
Paul Nugent

1998

CENTRE OF AFRICAN STUDIES
Edinburgh University

Price: £ 5.50 or US $ 11.00

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By

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1. Prologue

In the lives of most countries where a competitive electoral cycle is firmly rooted, the opportunity that is periodically presented to choose a new government, or to confirm an existing one, is considered a moment of genuine significance. In those countries where the long-term viability of the electoral process remains an open question, including many states in Africa, elections are likely to assume an added importance. Hence when Ghanaians went to the polls in December 1996 to elect a President and a new Parliament, this was widely interpreted within the country as a profoundly historic moment. For the first time since independence in 1957, the electorate was being presented with a genuine choice between renewing and terminating the mandate of the governing party. There had been many false starts along the way since competitive elections were first introduced in 1951. After independence, the opposition had effectively been stifled before being outlawed altogether in 1964, while the incumbent regimes of the Second and Third Republics had been ousted by the military before they had been given an opportunity to seek a fresh mandate. Although opposition leaders expressed doubts about the likely fairness of the process in the run-up to the 1996 poll, the very fact that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was seeking any kind of electoral mandate was a significant development in its own right.

This paper aims to provide a perspective on this national spectacle, but from two very different angles of vision.1 The first part of the

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1 I gratefully acknowledge receipt of a Small Grant from the Nuffield Foundation, which permitted two trips to the field to carry out research on the 1996 elections. Thanks are also due to Professor Joseph Ayee of the Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana for smoothing my passage, to Mohammed Abukari and Mrs. Emily Asiedu in Accra, to Derrick Honu for assistance in Hohoe North
paper attempts a reading of the political landscape of Ghana as a whole. It considers what the elections represented in the minds of the leadership of the respective parties, and how far their assessment of their strengths was borne out by the pattern of voting across the country. In the second part of the paper, I immerse myself in a series of political intrigues at the local level, and then consider how far these influenced the conduct of the elections. If the overall effect appears disjointed, that is not merely accidental - for the reality is that such an apparently unified set of events really bears multiple meanings depending on the context. In the course of shuttling between Accra and the locality, I have become conscious of significant differences in ways of seeing and interpreting events - both as between town and countryside and as between the politicians and journalists, on the one hand, and ordinary rural voters on the other. The dissonance between actors operating at different levels of the political system is real enough. Rather than seeking to smooth over the differences, therefore, I have opted for a more lumpy effect on the basis that it is a more faithful reflection of reality.

What elections mean to the people who participate in them - and how people perceive their limits when it comes to resolving communal and individual problems - are fundamental questions that ought to interest anthropologists as much as political scientists. Moreover, in the case of Ghana, and arguably elsewhere in Africa too, it makes little sense to study elections exclusively in the present political tense. Because politicians and voters alike read their politics historically, there is much to recommend a longer-range perspective. This paper will apply a historical lens to both the national and the local political arena. It will have achieved its fundamental objective if it succeeds in drawing attention to the diverse ways in which actors at different levels of the system perceive political realities and their room for manoeuvre within them.

and to Emilson Kwashie and Robert Alloh for providing information on Likpe affairs.
2. Living in the Past: Urban, Rural and Ethnic Themes in the 1996 Elections

Academic analysis has often noted a remarkable level of continuity in Ghanaian politics, expressed in terms of a recurrent duel between the so-called Nkrumahist and Busia/Danquah traditions. As is generally known, the contest between the Convention People's party (CPP) and the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was resolved in favour of the former before independence, a victory which was firmly consolidated thereafter. The overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah and the holding of fresh elections in 1969 enabled Kofi Busia, at the head of the regrouped opposition, to exact his revenge. Under military rule in the 1970s, members of the two dominant traditions were forced to submerge their differences and to co-operate in a campaign to force the military back to the barracks. When fresh elections were duly held in 1979, an avowedly Nkrumahist party, the People's National Party (PNP) squared up to two rival parties within the Busia/Danquah mould and triumphed once more. Under the rule of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), the old divisions went into abeyance once again, only to resurface at the point when Flt.-Lt. Rawlings intimated that a return to electoral democracy was on the cards. By the early 1990s, the pattern of political alignment in Ghana had become broadly predictable.

Crucially, contemporary Ghanaian politicians themselves behave as if the past is a reliable guide to present alignments and future successes. As politicians, they are the eternal optimists, hungrily searching for long-range patterns that confirm their belief in ultimate victory. The

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world of politics, as they say, is a harsh one and for most pretenders to office the future really only holds out the certainty of disappointment. But if politicians are typically a thick-skinned bunch, their Ghanaian embodiments are also very astute at identifying the lack of perspicuity on the part of their rivals. There is much to be gained, therefore, from talking to the politicians, which is precisely what I set out to do in 1992 and in the run-up to the 1996 elections. This section of the paper represents the assorted fruits of dialogues with national politicians, interaction with grassroots activists and a reading of the final results in historical perspective. I start by addressing the self-perception of each of the major political parties and the merits of their respective and, of course, selective readings of history. This prepares the ground for an examination of what the final results actually tell us about the patterns of political loyalty.

2.1. Back to Tradition, Forward to Victory

2.1.1. PCP = CPP = Extinction?
The 1992 Presidential elections were a traumatic experience for the opposition parties, especially for the three parties which claimed to represent the Nkrumahist alternative to the National Democratic Congress (NDC): namely, the People's Heritage Party (PHP), the National Independence Party (NIP), and the People's National Convention (PNC). Of the three, only the PNC actually managed to

4 The national politicians I interviewed were Dr. Hilla Limann, the former President and effective leader of the Peoples National Convention; J.A. Kufuor, Presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party; and Tony Aidoo of the National Democratic Congress. I also held discussions with Dr. Isaac Chinebuah, who had been the running mate of Limann in 1992, but who had since switched to the People's Convention Party. On the local level, I interviewed the sitting Member of Parliament for Hohoe North constituency, Pat Pomary, and her successor as NDC candidate, Nat Aduadjoe. I also interviewed Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie and Tony Akoto-Ampaw who stood for the NPP and the PCP respectively. I had a further series of meetings with Kofi Akorlor who was on the PCP constituency and regional executive. Finally, I had both formal meetings and informal discussions with grassroots activists in each of the parties in Hohoe North and in Accra. On polling day, I witnessed voting in parts of Accra before proceeding to Hohoe and on to Likpe.
carry a constituency in the Presidential poll. The NIP and PHP Presidential candidates, Kwabena Darko and Lt.-Gen. Emmanuel Erskine could not even win their home constituencies, and only managed to bag 4.5 per cent of the national vote between them. The scale of the wipe-out was such that it could not be satisfactorily explained with reference to rigging. For self-proclaimed Nkrumahists, the 1992 results represented a historical anachronism, in that theirs was held to be the natural tradition of government. The CPP, as the notional party of the commoners, had won the first series of competitive elections in 1951, 1954 and 1956 with handsome majorities and, as I have already noted, the PNP had repeated the trick in 1979. As they saw it, the only election that had been lost was that of 1969 - and then only because the CPP was a proscribed party and its leading figures were debarred from standing.

5 The PNC gained the highest share of the votes in the Ellembelle and Evalue-Gwira constituencies in the Western Region, in Sissala in the Upper West Region and in Bolgatanga and Navrongo Central in the Upper East Region.


7 The evidence for rigging was compiled by the NPP in The Stolen Verdict: Ghana, November 1992 Presidential Election (Accra: New Patriotic Party, 1993), and this was endorsed by the Nkrumahist parties. I have evaluated the quality of that evidence in ibid., pp. 232-242.
Although the Nkrumahist parties adhered publicly to the thesis that the 1992 Presidential election was indeed rigged, they privately conceded that the electorate had deserted them. The only logical reason seemed to be that the voters were punishing the 'Nkrumah family' for being divided against itself. Before long, therefore, the main Nkrumahist parties entered into negotiations which were designed to reunite the family. The NIP and the PHP had the least to gain by going it alone and so were the first to enter proximity talks. The National Convention Party (NCP) had sided with the NDC in 1992, but increasingly felt that its support had been taken for granted. The physical assault by President Jerry Rawlings on Vice-President K.N. Arkaah, and subsequent efforts to force the latter from office, merely confirmed to the NCP leadership that the alliance had been a mistake. Although a rump of the NCP preferred to stand alone, most of that party entered into the spirit of unification. That left the PNC, which had been the only Nkrumahist party to register some success in 1992.8 Much of the PNC leadership, especially in the Western Region, agreed with the diagnosis of the other parties. But a large section of the party remained personally loyal to Hilla Limann, especially in the north, and was not convinced that it needed the NIP, the PHP or the NCP. The lofty message that Limann constantly repeated was that the 'Nkrumah family' ought to unite behind the standard of the PNC. At the point when the negotiations started to bear fruit, Limann and long-time associates such as Dr. Isaac Chinebuah finally parted company as the latter rejoined the Nkrumahist fold.9

The People's Convention Party (PCP) was, therefore, born of a fusion between the NIP and the PHP, together with sections of the NCP and the PNC. Although unification was an achievement in its own right, it did not necessarily mean that all sections of the party now agreed on what Nkrumahism actually stood for. The old guard, which had been

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8 Limann had taken 6.7 per cent of the national vote in 1992.

9 In one conversation, Dr. Chinebuah explained his decision to join the PNC as a personal act of loyalty towards Limann, whose Foreign Minister he had been in the Third Republic. Whereas Limann had been abroad during the First Republic, Chinebuah had been a member of an Nkrumah government.
directly involved in the power structures of the CPP, was shrinking all the time, but some continued to adhere to a statist vision of development. The bulk of the PCP leadership conceded that the time for state entrepreneurship had long since passed and that the economic fortunes of the country depended on the promotion of a vibrant private sector. Safely ensconced in opposition, the PCP could afford to speak out against labour retrenchment and cost recovery in the health and educational sectors, but in the final analysis the party leadership agreed with the broad thrust of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This illustrates the success which the Rawlings regime had shifted the terms of economic debate since the mid-1980s. Arguably, it also exposed the ideological confusion of the Nkrumahist tradition as a whole. In the absence of an Nkrumah figure, Nkrumahism boiled down to an image rather than a coherent programme.

