically ensure the existence of true democracy or rule out the possibility of authoritarian structures and practices (Adcock, 2005). To clarify the minimal requirements of democratic consolidation, O'Donnell (1996) uses Dahl's (1971) concept of "polyarchy," which outlines a useful set of guidelines for democratic consolidation. Polyarchy has six requirements in addition to free and fair elections: universal suffrage, the right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and freedom of association (O'Donnell, 1996). These prerequisites should ensure that democracy functions at a minimal level: that is, competition occurs for public office, political participation is useful and inclusive, and civil rights and liberties are protected (ibid). While Dahl's (1971) minimal prerequisites for democracy are generally agreed upon, it is the unique political and social phenomena inherent to every fledgling democracy such as poverty, antidemocratic norms, weak institutions, military guardianship, etc that muddies concepts like democratic consolidation, making generalization nearly impossible (Adcock, 2005). Further complicating the situation, even when phenomena are roughly the same, competing terms sometimes exist to

describe them. For example, "guided democracy," "protected democracy," "tutelary democracy," "democradura" and "dictablanda" ("hard democracy" and "soft dictatorship," respectively) all describe a situation in which the military continues to exercise power in areas normally reserved for civilian branches of government (Adcock, 2005). It was this lack of precision that led political scientists Collier and Levitsky to describe the study of democratic consolidation as "Democracy with Adjectives" (Collier and Levitsky, 1997:430).

On the basis of the liberal conceptualization of democratic consolidation, the question is whether there have been any appreciable improvements in terms of democratic consolidation since the return of Ghana to constitutional government in January 1993. If participation of the bulk of the population, including the vulnerable groups in voting and decisions constitute a fundamental pre-requisite for democratic consolidation, then the issue of rejected ballots poses a serious challenge to democratic consolidation in Ghana. This is because it does not allow the wishes of the people to be carried or made known after election results have been declared. An analysis of the incidence of rejected ballots would attest to this claim. We now turn our attention in the next section of the paper to a systematic analysis of rejected ballots in Ghana since the first in election under the fourth republic in 1992.

### **Analysis of Rejected Ballots**

**The 1992 Elections** -The first election held in Ghana following the country's return to constitutional rule and the inception of the fourth republic was in 1992. Table 1 below shows that out of 7,401,370 registered voters, the valid votes cast was 3,978,070. The then incumbent National Democratic Congress (NDC) won the elections with 58.40% of the valid votes cast. They were followed by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) which garnered 30.29% of the valid votes cast. The People's National Convention (PNC) bagged 6.70% of the valid votes while the National Independence Party (NIP) and People's Heritage Party (PHP) respectively garnered 2.86% and 1.76% of the valid votes cast. The first election in Ghana's fourth republic had 149,813 or 3.6% rejected ballots. Even though the rejected ballots were significantly high, the margin between the NDC that won the elections and its closest rival, the NPP was such that the rejected ballot papers could not have made any difference even if they were added to the votes of the NPP. The huge percentage of rejected ballots may have been as a result of the 13 year long the time

interval between 1992 and the previous national election in 1979. Table 1 below gives a pictorial representation of the situation:

**The 1996 Elections** - In the 1996 general elections however, there was a decrease in the number of rejected ballots. Table 2 indicates that there were 9,279,605 registered voters. However, 7,256,872 votes were cast out of which 111,108 constituting 1.53% were invalid or rejected ballots. Impliedly, valid votes cast was 7,145,760 out of which the NDC that won the elections garnered 4,101,674 (56.52%) with the NPP bagging 2,829,726 (38.99%) of the votes. The PNC had 214,373 (2.95%) of the total valid votes cast. Table 2, shows the picture of the situation.

