



The Nexus between Citizen Participation in Elections and Development in Ghana: Empirical Evidence from Voters in Four Electorally-Swing Constituencies

Gbensuglo Alidu Bukari^{1*}, Eliasu Mumuni² and Adam Osman Oscar³

¹*Department of Political Science*

University for Development Studies, Tamale-Ghana

²*Department of Communication, Innovation and Technology*

University for Development Studies, Tamale-Ghana

Email: meliasu@uds.edu.gh

³*Department of Logistics and Procurement Management*

Tamale Technical University, Tamale-Ghana

oadamosman@tatu.edu.gh

**Corresponding Author: gbukari@uds.edu.gh)*

ABSTRACT

This paper sought to establish the relationship between individual citizens' voting participation in national elections and their felt socio-economic outcomes in Ghana. The paper adopts a micro-level approach and utilises data from 600 sample respondents in four selected constituencies. The aim is to ascertain their views on various socio-economic issues related to elections and felt individual and community outcomes. The data was analysed using standard multi-regression. The results established the relationship between the respondents' welfare and participation in voting in elections. The results revealed that the unique circumstances of voter choice in the electorally swing constituencies in the country are contingent on superior socio-economic policies of an incumbent government or political parties in electoral competition with the aspiration to win political power and dominance in future electoral contests in Ghana. Therefore, based on the results, economic development through active participation in the political and electoral processes should place a premium on inclusive access of citizens to income, health, education, and employment opportunities.

Keywords: *elections, democracy, participation, engagement, development, voting behaviour, Ghana*

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of economics presupposes an existing political structure and cannot be autonomous from political aspects. The notion of politics is perceived as the fulcrum around which the governmental apparatus revolves, functioning when a

political framework is instituted for such intent and purpose (Apadorai, 2004; Heywood, 2007). Numerous diverse political systems exist, with many losing their quintessence within a uni-polar world governed by contemporary liberal democratic ideologies (Bratton & Van de

Walle, 1997; Buitenhuijs & Celiene, 1995; Bukari, 2017). As a result, it may be contended that liberal democracy emerged as the widely accepted democratic governance system in the aftermath of the Cold War, an epoch marked by ideological conflict between the Western and Eastern spheres until the Eastern bloc's disintegration in 1989 (Huntington, 1991; Heywood, 2007; Anaman, 2016; Bukari, 2017).

Conversely, scholarly discourse encompasses multiple debates regarding prioritizing democratic governance over economic considerations or vice versa in developing nations (Shivji, 1991). This ongoing discussion engenders considerable dispute within political parlance without a definitive stance. One perspective posits that democracy's significance would be undermined if the majority of its intended beneficiaries lack fundamental social and economic provisions (Anaman & Bukari, 2021; Bukari, 2022). The other school of thought is that social and economic advancement can only be realised through the democratic establishment. For instance, the World Bank's Human Development Report (1992) defined governance as "how power is exercised in the management of a county's economic and social resources for development."

Undoubtedly, the establishment and perpetuation of a democratic atmosphere are crucial for cultivating and maintaining conditions conducive to robust and equitable progress, rendering it an indispensable accompaniment to well-founded economic strategies (Bollen & Jackman, 1985; Anaman & Bukari, 2019a, 2019b; Alidu & Bukari, 2020; Anaman & Bukari, 2021; Bukari, 2022). It is indisputable that within Africa, the capacity to tackle developmental impediments on the continent hinges upon the characteristics of democratic governance. This implies that the task of reinforcing the region's nascent democracy resides in ensuring harmony between endeavours

aimed at enhancing democratic consolidation and socioeconomic advancement (Gyimah-Boadi, 2010; Anaman, 2016; Bukari, 2017, 2022). Although it is incontrovertible that democracy does not inherently guarantee development, it is equally accurate to assert that it serves as the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive framework for the fair distribution of developmental programs and projects. As articulated by Makau (2000, p14), "Democracy will not take root in Africa if most of its population continues to live in abject poverty. Africans support democracy because they expect it to reverse decades of corruption, mismanagement and economic hardship." Also, for Salim (1999, p 3), "governance and respect for human rights cannot thrive on empty stomachs. In particular, democracy must deliver on bread-and-butter issues. Otherwise, democratic transitions will be reversed, and the continent will slide back into a situation where poverty policies give rise to the politics of poverty on the continent."