The leadership of the PCP was realistic enough to recognize that it had a protracted rebuilding project on its hands. Given that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) was well-entrenched in the old heartlands of the Busia-Danquah tradition, its own regeneration would inevitably have to come at the expense of the NDC. Partly for that reason, there was a willingness within the PCP to countenance an electoral pact with the NPP. Not everyone within the party was comfortable with such a strategy because the Busia/Danquah tradition had always been construed as the enemy. But an alliance could be sold to the party as a temporary and necessary compromise on the route towards a revival of Nkrumahist fortunes. The decision to accept the Presidential candidacy of J.A. Kufuor of the NPP was a difficult pill to swallow, but was generally seen as unavoidable. Once the NDC was unseated, the reasoning went, Nkrumahist voters would return to their natural home in the PCP. The leadership still professed to believe that the NPP could be tamed in the longer term.

2.1.2. An Elephant Never Forgets:
The NPP Plots its Brilliant Career

The NPP was, if anything, even more confident about its credentials as the natural party of government. The dominance of the CPP in the First Republic could not be denied, but it could be accounted for in
terms of an uneven playing field after 1957. The handsome victory of
the Progress Party (PP) against a supposedly Nkrumahist rival in 1969
was interpreted as a sign of the real balance of forces, and NPP
leaders talked openly about reliving the Busia years. The 1979 election
had brought a more embarrassing defeat, but this could be
rationalized - just as the Nkrumahists did after 1992 - in terms of an
unfortunate split in the Busia/Danquah ranks between the Popular
Front Party (PFP) and the United National Convention (UNC). In the
view of the NPP leadership, a united party of their tradition would
prove unstoppable at the polls. The dispiriting results of 1992, when
the tradition had in fact been united, was discounted on the grounds
that the predicted victory had been stolen from under the nose of the
party by Rawlings. Interestingly, however, the NPP was not always
consistent in its public rhetoric. For example, if the NPP genuinely
believed that Professor Adu Boahen had been the rightful victor in
1992, it made little sense to ditch him on the grounds, which were
widely stated after the poll, that he had been a poor choice of
candidate. In an interview held with Kufuor himself prior to the
election, it was striking that he made very little reference to The
Stolen Verdict. 10

Kufuor was clear that he wanted to leave nothing to chance in 1996.
Although he was sceptical about the electoral base of the PCP, and
seemed to regard the PNC as a far more serious player, he also
believed that a broad opposition alliance could only benefit the NPP.
The calculation was that, following its first taste of defeat against the
Kufuor-Arkaah ticket, the NDC would implode as a political force.
The myth of the invincibility of Rawlings would have been broken and
NDC voters would then have been there for the harvesting. As the
only other truly national party, the NPP would then be in a position to
tighten its grip on Ghanaian politics. Like the PCP, the NPP leadership
held out little hope for a lasting alliance once political normality was
restored. But because Nkrumahism was perceived as a spent force, the
NPP leadership was confident that it would emerge as the victor in
any subsequent showdown. Stated simply, the NPP looked forward to
government in perpetuity.

10 Interview with J.A. Kufuor, Accra, 28 August 1996.
Of course, the NPP was under no illusions about the advantages which the governing party enjoyed, and took every opportunity to point them out to anyone who would listen. However, the party also had reason to believe that the NDC was more vulnerable than it had been in 1992. The willingness of ordinary Ghanaians to take to the streets in protest against the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) was an indication that the Rawlings regime had alienated a significant section of the urban population. The allegations of corruption which were investigated by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) had been given maximum publicity in the press and had done much to dent the image of the NDC as a government of probity. Furthermore, the outbreak of ethnic conflict in the Northern Region had been widely blamed on the government, which had appeared to incite the Konkomba to demand their own chieftaincy - and then had failed to protect them when they were attacked in towns such as Tamale. Consequently, the NPP had no shortage of electoral ammunition at its disposal.

Although it did produce an election manifesto, the NPP found itself in the potentially embarrassing position of sharing much of the NDC policy agenda. The NPP was not quite sure about how best to respond to the apparent conversion of the NDC to market economics.

11 For an opposition perspective on these events, see Napoleon Abdulai (ed.) Ghana: The Kume Preko Demonstrations: Poverty, Corruption and the Rawlings Dictatorship (London: Africa Research and Information Bureau, 1995).


Hence, Kufuor accused the NDC of having stolen the mantle of the Busia/Danquah tradition, but then went on to question whether the government really believed in the policies it had chosen. At times, the NDC was accused of being too doctrinaire in implementing the very policies which the NPP generally approved of. Because the parties were so close on the fundamentals, the campaign was destined to be fought around images. The NPP presented itself in confident fashion as a government-in-waiting, with no shortage of experienced leaders ready to assume the reins of power. Their image of the NDC was that of a party of upstarts and cheats who lacked the basic qualifications to govern a country such as Ghana.

2.1.3. A Case for a Gynaecologist? 
The PNC and the Rebirth of Democracy

From the standpoint of the NPP, the only fly in the ointment remained the PNC which was resolutely opposed to any opposition alliance. Despite several covert approaches, Hilla Limann stood by his refusal to co-operate with the Great Alliance.\footnote{Limann mentioned that he had been approached by Kwame Pianim. Kufuor also confirmed that he had sent out feelers to his PNC counterpart. Interview with Hilla Limann, Accra, 23 August 1996 and J.A. Kufuor, 28 August 1996} To start with, he pointed out that the NPP was being thoroughly inconsistent in claiming that the 1992 elections were rigged, only then to insist that an alliance was essential to secure victory against the NDC. In Limann's opinion, the Great Alliance was defeatist from the outset. He also insisted that the pressure to forge an alliance emanated from sections of the opposition press who were not in touch with popular opinion outside of the major cities. Alluding to the forces of history once more, Limann pointed out that Ghanaians had been brought up with the notion that the Nkrumahist and Busia/Danquah traditions were implacably opposed to one another. Hence, to insist on an alliance now would confuse, and quite possibly alienate, the electorate. He also interpreted the media campaign, especially in the columns of the Ghanaian Chronicle, as a blatant attempt by Central Region intellectuals to promote their own
From Limann's perspective, the PNC had performed creditably in 1992 and could reasonably expect to increase its share of the vote because of NDC gaffes and its mishandling of the ethnic conflict in the North. The PNC was actually somewhat schizophrenic in terms of the image it projected. At one level, it continued to insist that it was the only legitimate Nkrumahist party, standing in direct succession to the PNP whose electoral mandate remained incomplete. In private, however, senior PNC figures conceded that theirs was effectively a party of the north. The party was gambling on the likelihood that the NDC would lose support in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions to the PNC rather than to the NPP, which did not have deep roots there. Furthermore, they were reasonably confident that Rawlings would be unable to secure a majority in the first round of voting. Failure to do so would force the NPP to strike a favourable deal in order to secure victory in the second round. With a solid bloc of northern support, the PNC would then be in a position to engage in some hard bargaining. On the other hand, if the PNC entered an alliance immediately, its bargaining position would be limited. In private discussion, some senior PNC politicians indicated that they deeply mistrusted the NPP as a predominantly Akan party, and hinted that they might even prefer to cut a deal with the NDC if a second round of voting transpired. The main problem for the PNC was that Hilla Limann's ailing health would force him to take a less active part in politics.16 After months of procrastination, during which Limann looked for a credible successor, the party selected Dr. Edward Mahama, a gynaecologist, as its Presidential candidate. The latter was a unknown figure in the country at large, and the worry for the PNC was that the electorate might not be prepared to endorse the handover. Yet, the experience of Limann in 1979 also suggested that a new face could be positively attractive to the electorate.

15 Limann fulminated against K.N. Arkaah whose record at the Ghana National Trading Corporation, he asserted, was a very poor one. Interview with Hilla Limann, Accra, 23 August 1996

2.1.4. The Flight-Lieutenant and His Accountant: The NDC on the Campaign Trail

Whereas each of the opposition parties was obsessed with the lessons of history, the NDC preferred to avoid the subject altogether. Although Rawlings was not beyond cashing in on the Nkrumah name if circumstances demanded it, it was well-known that he did not rate Ghana's first President very highly. Moreover, the statist agenda of the old First Republic was the antithesis of what the SAP had set out to achieve. Although his attachment to the tenets of economic liberalism should have endeared him to the Busia/Danquah tradition, he felt no great love for that side either. Even the record of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) could not be invoked too often because of the bitter memories harbourd by sections of the population. Moreover, the image of the PNDC as having governed with clean hands had become problematic with accusations about impropriety being levelled against prominent members of the former government, including P.V. Obeng, Dr. Adjei-Marfo and Ibrahim Adam.17

Because the NDC had an uncomfortable relationship with history, therefore, party leaders tended to retreat into a presentist discourse. The campaign strategy of the NDC rested on three main pillars. The first was the mystique surrounding Rawlings himself. Although urban intellectuals were inclined to poke fun at his lack of sophistication, his popular touch continued to work its magic in the country at large. Rawlings came across as a man of action and, whatever the shortcomings of his Cabinet colleagues, he was still regarded as someone who had not succumbed to the temptations of public office. Although Kufuor was a far more dynamic figure than Adu Boahen, the NPP style still exuded a certain stuffiness as the party of the 'big men'. The second pillar was the ability of the NDC to pose with some conviction as the party of development. The billboards which were erected in Accra and the main towns depicted a modernist utopia, in

17 The Ghanaian Chronicle reported regularly on the investigations and the clashes between Emile Short, the Commissioner of CHRAJ, and the government.
which motorway flyovers and skyscrapers would remake the urban landscape. To be effective, the government also needed to show that it was honouring its previous mandate. Projects across the country were therefore timed to reach fruition in the immediate run-up to the poll. The message to rural voters, in particular, was that the NDC had a proven track record in terms of bringing roads, electricity, water and other amenities to communities which had hitherto been neglected by central government. By contrast, a vote for the opposition was portrayed as a shot in the dark. Indeed, it was frequently insinuated that an NPP government might feel impelled to cancel existing projects as Busia had done. Finally, the NDC was able to rely on its superior capacity to disseminate its message throughout the length and breadth of the country. The public was constantly presented with an image of Rawlings travelling the countryside, commissioning development projects and attending chiefly durbars in his capacity as head of state. In the Volta Region, for example, Rawlings opened new bridges across the River Todzi at the border towns of Shia and Nyive, and commissioned a water supply project at Likpe which had been mooted for some years (se below). The use of government resources for what was, in effect, blatant electoral campaigning could always be justified on the grounds that the everyday business of state had to continue.