**The 2000 Elections (First Round)**-The 2000 elections witnessed an increase in the number of rejected ballots. As already indicated in the review of the literature, the elections could not produce a clear winner and so there was a run off conducted three weeks after the first round was held on December 7, 2000. Out of 10,678,652 registered voters in the first round of the elections, a total of 6,460,624 votes were cast out of which 6,406,231 were valid votes while 119,362 (1.8%) were rejected ballots. The NPP had 3,121,506, representing 48.32% of the valid votes cast while the NDC had 2,895,570 representing 44.82% of the votes. The PNC also garnered 162,076 (2.51%) of the valid votes cast while the CPP got 114,924 or 1.78% of the votes. The NRP followed the list with 72,213 representing 1.12% of the valid votes cast while GCPP bagged 67,505 (1.04%) of the valid votes cast. Even though the number of ballots rejected in the first round of the 2000 elections represented a remarkable improvement over previous elections, it still outweighed the total valid votes garnered by the United Ghana Movement (UGM) which recorded only 21,814 or 0.34% of the valid votes cast at the rear of the list.

**The 2000 Elections (Run-off)** -The 2000 run off elections which were a straight forward contest between the NPP and NDC. This was a time when Ghanaians seemed tired and fed-up with the NDC and hence yearned for a change. All the other parties therefore gave their support to the NPP against the NDC. At the end of polling, the NPP won by 3,631,263 representing 56.90% of the valid votes cast. The NDC lost the elections with 2,750,124, representing 43.19% of the valid votes cast. There were 6, 605,084 votes cast in the run off out of which 6,500,870 were valid votes while 104,214 representing 1.58% constituted rejected ballots. This figure was higher than the votes garnered by the NRP, GCPP and UGM. Of course, given the

difference between the NPP and NDC, the number of rejected ballots could not have changed the results if they were added to the votes of the NDC. What is however worrying is the sudden increase in the number or percentage from 0.81 in the first round to 1.58 in the run off. Table 3 gives an illustration of the situation.

**The 2004 Elections** - The number of rejected ballots further increased in the 2004 elections and many Ghanaians expressed worry about the trend. The elections recorded unacceptably high rejected votes. As per the results declared by the Electoral Commission, rejected votes alone accounted for 188,123 or 2.13 percent of the total vote cast which exceeded the votes obtained by Dr. Edward Mahama of PNC (1.91 % or 165,375) and George Aggudey of CPP (0.99% or 85,968). Total registered voters were 10,354,970 out of which 9,002,031 voted. Out of the total votes cast, 8813908 were valid votes. Out of the total valid votes of 8,813,908, the NPP won the elections by 52.44% (4,524,074) with the NDC securing 44.63% (3,850,368) of the valid votes cast. The rejected ballots, added to the votes of the NDC, could have pushed the elections into a second round during which the story could have been different. Table 4 below shows the illustration.

**The 2008 Elections (First Round)** - The 2008 general elections also could not produce a clear winner. Consequently, a second round election was held. In the first round, the NPP garnered 49.13%; NDC, 47.92%; CPP, 1.34%; PNC, 0.87%; DFP, 0.33%; DPP, 0.10%; RPD, 0.08%; and Independent Candidate (Kwasi Amofo Yeboah), 0.23%. Out of total registered voters of 12,472,758, total votes cast was 8,671,272, comprising 8,465,834 valid votes and 205,438 (2.4%) rejected ballots. This represents a radical deterioration of the problem of rejected ballots and flaws the electoral system of the country. The two main parties, the NPP and the NDC contested the run off in a manner that nearly marred the democratic gains made by the country. The country nearly lost her respect as an oasis of peace in a sub-region bedeviled with violent conflict. This was due to the violence, tension and other acts that threaten political stability, which characterized the keenly contested run off. The rejected ballots were far in excess of the votes garnered by all the contestants with the exception of the NPP and NDC. And added to the votes garnered by the NPP, the rejected ballots could have produced a straight forward winner in the elections. This would have spared Ghanaians the agony, tension and anxiety they had to go through in the run off.

**The 2008 Elections (Run-off)** - In the second round of the 2008 elections, votes cast was 9,094,364 out of which 92,886 (1.02%) were declared invalid or rejected while 9,001,478 were valid votes. Out of the total valid votes cast, the NDC won the elections with 4,521,032 votes (50.23%). The NPP narrowly lost with 4,480,446 votes (49.77%). The elections were very close and keenly contested. Consequently, the issue of rejected ballots dominated discussions on radio stations and among many political analysts giving the fact that a little over fifty percent of the rejected ballots added to the NPP votes could have tilted the elections in their favour. Many Ghanaians, particularly NPP sympathizers wondered whether the election results were a reflection of the wishes of the people given the number of rejected ballots. The beauty of Ghana's democracy was nearly marred as the then ruling NPP initiated measures to stall the transitional process. But for the intervention of the then sitting president, J.A. Kufuor, civil society organizations like the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Ghana) and other senior members of the NPP such as B.J Da Rocha, the results would not have been accepted by the NPP and this would have resulted in chaos. Had this happened, the blame would have partly been laid at the door step of the high spate of rejected ballots that characterized the elections. Table 5 shows the picture.