Regardless of the perspective from which the debate is anchored, it is evident that neither argument can be convincingly maintained, as the predicament faced by developing nations such as Ghana does not allow for a singular choice to be made. The challenge of political and economic progression in a majority of these countries, including Ghana, demands concurrent consideration of political, sociocultural, and economic factors and issues (Bukari, 2017, Anaman & Bukari, 2019a, 2019b, 2022; Anaman, 2016; Alidu & Bukari, 2020; Anaman & Bukari, 2021). This paper aligns with the view that political and economic liberation should be pursued concurrently and that prioritizing one over the other from the outset is inherently flawed. It is thus crucial to examine elections within the context of Ghana's economy and voting. In modern liberal democracies, competitive and participatory elections serve as the fundamental institution through which citizens can

exercise their right to self-governance. However, the effectiveness of the election in fulfilling this objective greatly hinges on the reasoning behind voters' actions at the polls. If electors' choices are guided by non-evaluative criteria such as clientelism, the aim of self-governance within a modern representative polity is thwarted. Despite its significance to understanding election as an instrument of democratic function, independent investigations into voting behaviour and motivations in emerging or transitional multiparty democracies like Ghana remain exceedingly rare. That is, numerous studies such as Boafo-Athur (2006), Gyimah-Boadi (2004, 2010), Ayee (1997, 1998, 2001, 2002) and others have focused on elite-level transitions along with state structures and institutions or explicated active political engagement, the relationship between election and socio-economic development outcome has not been established. This presents a quandary; thus, the primary goal of this paper is to discern why people vote in the study areas in Ghana. What are the influencing factors? The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: the theoretical framework, methodology, results, conclusion, policy implications, and references.

Theoretical Framework

Contemporary democracy operates on the principle that every citizen possesses equal entitlements to engage and cast his or her vote in the election and run for office under the governing constitution, with everyone's input carrying equal weight. When considered from a purely numerical perspective, a single person's vote holds minimal or no influence on a nationwide election with millions of participants. Nevertheless, people across the globe can be observed lining up to vote during specific elections, which prompts the age-old inquiry: why do individuals vote?

This paper relied on the economic theory of democracy (Downs, 1957). The concept of the economically rational voter

comprehending and scrutinising voter engagement in elections was initially developed by Downs (1957). According to Downs, individual citizens make the rational decision to vote based on the pursuit of their self-interest. This rational voter is primarily preoccupied with the type of policies that an elected government will implement — policies that benefit them personally. Specific policy dimensions may involve increased government investment in education or enhanced healthcare infrastructure. The rational voter harbours a preference for a policy that he/she deems most favourable; any deviation from this policy subsequently leads to diminished satisfaction for the voter. Subsequently, the economically rational voter evaluates the net voter benefit from voting, which equates to his/her favoured election outcome multiplied by the likelihood that his/her vote will impact the said outcome.

The economic theory of democracy assumes that individual voter choice constitutes the principal influence on the fate of political parties in one election after another. The individual voter is considered sovereign in electoral politics and also determines what political parties and politicians should do to earn his or her vote in terms of economic or development policies. The voter accordingly casts his vote in favour of a political party or candidate whose economic or development policies approximate his or her expectations and interests. In this case, the political arena is perceived as a reflection of the voter's electoral choices and preferences in the same way that the market reflects the individual consumer's preferences. Hence, the voter participating in an election and choosing a candidate of his/her choice influences the political process and development. It is therefore argued that non-participation in voting does not affect the welfare of citizens. This paper empirically interrogates this proposition or assumption based on the respondents'

responses in four electorally- swing constituencies in Ghana.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This investigation employs a meticulous, micro-level methodological approach to establish the relationship between engagement in Ghanaian national elections and the socio-economic consequences perceived by citizens. The analysis draws on data from a random sample of 600 individual voters residing in Ghana's four most pivotal electorally swing constituencies. The study seeks to unpack an array of the political economy matters associated with election and perceived individual and communal socio-economic ramifications within the Agona East, Effutu, Sunyani, and Techiman North constituencies (Bukari, 2017; Anaman & Bukari, 2019a, 2019b, 2021; Alidu & Bukari, 2020; Bukari, 2022).