There was a certain irony attached to the behaviour of the NDC. Although the party sought to downplay allusions to history, there was a sense in which it was following in the footsteps of the CPP. In its original incarnation, the CPP had distanced itself from tradition and posed as the party of modernity. Its own electoral strategy in the 1950s had rested not just on an appeal to the charisma of Nkrumah, but also on a pledge that it would bring tangible improvements to the lives of ordinary Ghanaians. Indeed, Nkrumah famously promised to turn Ghana into a paradise within a matter of years. The grandiose plans of the 1960s, which went so horribly wrong, represented an exaggerated - or perhaps distorted - version of that early image. The problem for Nkrumahists was that the scale of the vision became inversely proportional to the ability to deliver material improvements. If one substitutes Rawlings for Nkrumah, and alters some of the other values in the symbolic equation, the message of the 1950s is fundamentally similar. The knack was to avoid a repetition of the
regressive cycle which the CPP entered after 1960. That, in turn, rested on maintaining a steady pattern of economic growth and healthy public finances.

The political difficulties which the NDC faced in the approach to the 1996 elections were largely of its own making. The revelations of malpractice which emerged from the CHRAJ hearings did little to enhance the image of the NDC, although party fixers sought to make a virtue of the supposed transparency of the government. Secondly, the party had alienated many of its grassroots supporters by allowing sitting MPs to be deselected in favour of wealthy aspirants whose personal records and/or credentials were questionable. In fact, some 75 MPs succumbed to this poaching, some in dubious circumstances. For example, the young MP in the Choggo-Tishigu constituency was defeated by Ibrahim Adam after the latter allegedly entertained the selection committee and paid them for their votes. Indeed, the scale of bribery was so well-known that people in Tamale jokingly referred to the €5,000 note as an 'Ibrahim Adam'. The fact that Adam was also under investigation by CHRAJ for his previous conduct as a Minister only made matters worse. A similar story unfolded in Hohoe-North constituency where Pat Pomary was defeated in a primary election in which money allegedly changed hands. Tony Aidoo, an influential figure within the NDC, insisted that the choice of Parliamentary candidates was a matter for the constituency executives. However, it was an open secret that the leadership wanted more 'big men' in Parliament who could hold their own against the heavyweights of the NPP. The fact that the party appeared content to let loyal footsoldiers go to the wall in the process did not reflect well on the leadership. Finally, the situation in parts of the Northern Region remained highly tense following renewed discussion with Tony Aidoo, Flagstaff House, Accra, 22 July 1996.

18 Discussion with Tony Aidoo, Flagstaff House, Accra, 22 July 1996.

19 This case received considerable press coverage. My views on this subject have also been shaped by a number of informal discussions with Mohammed Haroon, the sitting MP.

outbreaks of fighting there. The NDC stood accused, at the very least, of having been clumsy in its handling of northern affairs. As the 1996 elections hove into view, nobody was quite sure how serious the fallout would be.

2.2. Every Picture Tells a Story: Mapping The 1996 Election Results

There was one significant difference between the 1992 and the 1996 elections. In the former case, as I have already noted, the Presidential results were vigorously disputed by the opposition who proceeded to boycott the Parliamentary poll in protest. There were some complaints from specific constituencies in 1996, but on this occasion the losing parties did acknowledge the overall results as the considered verdict of the Ghanaian electorate. Moreover, most of the legal challenges to the Parliamentary results were subsequently abandoned. Although it is not the principal concern of this paper, the voting statistics of 1996 do cast further doubt on opposition claims about outright manipulation in 1992. Much had been made of a supposedly inflated electoral register, which stood at 8.3 million by the time of polling. But in 1996, when there was much greater public confidence in the registration exercise, no fewer than 9.27 million voters appeared on the roll. Moreover, whereas almost 4 million votes were


22 The one major exception was the Ayawaso West Wuguon constituency where the courts eventually annulled the result in favour of the NDC candidate.

actually cast in 1992, this had risen to 7.2 million four years later.24 One could also make the same point with reference to particular constituencies. In my book, I referred to the case of Fanteakwa where Dr. Jones Ofori-Atta claimed that the actual results, which looked set to give victory to Adu Boahen, had been altered so as to give Rawlings a majority by 13,404 to 10,673 votes.25 Yet in 1996, when the count in Fanteakwa was not disputed, Rawlings won that constituency comfortably by 20,714 to 15,039 votes. Whereas much of the Stolen Verdict depended on figures that supposedly did not add up, the opposition quietly let the same electoral profile pass without comment in 1996. To an external observer, this looks very much like a tacit admission of error in relation to the first poll.

On the assumption that the 1996 results convey an accurate impression of real voting behaviour, we can now consider the underlying patterns more closely. An analysis of the bald statistics is indicative in itself (see Tables One and Two), but the effect is even more striking when they are transposed onto a constituency map. When this is done, the results reveal two clear patterns. First of all, there appears to be a clear trend of regional voting which might be depicted in terms of a centre-periphery rather than a north-south divide. It is literally the case that the centre of the country leaned heavily towards the NPP, whereas the outlying regions - the Volta Region in the east, the Western and Brong-Ahafo Regions in the west, and the Upper East and Upper West Regions in the north - aligned with the NDC. This is arguably not so much a point about geography as about history. Anyone attuned to the history of nineteenth-century Ghana would immediately notice a fracture along the fault lines of greater Asante - that is, between the metropolitan core and the inner and outer provinces.26


26 I am following the model of greater Asante as outlined by Ivor Wilks, Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), ch. 2.
Table One: Distribution of Presidential Vote By Candidate and Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rawlings % share</th>
<th>Kufuor % share</th>
<th>Mahama % share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>412,475 32.8</td>
<td>827,821 65.8</td>
<td>17,736 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-Ahafo</td>
<td>395,382 61.7</td>
<td>230,457 36.0</td>
<td>16,635 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>313,386 55.7</td>
<td>241,542 42.9</td>
<td>7,995 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>459,090 53.8</td>
<td>384,597 45.0</td>
<td>10,251 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gr. Accra</td>
<td>658,626 54.0</td>
<td>528,484 43.3</td>
<td>32,723 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>370,330 62.1</td>
<td>190,621 32.0</td>
<td>35,318 5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. East</td>
<td>230,791 69.0</td>
<td>54,041 17.4</td>
<td>45,696 13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. West</td>
<td>145,812 74.6</td>
<td>21,871 11.2</td>
<td>27,754 14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>690,421 94.5</td>
<td>34,538 4.7</td>
<td>5,292 0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>405,992 57.3</td>
<td>289,730 40.9</td>
<td>12,862 1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,099,760 57.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,825,715 39.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>210,980 3.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NEC*

Table Two: Seats Won By Main Parties By Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>NDC</th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>PCP</th>
<th>PNC</th>
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*Source: NEC*

The second pattern which strikes the eye is that there is a manifestly a difference between urban and rural voting behaviour. Although J.A. Kufuor was comprehensively beaten overall, he actually won a majority of constituencies in the principal cities and Regional capitals. He carried Cape Coast and Akropong; all three constituencies in the Sekondi-Takoradi area; all six in Kumasi; both in Tema and Sunyani; one of the two Tamale constituencies and five of the thirteen in Accra. Rawlings, on the other hand, only managed to capture the majority of
votes in Wa, Bolgatanga and Ho, although it is significant that he won most of the Accra constituencies. Outside of the centres of population concentration, the opposite picture emerges. The map reveals that there was a close correlation between the physical size of a constituency - and hence the population density - and its voting habits. In the rural areas, outside of Ashanti and the Eastern Region, the NDC swept the board. Juxtaposing these two patterns, and sharpening the image, one could say that the voters in Kumasi constituencies like Manhyia were amongst the most avid supporters of Kufuor, whereas the electorate in the remote constituencies of the Upper West Region, like Lawra, opted for Rawlings.

Two questions arise from this picture: firstly, how does one account for it; and secondly, what does it tells us about the political configuration of Ghana as a whole? Although the two patterns I have identified are actually closely interconnected, I will deal with them separately here. The centre-periphery divide is, as I have implied, one that is rooted in history, but not in any simple sense. The suggestion that, for example, there is an ancient enmity between the peoples of the Volta Region and Ashanti which somehow explains their political preferences today, is historically quite false. The fact of the matter is that the Anlo Ewe were allies of the Asante, whereas the Akyem were amongst their most bitter enemies in the pre-colonial period. And yet it was the Akyems who voted in large numbers for Kufuor, while the Anlos joined the rest of the Ewe in returning huge majorities for Rawlings and the NDC. It is tempting, in the light of these realities, to resort instead to ethnicity for an explanation - on the understanding that it is, to all intents and purposes, a modern phenomenon. On that basis, one might detect a divide between the voting habits of the Akan peoples and the rest of Ghana. The problem in this case is that while some Akan sub-groups voted heavily for the opposition - notably the Ashanti, the Akyem, the Kwahu, Akuapem and the Ahanta - there was solid support for the NDC amongst the Brong, Fanti, Assin, Wass, Sefwi, and the Akan peoples of the Volta Region. If

27 Following the work of Terence Ranger and others, it has become something of a truism that African 'tribes' were a creation of the colonial period. In the case of Ghana, this picture is somewhat qualified in Lentz and Nugent, op. cit.
Kufuor had managed to sweep the Akan board in the manner of Busia in 1969, he would almost certainly have made it to a second round of voting. As it happened, he fell well short of the target.

The point is not that one should jettison historic alignments or ethnicity, but rather that one needs to take account of the manner in which they interacted and were contextualized at the local level. The NPP, whether consciously or not, projected a image of itself as a party of Ashanti notables. The fact that no northerners or Voltarians were even considered as possible candidates for the party leadership beamed out a clear message to the electorate. Moreover, as I have argued in relation to the 1992 elections, the displays of 'big manity' which went down well in Ashanti had the opposite effect elsewhere.\(^28\) In the north and in the Volta Region, the triumphalist tone of the NPP campaign merely confirmed a well-entrenched stereotype of Ashanti arrogance. Even amongst fellow Akans, historic disagreements could be reactivated in the context of the electoral campaign. While the NPP scored some successes in Brong-Ahafo, most of the Region backed the NDC in numbers. This was a Region which had, of course, been carved out of the old Ashanti Region, amongst peoples who resented what they regarded as their inferior status under the previous set-up. Although that battle had long since been won through the intercession of Nkrumah, the NDC apparently sought to stir up fears that the Region would be re-incorporated into Ashanti.\(^29\) Moreover, the perceived interference by the Asantehene in Brong chieftaincy affairs had led to outbreaks of violence in the Techiman area as recently as 1996. It is striking that the former provinces remained as sensitive as ever to an imagined Ashanti imperialism a century after the empire had effectively been wound up. Even within the Ashanti Region, the historic fractiousness of Adansi in relation to Kumasi was revisited at the polls.\(^30\)

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\(^28\) Nugent, op. cit., p. 244.

\(^29\) See the letter to the editor by Kwabena Kyereme, The Statesman 2 June 1996.