### **Summary of Rejected Ballots**

A glance of the phenomenon of rejected ballots show that it is on ascendency in Ghana and could work against the wishes of the people during elections and ultimately hinder the consolidation of democracy in Ghana. In 1992, it accounted for 3.6% of the valid votes cast. This reduced to 1.53% in the 1996 elections as well as in the first round of the 2000 general elections (1.8%). The percentage of rejected ballots reduced in the run off elections of 2000 (1.58%). In 2004, it started souring up and constituted 2.13% of the votes cast while in 2008 it took a huge chunk of the votes recording an overall percentage of 3.42 of the valid votes cast. Table 6 gives a pictorial representation of the situation.

### **Discussions and Recommendations**

To begin with, there is no evidence that for instance all the rejected ballots in the 2008 run off elections were NPP votes neither is there any evidence that such votes could have gone to the NDC. Had it not been the high incidence of rejected ballots, the 2008 elections would have produced a clear winner in the first round. "...*Verily verily then, the EC had no business spending*

*millions of dollars on a second round. The second round (or even the third) vote, was simply unnecessary, probably a classic case of causing financial loss. The winner was determined in the first round, but the entire country had been blindfolded and fooled!* (Yankah, 2009)

The point is that in such competitive and close elections, every ballot paper becomes crucial in determining the outcome of such elections. High incidence of rejected ballots in close elections affects the acceptability of election results particularly by the party that loses the elections. In Ghana, this has not happened yet. Even though the NPP accepted defeat after raising a few qualms with the results of the elections, the question that must be answered is “will the phenomenon of rejected ballots that has assumed an ascendancy rate help in realizing the wishes of the people?” The answer certainly is “No”. Granted that the high incidence of rejected ballots could weaken Ghana’s democratic gains, it becomes imperative for drastic efforts to be made to properly dissect the phenomenon and solutions advanced. Sometimes the acceptability of a ballot becomes dependent on how literate and objective the electoral official and polling agents are. This is because even though it is sometimes easy to infer the choice or preference of a voter during counting of the ballots, the officials at the polling center may reject it on a flimsy excuse because of their own biases and sometimes partisan coloration. This is one key factor that accounts for the high incidence of rejected ballots. It simply does not allow the wishes of the electorate to be expressed during voting (Kumah, 2009). If leaders care about the wishes of the people and the need to consolidate Ghana’s democracy, then the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) must be adequately resourced to carry intensive and sustained educational programmes to sensitize election officials including party agents on the role they can play to help reduce the high incidence of rejected ballots.

In addition to the above, ignorance about voting procedures also accounts for the high incidence of rejected ballots. There are quite a number of the Ghanaian voter population who are still not conversant with the thumb printing process. Such people thumbprint any how on the ballot papers. They may decide to thumbprint for all the aspirants on the ballots because they like all of them or in protest against them and partisan politics in general; thumbprint in such a manner that makes it difficult for officials to determine the choice being made; make marks on the ballots in such a way that they can be identified against the principle of secret balloting; and not to