The four constituencies were selected on the 'basis of neo-classical economic rationality and the fact that since the beginning of the Fourth Republic of Ghana in 1993, following the first presidential and parliamentary elections in 1992, only two political parties have alternated political power in the four constituencies. Therefore, it cannot be considered an electoral stronghold of any political party under the Fourth Republic of Ghana. Moreover, an intriguing aspect is the voting behaviour exhibited by Agona East and Effutu voters, which have accurately elected the victor of all national presidential elections and referenda since 1979. Besides, Agona East residents have consistently selected the winning candidate in all 17 national elections and referenda since the inaugural election in the Gold Coast on February 8th, 1951 (Bukari, 2017; Anaman & Bukari, 2019a, 2019b).

This paper's sampling design constituted a multifaceted combination of stratified/clustered, systematic, and simplistic random methods. The frame of reference for sampling is derived from the

2010 census data, encompassing all eligible voters aged 18 years and above. A "simplified formula to calculate sample sizes" (Yamane 1967 p.886) was utilised to ascertain the minimal statistically valid sample size, presuming a confidence level of 95% and $P = 0.05$.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N(\alpha^2))} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size; N = sample frame or total registered voters of 18 years and above recorded in four selected study districts; α = confidence interval or level of precision; and 1 = constant. Thus, the sample size was determined from a sampling frame of 226,359 registered voters when this formula was applied. By substitution, using the above statistical or mathematical formula at a 95 percent confidence interval or precision level with a 0.05 percent error margin ($n = \frac{N}{(1+N(\alpha^2))}$);

Where n = sample size, N = sampling frame (226,359), α = confidence interval (0.05), 1 = constant, therefore, $n = 399.99 = 400$ respondents. Therefore a ' n ' value of four hundred (400) was adopted as statistically significant for the survey. We augmented the ideal sample size of 400 by 200 to accommodate non-responsiveness, culminating in a sample of 600 respondents.

The results of the analysis were conducted through multiple regression with the objective of establishing the relationship between individual respondents participating in voting and pertinent developmental indicators juxtaposed against their socio-economic traits. Four socio-economic dependent variables were examined, and these are personal income, health education and employment. The initial model includes fifteen (15) independent variables presumed to impact the dependent variable pertaining to the

relationship between voting involvement and augmented personal income (PVLIP_i) as follows:

$$PVLIP_i = B_0 + B_1 PINCOME_i + B_2 AGE_i + B_3 SEX_i + B_4 YEARSOFEEDUCATION_i + B_5 URBAN_i + B_6 MARRIED_i + B_7 EMPLOYMENTSTATUS_i + B_8 CHRISTIAN_i + B_9 MUSLIM_i + B_{10} ASANTE_i + B_{11} EWE_i + B_{12} AGONA_i + B_{13} BONO_i + B_{14} FANTE_i + B_{15} EFFUTU_i + U_i$$

Equation 2

Where:

PVLIP_i is a dependent variable explaining the relationship between voting in an election and improved personal income;

PINCOME_i is the individual personal income indicated by respondent i;

AGE_i is a continuous variable explaining the years of respondents in years;

SEX_i is a nominal variable for the sex of respondent i, with 1 (female respondent) and 0 (male respondent);

YEARSOFEEDUCATION_i is a continuous variable defined by the years respondents spent in formal education;

URBAN_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if respondent i, lives urban area) and 0 (if respondent i, did not live urban in the area);

MARRIED_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if respondent i, was married) and 0 (if respondent i, was not married);

EMPLOYMENTSTATUS_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i, was employed) and 0 (if the respondent was not employed);

CHRISTIAN_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if respondent i, was a Christian) and 0 (if respondent i, is not a Christian);

MUSLIM_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if respondent i, was a Muslim) and 0 (if respondent i, was not a Muslim);

ASANTE_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i was an Akan-Asante) and 0 (if the respondent was not an Akan-Asante);

EWE_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i, was an Ewe) and 0 (if the respondent i was not an Ewe);

AGONA_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i was an Akan-Agona) and 0 (if the respondent was not an Akan-Agona);

BONO_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i was an Akan-Bono) and 0 (if the respondent was not an Akan-Bono);

FANTE_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i was an Akan-Fante) and 0 (if the respondent was not an Akan-Fante);

EFFUTU_i is a nominal variable with a value of 1 (if the respondent i was a Guan-Effutu) and 0 (if the respondent i, was not a Guan-Effutu);

U_i is the regression equation error term initially assumed to be normally distributed with zero mean and constant variance.