\(^30\) On Adanse secessionism in the nineteenth century, see Wilks, op. cit., pp. 521-522.
Although being 'Akan' was certainly no guarantee of support for the NPP, expressions of ethnicity often worked against the latter in the transitional zones. Thus, while most Akyem, Kwahu and Akuapem voters were drawn to the NPP, the neighbouring Krobo, Adangme and Guan peoples were entirely opposed to it. In Akuapem, where Guan communities were seeking to secede from a state which was headed by an Akan paramount chief, the choice at the polls was clear enough: a vote for Rawlings was construed as a vote against Akan hegemony.\footnote{On the internal politics of Akuapem, see Michelle Gilbert, "'No condition is permanent': ethnic construction and the use of history in Akuapem", \textit{Africa} 67,4, 1997.} In a constituency such as Okere, the election was bound to turn on local politics, which in turn was interpreted through a powerful historical lens. In most cases, then, the ethnic dynamic worked against the NPP: on the national level, it alienated non-Akans, whilst amongst the Akans it often set non-Ashantis against their former overlords. The one exception was in the Northern Region, where recent conflicts with the Konkomba had seriously alienated the eastern Dagomba and Nanumba from the government. Hence the NPP won a majority in Yendi, Mion and Gukpegu-Sabongida constituencies in the Presidential poll and added the Wulensi Parliamentary seat. Although the 'stateless' peoples of the north were inclined to line up on the other side, at least the opposition was able to secure a foothold in this part of the Northern Region. But elsewhere the opposition was not able to find a way of inserting itself into the political cracks. The fact that chieftaincy affairs have been removed from the meddling of politicians under the Fourth Republican Constitution, which leaves the resolution of disputes to the Houses of Chiefs, has worked against the old style of political bargaining. This is a point I will return to in the second section of this paper.

The urban-rural distinction is easier to explain. The SAP was set up in such a way that it was bound to create winners and losers. Despite the populist rhetoric of the Rawlings regime, which posed as the defender of the hapless rural masses, the impact of the SAP does not translate into a straightforward urban-rural distinction. There were winners and losers in both contexts, and in fact the biggest winners - the
nouveaux riches - were located in the cities, where they exhibited their wealth in impressive residences in time-honoured Ghanaian fashion. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that the costs of adjustment were born more heavily by sections of the urban population. For obvious reasons, retrenchment from the public sector had a much greater impact on the cities and Regional capitals than on the countryside. Moreover, the indirect effect of government policy was to lead to more effective systems of urban taxation. Transport operators and street traders, in particular, felt the pinch much more heavily than before. The lack of subtlety displayed by the metropolitan authorities in the collection of taxes and the enforcement of regulations was a source of considerable resentment which rubbed off on central government as well. In the urban context, these groups of people represented a very substantial part of the electorate. On the other side of the equation, the countryside benefited more visibly from investments under the SAP. For people who are accustomed to pipe-borne water and electricity - and that includes most of the population of Accra - it is difficult to imagine the impact that the provision of these amenities has upon the minds of rural peoples. The same is true of roads, which reduce travelling times, but also enable farmers to secure access to markets. The NDC understood that the election would be won in the rural areas and made sure that it was seen to be delivering on its earlier election pledges. In addition, cocoa farmers received more favourable prices for their crops. Although this was not enough to win over farmers in Ashanti and parts of the Eastern

32 Chavagneux, op. cit., pp. 266-67, suggests that the urban share of the total population living in poverty increased between 1987 and 1992, and markedly so in the case of Accra.

33 The share of the urban population enjoying access to piped water was estimated at 86% in 1989, whereas only 58% of the rural population were thus catered for. These broad figures conceal enormous disparities. Hence, in the rural parts of the Northern Region, only 7% of the population had access to piped water, whereas 99% of the population of Accra did so. Bawumia, op. cit., p. 64. In their survey of Nima, Lynne Brydon and Karen Legge found that 59% of men and 48% of women had access to private standpipes. See Adjusting Ghanaian Society: The World Bank, the IMF and Ghana (London & New York: Tauris, 1996), p. 163.
Region, it did go some way towards convincing rural voters elsewhere of the honourable intentions of the regime.

The other significant factor in the equation was that the opposition depended heavily upon the print media to disseminate its message. While the newspapers reached larger towns in the south, they were simply unavailable across most of the country. For the majority of rural voters, the cut and thrust of political debate was largely absent. The exercise of choice came down, therefore, to weighing up the actions of the NDC thus far, and setting them against the likely performance of an NPP administration. Whereas the NDC usually had local stalwarts who could remind rural voters of promises that had been duly fulfilled, the opposition parties were thin on the ground. Although Kufuor and Arkaah passed through many rural communities on the campaign trail, they were seldom in one place long enough to leave a lasting impression. The NPP also made the cardinal error of believing the propaganda of its own press which covered these tours enthusiastically, remarking on the size and volubility of the crowds. But as many Ghanaian politicians have learned to their cost over the years, large crowds do not necessarily translate into boxes full of votes. And since newspapers such as the Ghanaian Chronicle and The Statesman were hardly read outside of the main cities, there was little in the way of campaign feedback to the rural electorate. Hence, at a very basic level, the opposition message simply did not reach the majority of the population.

The final task is to consider how the political configuration of Ghana has been affected by the 1996 elections. In so doing, it is salutary to measure the performance of the parties against their assessments of the prospects. The unambiguous lesson for the PNC would seem to be that there is very little mileage in striking out alone. Unlike Limann, who won a plurality of votes in 5 constituencies in 1992, Mahama failed to take the honours in any. The two constituencies in the Western Region which had endorsed Limann had, on this occasion, followed their local leaders and gone over to the PCP. And in the Upper East and Upper West Regions, the three constituencies which had voted for Limann, including his own Sissala stronghold, defected

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34 These were the Ellembelle and Evalue-Gwira constituencies.
to the NDC. The guarded effort to resurrect the PNC in the image of the Northern Peoples's Party of pre-independence times failed badly—perhaps because northern voters had no desire to be taken out of the political mainstream.

At the same time, the results suggest that the PCP's reading of history was seriously skewed. Far from representing a national force, the PCP had been reduced to the party of a thin coastal strip in the Western Region, where it won four Parliamentary seats. The one seat it won in the north, that of Mion, accrued to it by virtue of the unique ethnic dynamic of that area. Looking ahead to the next elections, the PCP did not seem to have any obvious springboard from which it could launch itself into the rest of the country. In the wake of defeat, some PCP activists borrowed from Limann's script and blamed the performance of the party on the alliance with the NPP. However, it is hard to credit the belief that a PCP Presidential candidate would have improved on the performance on Darko and Erskine in 1992. If anything, the Great Alliance probably conferred more seats on the PCP than it would otherwise have won. As it was, the inability of the PCP and the NPP to agree on who was to stand down, granted the NDC victory in a number of constituencies. But if the NPP had put up candidates in Ellembelle, where the PCP won by a mere 11 votes, or Evalue-Gwira, where its majority was 2,097, the NDC would in all likelihood have walked away with the seats. Even the Mion seat, where the PCP majority stood at 4,029 votes, would have been vulnerable under other circumstances. The loss of all of those seats would have left the PCP with a single seat in Parliament and starting even more deeply into the abyss.

On the face of things, the NPP could draw the greatest opposition comfort from the 1996 elections. J.A. Kufuor had improved on Adu Boahen's share of the vote and the party had won Parliamentary seats in seven of the ten Regions. On that basis, the NPP could at least claim to be a genuinely national party. Its overall tally of 61 seats fell well short of the NDC’s haul of 133 seats, although in the absence of a

35 Kufuor had won 39.6% of the vote as opposed to the 30.4% won by Adu Boahen.
split vote, at least another 4 or 5 seats would have accrued to it.\textsuperscript{36} But the NPP had established a solid block of opposition representation in Parliament. However, if one sets these results in a rather longer time-frame, the resulting picture is a rather sobering one for an outfit that regarded itself as the natural party of government. When a map of the 1996 Presidential results is placed alongside the one for 1992, it is clear that while the NPP made inroads into NDC territory, it did so in four very specific theatres. From its stronghold in central Ashanti, the party entrenched itself in the north-west of that Region, where it had failed in 1992, and spilled across the border into Brong-Ahafo.\textsuperscript{37} Secondly, the NPP was able to consolidate the wedge it had driven into the Eastern Region by adding the predominantly Akan constituencies. Thirdly, the NPP recorded some success in the Western Region, although it was riding on the PCP coat-tails in the coastal constituencies. And finally, as we have seen, the NPP was the prime beneficiary of the endemic ethnic tensions in the eastern quadrant of the Northern Region.

Elsewhere, however, the NPP made very little headway. The Volta Region, which was described by Rawlings as the NDC’s ‘World Bank’, was regarded as a lost cause from the start and little campaigning took place there. More significantly, most of the Western, Central and Brong-Ahafo Regions remained squarely in the NDC camp, despite the fact that they were regarded by the NPP as ripe for the picking. The electoral failure of the NPP across southern Ghana was in many ways a dramatic one. In the north of the country, the NPP was

\textsuperscript{36} PCP candidates contrived to lose Ododiodoo, Klottey-Korle, Asokwa East and Ayawaso West Wuguon for the NPP, although the latter may well return to the party after the recent court action. In Birim North, the PCP candidate won marginally more votes than his NPP counterpart. If either had stepped in favour of the other, they would have beaten the NDC candidate.

\textsuperscript{37} In 1992, Rawlings had won more votes than Adu Boahen in Ahafo Ano North, Ahafo Ano South, Offinso North and Ejura Sekyedumase in the Ashanti Region. The first two were captured by Kufuor in 1996, who also gained more votes in Tano North, Sunyani West and Sunyani East in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The first two were gains from the NDC.
revealed to have even greater limitations. The majorities in favour of Rawlings and the NDC Parliamentary candidates were typically very substantial in Upper East and Upper West, if somewhat narrower in the Northern Region. Even more telling is the fact that when the voters abandoned the PNC, they were not tempted to put their faith in the NPP. Hence the three northern constituencies which Limann had won in 1992 were captured by Rawlings the second time around. In one notable instance, the pattern of transferred allegiances worked in reverse order. In Bimbilla, the electorate voted for Rawlings as President, but many were reluctant to return Dr. Ibn Chambas as the MP. Instead of electing the Alliance candidate, the plurality of voters backed the PNC man instead. Across the north, therefore, the NPP had manifestly failed in presenting itself as an attractive alternative to the NDC.