make any thumbprint at all on the ballot papers. Others may prefer more than one candidate and therefore thumbprint for all their favourites on the ballot papers. These are due to ignorance on the part of the electorate (Arhin, 2005). Indeed, in the 2008 elections for instance, ignorance as a result of confusing voter education had a telling effect on the votes that were cast. People were told that they could use any finger to vote. Later on the Electoral Commission (EC) in consultation with the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) agreed that only the thumb print could be used in voting. Then on voting day, the small finger of the left hand was dipped in indelible ink, which added to the confusion about whether to use the small finger or the thumb. As a result of this, some voted with the small finger of their left hands instead of their thumbs. Some of these ballot papers were unfortunately rejected by party agents during collation of votes at the polling stations (Kissi, 2009). In the view of Mr. Alexander Tetteh, National Administrator of the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled (GSPD), three reasons accounted for the high number of rejected ballots. In his own words he said “first, I think the voter education was very low. Another reason was that we were not aware of how the indelible ink would be applied. Then we could talk about the distance between the table where voters dipped their small fingers in the indelible ink and the screen where they voted. In some cases the distance was short and the ink could not dry before voters entered the screen to thumbprint. The ink therefore soiled the ballot papers rendering them invalid during collation.” (Tetteh, 2009). The primary responsibility to educate the electorate falls on the EC and the NCCE. However, political parties as agent of political socialization must also play an active role in educating the electorate to ensure that they do not lose votes needed to capture political power.

Some of the causes of rejected ballots may be purely accidental while others may be deliberate. In the case of accidental causes, voters may inadvertently soil ballot papers with the thumbprint ink on their thumbs as they fold the ballot papers. Even when the thumbprint is done right, inappropriate folding of the ballot papers by voters may lead to spoiled ballots as the ink may end up soiling other areas not intended by the voter. Again, the ink on the fingers of electoral officials may also soil ballot papers during collation of votes. These are purely accidental causes (Jonah, 2009). However, there are alleged cases where suspected partisan electoral officers deliberately soil ballot papers with ink so as to render those ballots invalid to the advantage of another political party (ibid). Party agents must therefore be vigilant at polling centers in order

to ensure that the ink on the hands of the electoral officials do not soil the ballot papers whether intentionally or inadvertently during collation of votes and counting. And again all the stakeholders in charge of public education with political parties themselves playing a leading role must educate the voting public on the appropriate procedure to fold ballot papers.

Finally, the staggering number of spoiled ballots, an embarrassment to our democracy, reflects short-sightedness in Ghana's planning, and a lack of sensitivity to the crucial significance of illiteracy in the electoral process (Yankah, 2009). The disaggregation of the data from region to region in Ghana, gives a strong clue that illiteracy, or probably inadequate education impacted negatively on how people voted. Put differently, it is plausible to argue that the higher the illiteracy rate, the greater the percentage of rejected ballots. In 2004, rejected ballots in the Greater Accra region were 1.2%; 1.4% for Ashanti region; 1.7% for Volta region, 2.0% for Eastern region, 2.2% for Brong Ahafo region, 2.3% for the central region; Western region got 2.8%, Upper East had 3.7%, Northern region had 3.9%, and Upper West region of had 5.6% of the total ballots that were rejected. In 1992 Central region recorded 4.7% of rejected ballots (as against 2.3% in 2004); Upper East had 6.5% (against 3.7% in 2004), Northern region had 6.7% (as against 3.9% in 2004), and Upper west region which had as much as 8.3% in 1992 got 5.6% ballots rejected in 2004. Incidentally the last three regions with the highest rates of rejected ballots: Upper East, Northern and Upper West also have the highest illiteracy rates in the country. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census figures, Northern region has an illiteracy rate of 76.2%, Upper East has 76.5%, and Upper West has 73.5% illiteracy rate. Indeed of all regions, Greater Accra which often has the lowest percentage of rejected ballots, also has the lowest illiteracy rate of 18.4%. Western region has 41.8%, Central has 42.9%, and Brong Ahafo has 48.5%. There is thus a clear correlation between illiteracy and the incidence of rejected ballots.

## **Conclusion**

Even though the functioning of an electoral system does not automatically ensure the existence of true democracy or rule out the possibility of authoritarian structures and practices, elections are a fundamental prerequisite of democratic consolidation. As aptly argued by Adcock (2005), at the very minimum, consolidating democracy requires the existence of free, fair, and recurring elections allowing the citizenry of a country to choose representative leaders. However, the high incidence of rejected ballots that

have so far characterized elections in Ghana, if not checked, poses a severe threat to the realization of the minimum requirement for democratic consolidation in Ghana.