The other dependent variables are employment, education and health. The regression analysis involving all four dependent variables is reported in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings pertaining to the relationship between electoral involvement and increased individual earnings can be observed in Table 1. Although the R² score of 0.109 indicates a moderate explanatory capacity for the estimated model, its statistical significance at the 0.01 level cannot be disregarded. The Ramsey Reset

Test confirms the correct specification of the model with a p-value of 0.882, considerably exceeding the upper limit of 0.05 for statistical significance employed in this investigation, signifying that the null hypothesis asserting proper model specification cannot be refuted.

Moreover, no substantial heteroscedasticity issue is manifested within the estimate, as evidenced by the LM heteroscedasticity test yielding a p-value of 0.499, surpassing the decisive threshold of 0.05 utilised in this paper. With all the 15 independent variables encompassing variance inflation factors considerably lower than the critical benchmark of 10.0, it can be deduced that multicollinearity concerns are absent within the model.

The findings demonstrate that only the employed, Agona, and Fante have statistical significance in their influence on the dependent variable, as indicated in Table 1. Individuals who are employed tend to recognise and appreciate the direct association between voting participation and their personal income enhancement. Agona and Fante's respondents likewise exhibit a higher propensity than others to acknowledge the relationship between engaging in voting activities and experiencing an uptick in personal income. As per the standardised regression estimates, Agona emerges as the most crucial independent variable impacting the dependent variable.

Table 2 presents the outcome of the regression analysis concerning the score value pertaining to the relationship between participating in voting and acquiring employment opportunities. Although the estimated model's efficacy is moderate, it surpasses that of Table 1. Analogous to the earlier finding highlighted in Table 1, the Ramsey Reset Test confirms that this model is also accurately specified. The absence of significant multicollinearity within this model is evidenced by low variance inflation factor figures pertaining to all 15

independent variables contained therein. However, given a p-value of 0.012 – which falls below the critical maximum statistical significance threshold of 0.05 applicable to this study – noteworthy heteroscedasticity exists within this estimated model, warranting a cautious interpretation of the outcomes of this regression analysis.

Once more, employed, Agona, and Fante represent statistically significant variables affecting the dependent variable; additionally, pincome constitutes a statistically-significant variable – ranking second regarding importance based on standardized regression estimates (as seen in Table 2). This outcome concerning pincome implies that individuals with higher incomes may possess greater access to social and economic capital information as well as knowledge from media sources; hence, they recognise and value the direct interconnection between voting participation and enhanced or augmented employment opportunities. This observation could potentially be attributed to higher-income persons reaping more extensive benefits from democratic systems due to increased income levels and wealth – along with the safeguarding role democratic systems perform in defending this income and asset base.

Table 3 summarises the outcomes of the regression analysis, concentrating on the direct association between voting involvement and the escalation of individual and familial educational prospects. The evaluated model is accurately delineated and does not exhibit heteroscedasticity issues, as confirmed by the Ramsey Reset examination and the LM heteroscedasticity assessment. There is an absence of substantial multicollinearity within the model due to minimal variance inflation factor values for all 15 independent variables. With an R^2 of 0.10, the model's potency is moderate; however, it holds considerable significance at the 0.01 level.

The five statistically meaningful variables include employed, pincome, urban, Agona, and bono. Expectedly, individuals with employment and elevated incomes perceive a more pronounced direct correlation between voting participation and augmented personal and household educational opportunities, as evidenced by the significant positive values of employed and pincome variables' parameters. The affirmative outcomes concerning Agona and Bono in relation to enhanced individual and family educational chances could be attributed to heightened awareness of developmental concerns and civic duties communicated through the radio, television and social media channels. The establishment of a community day senior high school in the Agona East district and a university in the Brong Ahafo region, alongside numerous recently constructed community day senior high schools (E-blocks), could also be considered as reasons. The statistically significant parameter value for urban implies that urban residents value less the direct connection between voting engagement and rising educational prospects; this result illustrates heightened unemployment levels within urban territories compared to rural areas.