When viewed in historical perspective, none of this is particularly surprising. In 1979, the close relative of the NPP, the PFP, had exhibited a similar incapacity to win votes in the north. In the second round of Presidential voting, Victor Owusu had failed to carry a single constituency in the Upper Region and had taken only 2 out of 14 in the Northern Region. Although this pattern could be attributed to the fact that Limann was a northerner, the PNC leaders were essentially correct in their belief that the Busia/Danquah tradition was not well liked in this part of the country. The 1979 results also confirm the weakness of the Busia/Danquah tradition across the south of the

38 These were Sissala, Navrongo Central and Bolgatanga constituencies.

39 The Konkombas accused Chambas of handing out arms to the Nanumbas in the 1994 conflict. In 1996, the Nanumbas also seem to have deserted him.

40 The NPP did not put up a candidate, leaving the seat to the PCP.

country. Hence Owusu had failed to win a single constituency in the Greater Accra, Central, Western and Volta Regions. The PFP's Regions of strength - that is Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Eastern Region - were the same as those of the NPP in 1996. These two sets of results, separated by a gap of 17 years, strongly suggest that the Busia/Danquah tradition has real difficulties in projecting itself as party of the nation as a whole. In short, the scale of self-delusion in relation to historic voting alignments is very considerable.

From the opposition perspective, a particularly worrying aspect of the results must be the relatively strong showing of the NDC in areas where it came off second best. In Accra itself, the NDC won eight of the thirteen constituencies in the Presidential contest, and seven (likely to be reduced to six on appeal) in the Parliamentary poll. Moreover, in the constituencies it lost, the governing party was usually not too far behind the opposition. Although it came second to the NPP in the two Tema seats, the performance of the NDC was respectable enough. In Tema East, for example, the NDC candidate took 29,915 votes to the 33,421 votes of the victorious NPP candidate. These results demonstrate that while the urban areas presented more of a challenge for the governing party, they were by no means a lost cause. Even in the NPP heartlands of Ashanti, the NDC was able to point to areas of strength. It won the greatest number of Presidential votes in the two southern constituencies of Adansi Asokwa and New Adubiase and the two northern constituencies of Offinso North and Ejura Sekyedumase. In the Parliamentary poll, it narrowly lost Offinso North, but held the others. Moreover, due to a spectacular miscalculation on the part of the NPP and the PCP, who put up rival candidates, the NDC was able to capture the Parliamentary seat of Asokwa East within Kumasi proper. Whereas the NPP lagged a long way behind the NDC in the Regions it lost, except in the Central

42 In Offinso North, Dr, Kofi Apraku won the seat for the NPP by 10,456 voters to the 10,257 votes of the NDC candidate.

43 The NDC candidate won by 30,382 votes to the 28,442 votes of the NPP candidate. The PCP candidate had managed to frustrate an easy victory for the NPP by polling 17,724 votes.
Region, the NDC could notch up votes even in the most apparently hostile territory.

This assessment might appear to bode ill for the long-term health of the Fourth Republic. If recent reports of defections to the NDC are to be believed, the NPP is encountering a shrinkage of its political base. The prospects for the entrenchment of one-party dominance poses an obvious threat to democratic practice. If the opposition parties perceive that they have no realistic chance of winning at the polls, they may be tempted to look to the military once again. The Busia/Danquah tradition has always posed as the implacable opponent of military government. But the reality is that its members have been prepared to co-operate with the men in uniform if they have offered the only means of breaking the stranglehold of the tradition's civilian opponents. On this basis, Kofi Busia profited from his association with the National Liberation Council. And it should not be forgotten that J.A. Kufuor himself served as a PNDC Secretary for Local Government under Rawlings. In that capacity, he was more or less formally representing the Busia/Danquah tradition.

There is one unknown in the political equation as it stands, and that is whether the NDC will cope effectively with the problem of political succession. Because Rawlings cannot stand for a third term without changing the constitution, and has so far shown no inclination to do so, the NDC needs to find a suitable candidate in time for the next elections. Given that Rawlings has been one of the greatest assets of the governing party, there is a real danger that support for the NDC will haemorrhage in his absence. It now appears that J.E.A. Mills will be elevated from his present position of Vice-President. Mills is a political unknown and is not overflowing with charisma, but his attraction for the NDC leadership lies in the fact that he is the creature of Rawlings. In the calculation of party fixers such as Dr. Obed Asamoah, a Mills candidacy would mean that Rawlings would retain his political influence and could continue to bat publicly for the NDC at election time. If Rawlings had set out to change the constitution to facilitate a further bid for the Presidency, it would have had a highly destabilizing effect on the entire political system. At least a Mills candidacy does hold out the possibility of an opposition victory
next time around, and this may be enough to keep the Fourth Republic on the rails.

3. Tenuous Connections: Chiefs, Lawyers and Politicians in The Local Political Arena

In the second part of this paper, I wish to start by shifting the focus to the local political arena in which another cast of characters struts the stage and where the priorities are often of a different order. An earlier academic literature on Ghana arguably set the standard for studies of African politics more generally in mapping out the points where the local and national political arenas intersected. In particular, these studies revealed how political parties were able to mobilize local support by tapping into existing factional alignments surrounding the institution of chieftaincy. It is unfortunate that there has been a dearth of such detailed local studies in recent years, although the revitalized interest in Ghana from outside may soon begin to redress the

balance.45 This paper is a conscious attempt to return to these venerable academic roots.46

Few would dispute the importance attached to chieftaincy in Ghana. As an institution that is effectively semi-detached from the state, it has survived the vicissitudes of independence remarkably well.47 When formal state institutions were on the verge of breakdown at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, chieftaincy still retained a great deal of popular legitimacy. If chiefs had wielded real powers on behalf of state authority, the story would in all likelihood have been a very different one. Be that as it may, it is surely significant that Rawlings, like Nkrumah before him, began by attacking the chiefs and ended up courting them at the point when the revolution was definitively abandoned. In the pantheon of Ghanaian chiefs, of course, none is more elevated than the Asantehene. As the closest thing Ghana has to a constitutional monarch, every government has felt it prudent to maintain cordial relations with the traditional head of the Asante people. But even in parts of the country where chieftaincy is less deeply rooted, it is taken very seriously by all concerned. It is striking that the Konkomba in the Northern Region and the Guans in Akuapem have both sought recognition for their own chiefs, despite conceding that they did not originally have chiefs of their own.

45 Although she does not deal with elections, Michelle Gilbert, op. cit., does offer one highly detailed study of local politics. The Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana has carried out a number of local studies in relation to the 1996 elections. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to obtain a copy of their final publication.

46 One reviewer of my book, complained that it was too local in orientation. I make no apologies for seeking to understand Ghanaian politics from the bottom upwards. Our understanding of the workings of the First Republic were derived precisely from those studies which endeavoured to discuss local in relation to national politics.

47 On the vitality of contemporary chieftaincy, see the special issue on "The New Relevance of Traditional Authorities to Africa's Future", in Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law 37-38, 1996.
The paradox surrounding chieftaincy is, however, that while the institution possesses considerable legitimacy, the incumbents constantly face challenges to their authority. In many traditional areas, there are recurrent plots to unseat the sitting chiefs and to install rival candidates. In the past national governments, starting with the Nkrumah regime, played chieftaincy politics themselves by engineering the destoolment of chiefs who were perceived as disloyal and replacing them with others who were considered more pliable. This fuelled local factionalism because the losing side typically viewed the arrival of a new regime as an opportunity to turn the tables on their opponents. In somewhere like Dagbon, where chieftaincy politics has been especially vigorously contested, the power of chiefly factions has waxed and waned in synchrony with the ebb and flow of national politics.48

In view of the experience of previous elections, one might have expected chieftaincy struggles to have featured prominently in the 1996 campaign. Curiously, however, the detailed coverage in the media made very little reference to this dynamic. It is true that there was considerable press commentary surrounding the selection of candidates in specific constituencies - especially in respect of the NDC. But the furore surrounding the primaries was generally depicted in terms of individual ambition, rather than as the outcome of traditional factional struggles.49 The politicians, or at least those who were important enough to be quoted, also appeared to steer clear of this terrain. At the formal level, at least, the politicians behaved as if the elections would be won by dint of the cogency of their arguments and the self-evident quality of their leadership rather than by exploiting local discord. It is entirely possible, of course, that political aspirants sung a different tune once they were free to roam their constituencies. However, I wish to demonstrate that even where conditions were

48 On the politics of Dagbon, see Staniland, op. cit. and Antoine, op. cit.

49 The greatest controversy surrounded the contests in Tamale, where Ibrahim Adam allegedly used underhand means to secure his nomination, and in Ketu North where Kofi Awoonor sought to replace the Regional Minister, Modestus Ahiable. In the latter case, the opposition press revelled in rumours of a resort to 'juju'.
apparently ripe, the candidates could be surprisingly reticent about exploiting local distemper. In suggesting that the elections of the 1990s were qualitatively different from earlier polls, I am venturing a hypothesis which can only really be substantiated on the basis of many more detailed case-studies than are currently available. Nevertheless, the Hohoe-North constituency may be indicative of the emergence of a different mode of articulation between the national and local political arenas. If so, this is surely a significant departure indeed.

If there was a difference about the election of 1996 (and to some extent 1992 as well), this could be attributed to two recent developments. The first was that the campaign was conducted through the national media as never before. The respective parties sought to project well-honed images of themselves through the newspapers, radio and television. Some of the campaign advertisements were very slick indeed and were almost redolent of an American campaign style. Many impecunious candidates, who were often city slickers, paid only periodic visits to their constituencies and contested their seats from afar. Apart from the spadework provided by their local sympathisers, they depended heavily upon tapping into the image of the national party in order to secure their election. As has already been noted, the opposition politicians probably overestimated the reach of the media, even if television ownership in rural households had increased markedly in the rural areas. But because the perception was that the election was a genuinely national affair, as opposed to the sum total of 200 local contests, politicians may have felt less impelled to stir the cauldron of local intrigue. Certainly, the leadership of the respective parties regarded local jealousies as a detraction from the substantive national issues.