## **References**

- Adcock, Chris (2005). Violent Obstacles to Democratic Consolidation in three countries: Guatemala, Columbia and Algeria. Retrieved February 1, 2009, from Web site:  
<http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/demo/overview.php>.
- Asante, Kojo (2009). Rejected Ballots in the 2008 Elections. Retrieved January 10, 2009, from African Elections Web site:  
<http://www.africanelection.org/ghana/news/page.php>.
- Ayee, J.R.A. (2001). The 2000 General Elections and Presidential Run-off in Ghana: An Overview. In J.R.A Ayee (Ed.), *Deepening Democracy in Ghana: Politics of the 2000 Elections* (pp 23-25). Legon: Freedom Publications Ltd.
- Collier, David and Steven Levitsky (1997). Democracy With Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research. *World Politics*, 49 (3), 430.
- Dahl, Robert (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gasiorowski, M.J and Power Timothy (1998). The Structural Determinants of Democratic Consolidation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 31 (6), 740.
- Herbert Stephen and Edwards Tom (2007). Rejected Ballots. Retrieved February 5, 2009, from Festival of Politics Web site:  
<http://festivalofpolitics.co.uk/business/research/briefings-07/SB07-36.pdf>.
- Jeffries, Richard (1998). The Ghanaian Elections of 1996: Towards Consolidation of Democracy?, *African Affairs*, 97, 189-208.

Jonah, Kwesi (2005). "Election 2004 and the Policy Challenge of the Government", mimeo, pp. 2-10.

O'Donnell, Guillermo (1996). Illusions about Consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*, 7( 2), 34-51.

Oquaye, Mike (2001, January / February). Government and Politics in Contemporary Ghana (1992-1999) – A Study. *Governance Series*, 1(1), 3-5.

Schedler, Andreas (1998). What is Democratic Consolidation?. *Journal of Democracy*, 9( 2), 91-107.

Yankah, Kwesi (2009). Comments made on the high rejected ballots rate in the 2008 elections at the closing of the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual New Year School at the University of Ghana on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

### **Interviews**

Interview with Albert Kofi Arhin, Director of Elections, Electoral Commission in Accra on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

Interview with Alexander Tetteh, National Administrator of the Society for the Physically Disabled on the Causes of Rejected Ballots in Accra 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009.

Interview with E. Asante Kissi, Electoral, Electoral Commission in Accra on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

Interview with Fanny Kumah, Director of Public Education, NCCE in Accra on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

Interview with Kwasi Jonah, Institute for Democratic Governance, in Accra on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

**Table 1: 1992 Election Results**

Registered Voters	Valid Votes Cast	Rejected Ballots	NDC Votes	NPP Votes	PNC Votes	PHP Votes	NIP Votes
7,401,370	3,978,070	149,813 (3.6%)	58.40%	30.29%	6.70%	1.76 %	2.86%

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana of Ghana

**Table 2: 1996 Election Results**

Registered Voters	Valid Votes Cast	Rejected Ballots	NDC Votes	NPP Votes	PNC Votes
9,279,605	7,145,760	111,108 (1.53%)	4,101,674 (56.52%)	2,829,726 (38.99%)	214,373 (2.95%)

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

**Table 3: 2000 Elections (Run Off)**

Registered Voters	Valid Votes	Rejected Ballots	NPP Votes	NDC Votes
10,678,652	6,500,870	104,214 (1.58%)	3,631,263 (56.90%)	2,750,124 (43.19%)

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

**Table 4: he 2004 Elections**

Registered Voters	Valid Votes	Rejected Ballots	NPP Votes	NDC Votes	PNC Votes	CPP Votes
10,354,970	8813908	188,123 (2.13)	4,524,074 (52.44%)	3,850,368 (44.63%)	165,375 (1.91%)	85,968 (0.99%)

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

**Table 5: 2008 Elections (Run Off)**

Registered Voters	Valid Votes	Rejected Ballots	NDC Votes	NPP Votes
12,472,758	69,001,478	192,886 (1.02%)	4,521,032 (50.23%)	4,480,446 (49.77%)

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

**Table 6: Summary of Rejected Ballots since 1992**

Election Year	Rejected Ballots (%)
1992	3.6%
1996	1.53%
2000 (First Round)	1.8%
2000 (Run-off)	1.58%
2004	2.13%
2008 (First Round)	2.4%
2008 (Run off)	1.02%

Source: from the study