Table 4 elucidates regression analysis findings pertaining to the direct nexus between voting participation and individual as well as family health conditions. The approximation is accurate according to the Ramsey Reset test without any notable heteroscedasticity following LM's

heteroscedasticity evaluation. Multicollinearity is not a significant factor within the model based on low variance inflation factor values associated with all 15 independent elements. The model's strength, expressed by the R^2 , is modest yet statistically meaningful at the 0.01 level. The five statistically consequential variables in the model are employed, pincome, urban, Agona, and Fante. All five variables exhibit positive estimated parameter values, signifying a favourable link between these variables and the dependent component.

Table 4 findings are coherent considering the amplified healthcare establishments in the surveyed regions inaugurated within the past five years. Survey respondents with employment or superior revenue are anticipated to benefit from the improved healthcare facilities available in the study areas. Metropolitan regions generally possess an enhanced scope and quality of medical amenities compared to their countryside counterparts, as well as superior access to informational channels and the press. This aspect contributes significantly to the affirmative correlation between engaging in electoral procedures and elevating individual and familial well-being. Moreover, the participants from Agona and Fante ethnic groups exhibit a greater predisposition towards appreciating the direct association between active involvement in the voting process and the improvement of personal and household health conditions.

Table 1: Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of the Respondent's Score Value of the relationship between Participation in Voting and Improved Personal Income (PVLPI)

| Explanatory Variable | Parameter Estimate | Standardised Regression Estimate | Probability level of Significance | Variance Inflation Factor |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| INTERCEPT | 0.528 | 0.000 | 0.404 | 0.000 |
| PINCOME | 0.000 | 0.072 | 0.155 | 1.645 |
| AGE | 0.013 | 0.077 | 0.110 | 1.484 |
| FEMALE | 0.032 | 0.008 | 0.855 | 1.078 |
| YEARS OF EDUCATION | 0.006 | 0.015 | 0.766 | 1.524 |
| URBAN | -0.115 | -0.027 | 0.567 | 1.392 |
| MARRIED | 0.253 | 0.060 | 0.201 | 1.414 |
| EMPLOYED | 0.571 | 0.107 | 0.023** | 1.412 |
| CHRISTIAN | 0.360 | 0.084 | 0.420 | 6.995 |
| ISLAM | 0.189 | 0.044 | 0.675 | 6.912 |
| ASANTE | -0.616 | -0.043 | 0.289 | 1.058 |
| EWE | 0.216 | 0.011 | 0.781 | 1.033 |
| AGONA | 1.021 | 0.176 | 0.000*** | 1.404 |
| BONO | -0.169 | -0.028 | 0.511 | 1.157 |
| FANTE | 0.713 | 0.087 | 0.040** | 1.127 |
| EFFUTU | -0.648 | -0.053 | 0.199 | 1.096 |

Source: Survey Data, 2016

Notes:

Valid sample size used for the Analysis was

596

R²

0.109

Probability significance level of Ramsey Reset Test for correct model specification

0.882

Probability significance level of Lagrange-Multiplier test of no heteroscedasticity

0.499

*** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 1% level.

** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 5% level.

Table 2: Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of the Respondent's Score Value of the relationship between Participation in Voting and Gaining Employment (PVGEMP)

| Explanatory Variable | Parameter Estimate | Standardised Regression Estimate | Probability level of Significance | Variance Inflation Factor |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| INTERCEPT | 0.666 | 0.000 | 0.293 | 0.000 |
| PINCOME | 0.000 | 0.140 | 0.005*** | 1.648 |
| AGE | 0.013 | 0.079 | 0.093 | 1.471 |
| FEMALE | 0.087 | 0.020 | 0.616 | 1.076 |
| YEARS OF EDUCATION | 0.007 | 0.019 | 0.693 | 1.528 |
| URBAN | 0.137 | 0.031 | 0.496 | 1.399 |
| MARRIED | 0.249 | 0.058 | 0.208 | 1.414 |
| EMPLOYED | 0.582 | 0.107 | 0.020** | 1.416 |
| CHRISTIAN | 0.052 | 0.012 | 0.907 | 7.031 |
| ISLAM | -0.162 | -0.036 | 0.721 | 6.944 |
| ASANTE | -0.047 | -0.003 | 0.936 | 1.058 |
| EWE | 0.971 | 0.049 | 0.214 | 1.032 |
| AGONA | 1.194 | 0.201 | 0.000*** | 1.409 |
| BONO | -0.162 | -0.026 | 0.530 | 1.159 |
| FANTE | 0.895 | 0.108 | 0.009*** | 1.128 |
| EFFUTU | -0.131 | -0.011 | 0.789 | 1.090 |

Source: Survey Data, 2016.