The second important development was that the Constitution of the Fourth Republic effectively insulated chieftaincy from political interference. Paragraph 270 binds the hands of Parliament and the executive in stipulating that:
Parliament shall have no power to enact any law which -
(a) confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever; or (b) in any way detracts or derogates from the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy.50

In the event of a chieftaincy dispute, the Constitution lays down that the case will be decided by the Regional House of Chiefs, with leave to appeal to the National House of Chiefs and subsequently the Supreme Court.51 Because many of the chiefs who are supposed to adjudicate the cases have their own vested interests, this is certainly not a recipe for rapid resolution of existing disputes.52 But it does mean that politicians no longer have anything very much to offer chiefly factions other than their moral support. For that reason, prospective candidates in 1996 were more likely to concentrate on what their side could deliver in terms of local amenities. In contexts where whole villages were in dispute with one another, there was still some scope for punishing some local factions and rewarding others. But the provision of most local amenities was under the control of the District Assemblies which, nominally at least, were outside party politics.53 In view of this shift in the balance of influence, it would have been surprising if the politicians had not modified their campaign strategies accordingly.

This raises the question of how the prospective Parliamentary candidates did in fact engage with local political actors in the changed  


51 Ibid., paragraph 273.

52 I have argued that the prospects for chieftaincy are actually a great deal more problematic than some revisionist opinion would have us believe. See "An abandoned project? the nuances of chieftaincy, development and history in Ghana's Volta Region", Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law 37-38, 1996.

53 District Assembly candidates are not permitted to stand for election on a party platform.
conditions of the Fourth Republic. In what follows, I wish to draw attention to a range of contacts which was certainly important if not always explicitly 'political'. I will deal with the case of the Hohoe North constituency, which is located in the central portion of the Volta Region. This is a constituency where I conducted field research during the 1992 elections and what follows may therefore be read in conjunction with an earlier piece.\textsuperscript{54} More specifically, I will focus on Likpe Traditional Area, which makes up a section of that constituency, and which has witnessed a series of especially bitter and protracted chieftaincy disputes in recent times. From there, I will go on to examine the selection of Parliamentary candidates in Hohoe North and their connections to local interest groups. Finally, I will consider the extent to which chieftaincy and local loyalties featured in the electoral campaign and in the shaping of the final result.

3. 1. A Profile of Hohoe North Constituency

The Hohoe District is divided into two Parliamentary constituencies, Hohoe North and Hohoe South, and it is the former which is under examination here. The Hohoe North constituency must rank as one of the most diverse in the country as a whole. To start with, it comprises five Ewe-speaking communities (or \textit{dukowo}), namely Gbi, Alavanyo, Gbledi, Fodome and Wli. In addition it encompasses four of the so-called Central Togo minorities, namely the Akpafu, Likpe, Lolobi and Santrokofi, who speak separate languages and who are nowadays inclined to insist on their cultural distinctiveness from their Ewe neighbours.\textsuperscript{55} The Gbi town of Hohoe is a commercial centre of some importance, by virtue of its location on the edge of the cocoa belt and its strategic position on the main arterial route connecting the yam-producing areas of the northern Volta Region with the Accra market. Hohoe recorded a population of some 21,000 people at the time of the last census in 1984, which would mean that it contains something in

\textsuperscript{54} See Nugent, \textit{Big Men}, pp. 249-261.

the order of 26,000 people today.56 As befits a town of that size, Hohoe is home to a sizeable stranger population, consisting largely of Muslim traders who inhabit the zongo on the northern outskirts of the town, along the main trunk road to Jasikan. The rest of the constituency is predominantly rural and there is a tradition of regarding Hohoe proper with a certain amount of jealousy, even if outlying villages depend upon its markets to purchase many of their needs. This would be certainly be true of Likpe itself which has spent the last five decades trying to come to terms with the burgeoning prosperity of the Gbi people, who have been construed as traditional rivals. The reason for centring this analysis upon Likpe proper is that, in a Region which has witnessed more than its fair share of chieftaincy disputes, it has been at the centre of a series of well-documented contests. This, together with the fact that Likpe has spawned a number of important political actors on the national stage, makes it an ideal setting in which to explore connections between different levels of the system.

3.1.1. The Foundations of Factional Politics in Likpe

Likpe Traditional Area encompasses ten villages located between Hohoe and the border with Togo. In Likpe, chieftaincy disputes have been a recurrent feature of the twentieth century experience. In 1930, in the midst of one such wrangle, an exasperated District Commissioner was led to comment of the Bakpele (as they prefer to call themselves) that "the majority of them are delightful people but extremely obstinate".57 This is a sentiment that has been echoed by more than one of his successors down to the present day. As is true of

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56 This assumes that the population of Hohoe rose by the same as the national average. It is estimated that the population of Ghana as a whole rose from 12 million to around 15 million between 1984 and 1996.

so many rural communities in Ghana, there are political fault lines that run through the body politic which have imparted a certain regularity to events. Disputes which have remained in abeyance for years, and sometimes decades, have a habit of resurfacing when least expected. There have been three categories of dispute, which warrant some discussion here.

**Table Three: The Chieftaincy Hierarchy in Likpe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Okakple (Mate)</th>
<th>Bakwa/Todome</th>
<th>Avedzeme</th>
<th>Mate</th>
<th>Bala</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nkwanta</td>
<td>Agbozome</td>
<td>Abrani</td>
<td>Kukurantumi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koforidua</td>
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</table>

Firstly, there have been periodic struggles between the clans and families claiming previous occupancy of a given village stool. Across most of the Volta Region stools, as the symbols of chiefly authority, represent an Akan borrowing from the nineteenth century, and Likpe is almost certainly no exception to this rule. Traditions that were collected in the colonial period described the first leader, a woman by the name of Klemefi, as a fetish priestess. However, possession of a stool had become an essential attribute of chiefly authority by the start of colonial period. Under German rule, the reluctance of candidates to come forward, because of the unpopularity attached to the collection of taxes and the marshalling of forced labour, meant

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58 The polities which had the closest relations with their Akan overlords, the Akwamus and the Asante, adopted their politico-military structures most thoroughly. Peki is the classic instance. See C.W. Welman, "Peki", first published in 1825 and reprinted in The Native States of the Gold Coast. (London: Dawsons, 1969). In the case of another Ewe people, see Michel Verdon, The Abutia Ewe of West Africa: A Chiefdom That Never Was (Berlin, New York & Amsterdam: Mouton, 1983).

59 There is a direct parallel here with Guan traditions in Akuapem, in the Eastern Region, which tell of how fetish priests gave way to a system of Akan chieftaincy imposed by the Akims. Gilbert, *op. cit.*
that the net was cast wider than it might otherwise have been. 60 This led to a proliferation of potential claimants when chiefly offices became more attractive under British rule from 1919. On the death or destoolment of an incumbent, the normal pattern has been for all of the families which have previously supplied a chief to seek to provide the next successor. On more than one occasion this century, the losing side has physically uprooted itself rather than admit defeat and submit to the winners. Hence Kukurantumi seceded from Bala in 1927, and Koforidua and Agbozome broke away from Avedzeme in 1939/40. This has not always provided a lasting solution, however, in that the dissident elements have tended to fall out amongst themselves once safely installed in their new homes. For example, the Vute and Basio clans which joined the exodus to Agbozome later sought recognition of their own separate chiefs on the grounds that they were really ethnically distinct peoples.

The politics of the Paramount stool has itself conformed to this pattern of periodic succession struggles. Until 1965, the chief of Mate was simultaneously the Okakple of Likpe 61, a position which was filled by a candidate from one of two clans: the Kalelentis and the Kalegatos. After the destoolment of the incumbent in 1927, the intensity of the argument between the clans was such that the administration decided to establish an official enquiry to finally resolve the issue of who was entitled to the stool. In 1932, the Gutch enquiry established the principle of an orderly rotation between the two royal families and, on this occasion, awarded the stool to the Kalelenti candidate. 62 Chief Boke Akototse III remained on the stool until his death in 1955, at which point the dispute resurfaced once again. Whereas the Kalelentis insisted that the Gutch findings had been mistaken, the Kalegatos

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60 In Mate itself, the Kalelentis apparently refused the stool three times because no-one wished to take on the burden.

61 This is roughly equivalent to the Akan title of Omanhene or Paramount Chief.

62 GNAA ADM 39/1/216, "Ho-Kpandu District Native Affairs", "Findings of Mr. John Gutch in the Enquiry Held at Likpe Mate on 17th- 20th December 1932".
were itching to place one of their own number on the vacant stool. The Nkrumah government revisited the earlier debate and eventually decided to uphold the principle of rotation in 1959. The fact that Nana Soglo Allo II, from the Kalegato family, also happened to be a stalwart of the CPP certainly helped his cause. However, this turned out to be a temporary solution because he died in mysterious circumstances at the end of the following year. The Kalegatos insisted on being given a second chance on the grounds that Nana Soglo Allo II had been poisoned by his wife, who hailed from the other side, and that the Kalelentis had never accorded him the respect that was due to a chief in the first place.

For their part, most of the Kalelentis were determined to regain the stool and now found it expedient to appeal to the principle of rotation to advance their claim. Surprisingly, their clan head (from the Lemboe family) indicated his willingness to let the Kalegatos have a second chance on the understanding that this would not prejudice the underlying principle of rotation. Because the Kalegatos could draw on the support of most of the other chiefs, and possibly because their candidate was once again a CPP sympathiser, the government agreed to gazette the brother of the deceased chief as Nana Soglo Allo III. The Kalelentis appealed in vain for a fresh enquiry and, finding the CPP administration unyielding, opted to follow precedent by seceding from Mate altogether. In 1964, the Kalelentis founded the new village of Abrani along with other clans who had supported them, but left the Lemboes behind in their former village. The Kalelentis later sought to reopen the case after the fall of Nkrumah, alleging that their non-CPP loyalties had been used against them. An enquiry was duly instituted in 1967, but the Kalelenti case was fatally undermined when it emerged that their candidate had himself enrolled in the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute. After the final collapse of his bid for the Paramountcy, Nana Mantey Akototse IV of Abrani sought recognition as a village chief, but was repeatedly blocked by Nana Soglo Allo III who insisted on the return of stool properties first. Although he was formally gazetted in 1976, it was not until 1984 that he was admitted to the Likpe Traditional Council. His eventual willingness to seek an accommodation with his former rival was partly due to the fact new challengers were emerging from within his own clan, while the Gudeve clan had started to claim a separate stool for itself.
A second category of dispute, surrounding the customary status of the Okakple, has also remained in abeyance for long periods of time, only to be reactivated by the playing out of other conflicts. Over the course of the twentieth century, the oral traditions of the Likpe people have shown themselves to be nothing if not fluid and mutually contradictory. But one theme which constantly recurs in the retelling of Likpe history is the founding of a commonwealth, at some time in the more or less distant past, through a political union between a group of autchthons (the forbears of the Todome/Bakwa people) and another group of migrants led by Klemefi. The two sides, who allegedly combined for mutual security, are said to have come to a formal arrangement - which I term the Likpe Constitution - whereby the migrants would provide the chiefs while the indigenes, as the landowners, would retain certain other prerogatives. These traditions have generally been given a different twist by the constituent sections of the community. The Mate versions emphasize the decision of all the sub-groups to confer the chieftaincy on their village, which has been taken to mean that the selection of the Likpe chief is their own internal affair. The disagreements between the Mate versions turn on whether Klemefi initially stepped aside in favour of Allo or Lemboe - who represent the first chiefs of the Kalegato and Kalelenti clans respectively. By contrast, the Todome/Bakwa versions insist that their leader created a stool for the migrants who had hitherto lacked one. This has sometimes been interpreted to mean that they have the right to withdraw the stool from an errant or incompetent Okakple. On occasion, the Todome/Bakwas have even implied that

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64 Klemefi was said to be incapable of performing her chiefly functions when she was menstruating and so handed over to her brothers. Apart from the gender dimension, which is fascinating in itself, it is tempting to read this tradition as a statement on the new responsibilities attached to the system of chieftaincy that was being introduced. The Kalelenti and Kalegato versions diverge on the question of which brother succeeded her.