Notes:

Valid sample size used for the Analysis was

596

R²

0.142

Probability significance level of Ramsey Reset Test for correct model specification

0.879

Probability significance level of Lagrange-Multiplier test of no heteroscedasticity

0.012

*** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 1% level.

** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 5% level.

Table 3: Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of the Respondent's Score Value of the relationship between Participation in Voting and Personal and Household Educational Opportunities (PVPHEO)

| Explanatory Variable | Parameter Estimate | Standardised Regression Estimate | Probability level of Significance | Variance Inflation Factor |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| INTERCEPT | 1.996 | 0.000 | 0.002*** | 0.000 |
| PINCOME | 0.001 | 0.181 | 0.000*** | 1.648 |
| AGE | 0.002 | 0.014 | 0.766 | 1.471 |
| FEMALE | 0.042 | 0.010 | 0.810 | 1.076 |
| YEARS OF EDUCATION | -0.005 | -0.013 | 0.792 | 1.528 |
| URBAN | -0.566 | -0.131 | 0.005*** | 1.399 |
| MARRIED | -0.113 | -0.027 | 0.565 | 1.414 |
| EMPLOYED | 0.553 | 0.104 | 0.027** | 1.416 |
| CHRISTIAN | 0.024 | 0.006 | 0.956 | 7.031 |
| ISLAM | -0.315 | -0.073 | 0.485 | 6.944 |
| ASANTE | 0.407 | 0.029 | 0.483 | 1.058 |
| EWE | -0.051 | -0.003 | 0.948 | 1.032 |
| AGONA | 0.561 | 0.097 | 0.039** | 1.409 |
| BONO | 0.571 | 0.095 | 0.026** | 1.159 |
| FANTE | 0.352 | 0.044 | 0.298 | 1.128 |
| EFFUTU | -0.656 | -0.055 | 0.181 | 1.090 |

Source: Survey Data, 2016.

Notes

Valid sample size used for the Analysis was 596

R² 0.100

Probability significance level of Ramsey Reset Test for correct model specification 0.338

Probability significance level of Langrange-Multiplier test of no heteroscedasticity 0.439

*** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 1% level.

** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 5% level.

Table 4: Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of the Respondent's Score Value of the relationship between Participation in Voting and Personal and Household Health Status (PVPHHS)

| Explanatory Variable | Parameter Estimate | Standardised Regression Estimate | Probability level of Significance | Variance Inflation Factor |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| INTERCEPT | 0.456 | 0.000 | 0.490 | 0.000 |
| PINCOME | 0.000 | 0.157 | 0.002*** | 1.648 |
| AGE | 0.007 | 0.040 | 0.405 | 1.471 |
| FEMALE | 0.172 | 0.039 | 0.341 | 1.076 |
| YEARS OF EDUCATION | -0.012 | -0.029 | 0.554 | 1.528 |
| URBAN | 0.844 | 0.186 | 0.000*** | 1.399 |
| MARRIED | -0.215 | -0.049 | 0.297 | 1.414 |
| EMPLOYED | 0.758 | 0.136 | 0.004*** | 1.416 |
| CHRISTIAN | 0.147 | 0.033 | 0.752 | 7.031 |
| ISLAM | 0.171 | 0.038 | 0.717 | 6.944 |
| ASANTE | 0.349 | 0.023 | 0.565 | 1.058 |
| EWE | -0.328 | -0.016 | 0.686 | 1.032 |
| AGONA | 1.129 | 0.176 | 0.000*** | 1.409 |
| BONO | 0.195 | -0.028 | 0.468 | 1.159 |
| FANTE | 0.764 | 0.087 | 0.031** | 1.128 |
| EFFUTU | -0.079 | -0.053 | 0.877 | 1.090 |

Source: Survey Data, 2016.