65 On one occasion in the twentieth century, the Todome chief has actually physically removed the stool from Mate.
the incomers usurped power which was rightfully theirs. In other villages outside Mate, there has been less support for Todome/Bakwa claims, but they have shared their insistence that the Mate chief was always a first amongst equals with strictly limited powers. There have been occasions over the course of this century when criticism of an Okakple has spilled over into a questioning of the very right of Mate to monopolize the paramountcy. In the early 1950s, for example, a rebel faction sought to destool the Okakple and two other chiefs and then to transfer the paramountcy to the village of Bakwa.

Despite these challenges, the very precariousness of the Likpe paramountcy is what has enabled incumbent Mate chiefs to fight their corner successfully. During the 1930s and 1940s, the British sought to persuade Boke Akototse III to surrender his autonomy by amalgamating under another more powerful chief - preferably either the chief of Kpandu or of Buem. With strong local support, he held out against the pressure that was exerted upon him. It was only when he finally agreed to enter a federated state with Gbi and Ve in 1949, which was supposed to involve no loss of 'sovereignty', that he suffered a backlash in the form of attempts to destool him. Nevertheless, his failure to swear an oath of allegiance to any other chief was what secured the coveted status of Paramount Chief for the Likpehene after independence. This was later retracted by Decree 112 of the National Liberation Council which was supposed to resolve the anomalies created by the Nkrumah regime's interference in chieftaincy affairs. A Legislative Instrument of 1974 re-admitted the Likpe chief to full membership of the Regional House of Chiefs, but it left the issue of the paramountcy ambiguous. The Committee of Enquiry into Volta Region Chieftaincy Affairs of 1975/76 was supposed to resolve the matter of paramountcies once and for all, but its final report was suppressed by the government. The perceived diminution in status of the Likpe stool was a serious matter in the eyes of all sections of the community. For that reason, the efforts of Nana Soglo Allo III to bolster his position was likely to command widespread support. The tactical brilliance of Nana Soglo Allo III lay in subtly linking the defence of his status on a Regional stage to the fortification of his position within Likpe.
The key to the conjuring trick lay in a subtle reworking of existing tradition. During the struggles of the amalgamation era, Chief Nana Agya Mensah of Avedzeme had seized on a tradition that Klemefi had led the Bakpele migrants from Atebubu and used it to assert that the Bakpele were really Akans in origin. At the time, Boke Akototse III had opposed this interpretation of history, insisting that the Bakpele actually originated from the Ewe cradle of Notsie. However, Nana Soglo Allo III later decided to elaborate upon the Agya Mensah thesis. During the 1960s, a whole range of Akan titles came into usage, representing either translations from the nearest Sekpele term or the invention of entirely new offices. Hence, Likpe acquired the complete package of queen mothers, linguists and asafo leaders. At the same time, the Akan nomenclature for wing chiefs was imported wholesale. The Bakwa chief became Benkumhene (head of the left wing), the Bala chief became Nifahene (head of the right wing), and the Avedzeme chief became Adontenhene (head of the vanguard). The problem with finding a place for both the Bakwa and Todome chiefs, who belonged to the same division, was initially resolved by styling the latter the Krontihene. Later the Todome chief, as the senior sub-chief, began to style himself the Benkumhene. This jockeying for titles, with the attendant confusion, provides a clear illustration of the extent to which supposedly ancient traditions have been manufactured in recent times. Nana Soglo Allo III also went a step further and created a separate chief for the town of Mate, who was initially styled the Gyasehene and later the Kyidomhene (head of the rearguard). This office was then conferred on the Lemboe family to reward it for past support in the stool dispute. By separating the Okakple from

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66 Later, Nana Soglo Allo III flirted with the idea that the Likpe people were really Guans, which numbered them amongst the original inhabitants of Ghana. This proved problematic, however, because the Guans did not have stools before the Akan imposed their rule, which rather undermined the claim to a Paramountcy. See Nugent, Myths of Origin, pp. 18-21.

67 Nana Agya Mensah II had been styling himself Adontenhene since the rebellion against Akototose.

68 It was later taken away when the first incumbent, Mensah Lemboe, was convicted for fraud and destooled. The position then passed to the Dzahini family where it has remained ever since.
everyday Mate business, and giving him sole oversight for the affairs of Likpe as a whole, Nana Soglo Allo III had effectively elevated his office to something other than a first amongst equals.

This account leads logically to a discussion of the third line of fracture. The Akanization of Likpe chieftaincy did not of itself create a hierarchy of offices. The British system had explicitly recognized the headchief in Mate and subchiefs in Todome, Bakwa, Bala and Avedzeme. The leaders of the other villages, which had seceded from the original settlements, were regarded as nothing more than headmen. The context was one in which the British administration was endeavouring to scale down the number of 'petty chiefdoms'. After independence, however, new tiers were added to the system and a process of titular inflation was set in motion. While the Okakple became a full Paramount Chief, the sub-chiefs were gazetted as divisional chiefs and the former headmen became sub-divisional chiefs. When the Likpe Traditional Council was established, all these chiefs were given representation on it. But they were also slotted into a fixed position within a hierarchy. For example, sub-divisional chiefs were not supposed to approach the Paramount Chief without passing through their respective divisional chiefs. Much of the internal politics of the Traditional Council has sprung from the efforts of the divisional chiefs to hold the line, while their sub-chiefs have lobbied for an equivalent status for themselves. Equally the sub-divisional chiefs have had to fend off their own challenges from below. For example, as has already been noted, the Basio and Vute clans in Agbozome sought recognition for their own chiefs who would owe allegiance directly to the Avedzeme chief. Although this posed a direct threat to the Agbozome chief, Nana Sekyere at one point agreed that separate Basio and Vute chiefs might be recognized on condition that he was made a divisional chief. This naturally threatened the primacy of the Avedzeme chief who regarded the creation of Basio and Vute chiefs precisely as a means of cutting Nana Sekyere down to size.

Given these extremely complex lines of fracture, there have been abundant opportunities for a skilful political operator to forge tactical alliances across different levels of the system. In his heyday, Nana Soglo Allo III was the absolute master of local politics, appearing to
back one faction in a dispute only to switch sides when victory looked likely to upset the equilibrium. Like the most adroit African statesman, he appreciated that the secret of political success lay in keeping everyone else off balance, whilst appearing to have the best interests of the whole community at heart. It was when his health began to fail in the mid-1980s, however, that he began to lose his grip over local politics. As he visibly weakened, both physically and politically, a new actor took centre stage. The latter, as we shall see, proved even more creative in reworking local history and exploiting the existing tensions within Likpe. Indeed Vincent Asamoah threatened to engineer a veritable revolution in the interpretation of Likpe history and the composition of its chieftaincy structures.

3.1.2. Vincent Asamoah and the New Politics of Likpe

In the Hohoe District, the Asamoah name is one which connotes wealth and political power. Dr. Obed Asamoah, from Likpe-Bala, was Ghana's longest serving Minister (or Secretary) of Foreign Affairs, having served throughout the PNDC era and into the Fourth Republic. At the time of writing, he is the Attorney-General, a post which he held for some years in tandem with that of Foreign Minister. In addition, Dr. Asamoah is generally considered as the effective brains behind the NDC and is credited with having engineered its victory in 1992. Dr. Asamoah visits his home whenever he can, and maintains a close interest in the affairs of the District. For the moment, I am less interested in the character of Dr. Asamoah than with his brother, Vincent Asamoah. The latter is a former pharmacist who has turned what was originally planned as a private hospital into a hotel on the outskirts of Hohoe. He is perceived as a man of considerable financial means. In addition, he happens to be the 'founder member' of the NDC in Hohoe North constituency. As we shall see, he wields a considerable degree of influence over party affairs in the District. At this juncture, though, I am more concerned with his role in the internal politics of Likpe.

Vincent Asamoah has played a more or less active part in Bakpele affairs since the 1960s when he served as General Secretary of the Likpe Students Union which sought to mediate in the stool dispute. In more recent times, his reputation has grown as an uncompromising
litigant in his own right. If funerals represent the end of some human affairs, they often represent the beginning of others in Ghana. The conflict which has engulfed Likpe for the past fifteen years began simply enough with the funeral for the brother of Obed and Vincent Asamoah in 1983. The deceased had served as linguist to the Bala chief, but due to ill-health Vincent had been acting on his behalf. When the funeral invitations were despatched, they referred to Vincent Asamoah as the chief linguist of Likpe. This provoked an immediate response from Nana Soglo Allo to the effect that while he might be linguist to the Nifahene, he had no relationship to the Paramount stool. This elicited a lengthy riposte from Vincent Asamoah, alleging that the office of chief linguist had resided with the town of Bala since the Likpe commonwealth was first created, and that it had been entrusted to his own family, without serious challenge, since colonial times. This letter was followed by a formal request from the Nifah division that the Likpe Traditional Council acknowledge that the position of chief linguist rightfully belonged to the Asamoah family. This was challenged by the Osibo family from Mate which insisted that it had always provided the linguists to the Paramount Chief. Thus began a process of litigation which has continued until the present day.