Notes

Valid sample size Used for the Analysis was 596

R² 0.114

Probability significance level of Ramsey Reset Test for correct model specification 0.392

Probability significance level of Langrange-Multiplier test of no heteroscedasticity 0.176

*** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 1% level.

** denotes statistical significance of the parameter at the 5% level

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The paper evaluates respondents' perspectives on participating in voting and their correlation with citizens' perceived socio-economic development. The presumed socio-economic enhancement enables the determination of the association between involvement in voting in national elections and personally experienced socio-economic consequences. The inquiry posed concerns about whether engaging in national elections can correlate to ameliorating individuals' socioeconomic status.

The rational voter theory (Downs, 1957) utilises microeconomic theory to study voting behaviour, emphasising variables such as rationality, choice, uncertainty and information sharing. It depicts the electoral arena as a marketplace. The voters are on the demand side, and the political parties are on the supply side. Any political party in electoral competition aims to maximise the number of votes to win a national election. Each voter engages in a cost-benefit analysis in which he or she calculates the payoffs in terms of the costs and benefits of the various electoral choices presented by the political parties and independent candidates. This paper examined voter choice by respondents in four (4) electorally swing constituencies, which is determined by voters' preferences on a variety of issues brought about by the few political parties that dominate the market. It seeks to determine the variables that influence participation in voting and the association between involvement in voting and socio-economic development in study areas. The analysis results have established the relationship between socioeconomic development variables (income, health, education, employment) and voting in an election. Nevertheless, individual and household economic well-being – encompassing personal earnings, employment prospects, educational opportunities for individuals and

households, personal and family health conditions, and voting relationships in the study areas- display varied results.

Despite the variation, the results show an unquestionable relationship between voting engagement and enhanced access to human development. Drawing on the statistical significance, there is an unequivocally direct association between voting involvement and personal and household economic well-being, which hinges upon crucial attributes of voters such as personal income and employment status. The preponderance of evidence produced by the findings intimates that employed individuals perceive a greater connection between voting in elections and personal and household economic welfare compared to their unemployed counterparts due to heightened awareness of civic rights and communication pertaining to electoral instances and voting matters.

Conversely, the analysis results present two distinct demographic groups of voters, which are discernible. First is the relatively content group reaping the 'benefits of democracy' with augmented voters' welfare, and the second group of voters are those grappling with recognising the 'value of democracy' as a catalyst for development, which they believed ceases at polling booths. The unemployed population evidently belongs to this second group of voters in electoral politics in the electoral swing study constituencies. It is also apparent that this dual classification transcends gender lines since no evidence was detected through result-based discrepancies in scores or parameter valuations of variables concerning sex differences.

In light of the findings, it can be deduced that amplifying democratic growth via active participation and engagement in the electoral process necessitates a heightened emphasis on fostering inclusive access for citizens regarding income and employment

prospects and equitable educational opportunities. This is attributed to the established significant relationship between voting in elections in the swing-electoral constituencies and tangible socio-economic development benefits. The results support the view that expanding income access and closing knowledge disparities in Ghana is very important.

The paper argues and concludes that democratic development merely transcends the provision and utilization of economic and social amenities enjoyed by citizens. The development communication bid remains critical in this instance. Besides, macroeconomic implications have far-reaching ramifications for citizens via economic growth, burgeoning government budget deficits (which augment national debt), inflation, and interest rates. Hence, there is a need for inclusive income, education, employment, education, and proper communication of government policies to deal with the inequality throughout Ghana's urban and rural communities as well as its geographical gaps in the southern and northern regions. In conclusion, the electoral-swing study highlights a pronounced correlation between socioeconomic development indicators and voter participation in the surveyed constituencies. Specifically, fostering inclusive access to essential elements such as income, health, employment opportunities, education, and a comprehensive array of welfare-driven policies holds significant potential to influence voters' decisions during elections, particularly in crucial swing constituencies in Ghana.

Recognising this pivotal connection, political parties and leaders vying for electoral success in Ghana must proactively address the unique circumstances prevailing in these electoral swing constituencies through engagement. By prioritising the enhancement of

socioeconomic conditions, political stakeholders can strategically position themselves to secure the support and allegiance of voters, ultimately shaping the outcomes of future electoral contests in the country. Political entities must seize this opportunity, understanding that the effective navigation of these circumstances could be a determining factor in achieving political power and dominance in the dynamic landscape of Ghanaian electoral politics.

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