In customary disputes of this nature, the court of first instance is the Traditional Council. Coming at a time when the formal legal system was under attack for its tardiness, this might have appeared more likely to produce a quick result - as well as one that bore the stamp of local legitimacy. The reality was, however, that the structural tensions within Likpe were bound to infuse legal process with a strong dose of factional politics. When Nana Bulley Osai VI of Bala and Nana Kofi Agyeman II of Kukurantumi sued Kwabena Osibo and Nana Soglo Allo III over the affair in 1983, the composition of the Judicial Committee became an immediate bone of contention. The

69 Recounted in Allo stool files [henceforth ASF], E.K. Osibo to President of Likpe Traditional Council (23 May 1988).

70 ASF, Vincent Asamoah to Nana Soglo Allo III (26 April 1983).

71 On the courts and the revolution, see Nugent, Big Men, pp. 56-57.
Todomehene and the Avedzemehene, as ranking divisional chiefs, were unlikely to be sympathetic towards any attempt to tamper with the existing hierarchy. Not surprisingly, therefore, the plaintiffs objected to their membership of the panel on the grounds that they were inherently biased. Less explicity, Kwabena Osibo argued that the two divisional chiefs should not sit on the case because they were destined to be his witnesses. Furthermore, Nana Soglo Allo III himself contended that it was against custom to sue the Paramount Chief in this fashion.

The case had therefore to be restarted, with the inclusion of Vincent Asamoah as one of the plaintiffs and the omission of Nana Soglo Allo III as defendant. A fresh panel was then appointed, consisting of Nana Kwaku Samba IV of Koforidua, Nana Mantey Akototse IV of Abrani and Togbe Yaw Aduge of Nkwanta.72 The significance of this change was that lesser chiefs, who were unlikely to be so concerned about the preservation of the pecking order, would now be sitting on the case. Furthermore, the Abrani chief was hardly likely to look favourably on the Osibo cause given that the latter family had sided with the Kalegatos during the stool dispute of the early 1960s. Reading the political portents, the Osibo family took the matter to the High Court in 1988, arguing that two members of the panel had not been properly gazetted and so were not recognized members of the Traditional Council.73 The court concurred and the committee had once more to be disbanded. An attempt was then made to reach an amicable settlement, using the good offices of Dr. Obed Asamoah who had so far distanced himself from his brother's cause. But when arbitration failed, the matter was referred back to the Traditional Council. At this point, the factional equation underwent a significant shift. The Bala chief, who had been the most prominent backer of Vincent Asamoah, suddenly announced that he "had backed a wrong cause", and that he

72 Nkwanta is a village populated by strangers, which is attached to the Bakwa stool.

73 The complaints were against Nana Samba and Togbe Aduge. Kwabena Osibo also alleged bias on the part of the Abrani chief in a letter to the Regional House of Chiefs, dated 19 July 1986.
was withdrawing from the case.74 This was to lead to a serious rift in Bala between the supporters of Nana Bulley and those of Vincent Asamoah. The latter nevertheless persisted with the case which finally came before yet another Judicial Committee in August 1990.

Amidst this complicated detail, it would be worth pausing to consider the Asamoah case in further detail because it demonstrates how far a shrewd political operator can go in fashioning a novel interpretation of custom out of existing traditions. As with most public disputation in Likpe, the Asamoah statement of claim began with the forging of the Likpe Constitution.75 He asserted that a conscious decision had been made to divide up the various offices between the different villages from the very start. That is, while Mate received the chieftaincy, the post of stool father was given to Avedzeme, that of mankrado went to Todome/Bakwa and the position of linguist was conferred on Bala. He went on to claim that the Bala chiefs had traditionally served as linguists for the whole of Likpe, but that this came to be seen as demeaning to their position as divisional chiefs. Hence the responsibility was devolved onto the Asamoah family in 1911. By contrast, Nana Soglo Allo III insisted that the position of Akyeamehene had never formally existed and that linguists had certainly never been enstooled. In his recollection, which is borne out by whatever evidence exists in the National Archives, an Okakple had normally asked someone from Mate to act as his linguist. The suggestion was that a customary right had gradually grown up around the Osibo family, but that the underlying right to appoint a linguist had always rested with the Likpe chief himself. Emmanuel Osibo, who had previously filled the position, made the additional observation that it would have been quite anomalous, and impractical, for the chief and the linguist to hail from separate villages.76

74 ASF, Circular letter from Nana Bulley Osai VI (16 March 1990)

75 This is reproduced in ASF, Judgement of the Judicial Committee of Likpe Traditional Council in the case of Nana Kosi Asamoah Egletsu II of Likpe Bala and Nana Okyerefo Kasanku I of Likpe Kukurantumi vrs Nana Kwabena Osibo of Likpe Mate, 28 August 1990.

The response of Vincent Asamoah was to revive an earlier thesis, which Nana Soglo Allo III had once championed himself, namely that the Bakpele were really Akans. He then went on to contend that within the Akan system of chieftaincy it was quite normal for the linguist to come from a different village to that of the Omanhene. In support of this argument, he cited J.B. Danquah's classic *Akan Laws and Customs* as well as the example of Ashanti. To quote from the summary of the Judicial Committee:

He said there is also Akyeamehene of Ashianti [sic] in the person of Nana Bafour Osei Akoto who hails from a different town besides Kumasi and therefore since the traditional setup in Likpe is the same as that of Ashianti [sic], that is why the Akyeamehene of Likpe also comes from Bala and not Mate the seat of the paramountcy.

Going still further, Vincent Asamoah insisted that, in accordance with Akan tradition, a chief linguist was to be regarded as a substantive chief in possession of a stool. Given that the very existence of stools in Likpe seems to have been a comparatively recent innovation, this was a bold assertion indeed. In fact, the real reason why the Bala chief appears to have parted company with his former protégé was that he woke up to the possibility that his own position might come under threat if Vincent Asamoah was duly recognized as a chief in his own right. Hence their falling out was itself a variation on an established theme of factional segmentation in Likpe divisional politics.

The new Judicial Committee, consisting of Nana Kwaku Samba IV of Koforidua, Nana Mantey Akototse IV of Abrani and Nana Kwame Norgbe I of Nkwanta, received written submissions from both sides. However, the Osibo family failed to attend the final hearing, as a


78 ASF, Judgement of the Judicial Committee, 28 August 1990, p.9.

79 A committee, calling itself the Likpe Bala Concerned Citizens' Committee, issued a report on 4 October 1991, which was critical of both parties. With respect to Vincent Asamoah, it expressed concern about the breach of tradition involved in his enstoolment as a chief.
result of which the committee came down in favour of Vincent Asamoah. Although greatly pleased by the result, which he significantly trumpeted as a "victory over [the] Mates",80 he appreciated that final victory depended upon being formally gazetted by government. This, in turn, rested upon the willingness of the Traditional Council to submit his papers via the House of Chiefs to government. Nana Soglo Allo III and the divisional chiefs were able to stall for some time on the grounds that the case had raised a fundamental constitutional issue which needed to be looked into more closely.81 Moreover, the Osibos appealed to the High Court on the grounds that the Bala chief had withdrawn as plaintiff and that the suit had therefore been struck out.82 Nana Soglo Allo III even sought the suspension of the members of the Judicial Committee from the Traditional Council on the basis of this appeal.83 In sum, the fact that the Akyemehene case remained sub judice for the first half of the decade prevented Vincent Asamoah from claiming final victory.

The affair entered a new, and even more divisive, phase in January 1995 with the death of Nana Soglo Allo III, which, predictably enough, reopened the Likpe Stool dispute. The Kalegatos wasted no time in performing an enstoolment ceremony for Robert Alloh, who was the youngest son of the deceased chief. As a lawyer working in London, he was typical of the modern Ghanaian chief: educated, relatively well-off and cosmopolitan in outlook. On the Kalelenti side, the Abrani chief did not seek to claim the stool for himself, recognizing that he had forfeited that right by seceding from Mate. However, the Lemboe family did

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80 Files of Emilson Kwashie [henceforth EKF], Vincent Asamoah to Nana Bulley Osai VI and elders (6 September 1990).

81 Nana Soglo Allo III requested the President of the National House of Chiefs to appoint a commission of enquiry, ASF letter dated 2 December 1994.

82 Their contention was that a new Judicial Committee should have been set up ASF, Affidavit of Kwabena Osibo in respect of appeal to High Court. dated 18 December 1990.

83 ASF, Letter from chiefs of Abrani, Koforidua and Nkwanta to Registrar of Likpe Traditional Council (4 February 1991).
enstool their own candidate, Elias Torddey, as members of the Kalelenti clan.\textsuperscript{84} Torddey was no match for Alloh in educational terms, a consideration which even Dr. Obed Asamoah admitted ought to have some bearing on the succession. The Lemboe candidate also lacked the financial clout to fight a lengthy legal battle on his own. The obvious solution was to enter into an alliance with Vincent Asamoah who was able and apparently ready to provide financial support, and who could promise the backing of the sub-divisional chiefs. The \textit{quid pro quo} was that Ampofo would support his own recognition as a chief if he was victorious in the struggle for the paramountcy.

The scene was therefore set for a series of contests in which the divisional chiefs and the Kalegato faction in Mate lined up against Vincent Asamoah, the sub-divisional chiefs and the Lemboe family in Mate. One predictable battleground was the Likpe Traditional Council, while the other was the courts. In 1977, appraised of the fact that Nana Mantey Akototse IV was about to be gazetted, Nana Soglo Allo III had persuaded the Traditional Council to pass a resolution to the effect that the Likpe stool should cease to be rotatory.\textsuperscript{85} In 1990, a number of the sub-divisional chiefs, sensing that the incumbent was ailing, passed a resolution calling for the abrogation of that decision. Fortified by a numerical majority in the Traditional Council, the Asamoah faction was able to formally overturn the decision five years later.\textsuperscript{86} This cleared the way for the candidacy of Ampofo, despite the fact that the Lemboe family had apparently never provided chiefs within the Kalelenti clan.

Although this decision was a setback, the Allo faction was momentarily secure in the knowledge that the presidency of the Traditional Council still lay with the divisional chiefs. One of them had been acting

\textsuperscript{84} As early as 1981, Mensah Lemboe (the destooled Matehene) had indicated the intention of his family to stake a claim to the paramountcy when it became vacant. ASF, letter to Registrar of Regional House of Chiefs, dated 7 December 1981.

\textsuperscript{85} ASF, Resolution adopted by the Likpe Traditional Council, Likpe Mate, 3 June 1977.

\textsuperscript{86} ASF, Resolution dated 28 December 1990, and Minutes of Meeting of Likpe Traditional Council, dated 20 January 1995.
president since the time that Nana Soglo Allo III became incapable of fulfilling his duties. The Bala chief, who served for a period, became ineligible after he admitted to having lent out some of the money which had been collected for the Likpe electrification project. This provided the excuse to suspend him from the Council altogether in 1995. Because the Avedzeme chief, Nana Ntri II, had not yet been formally gazetted, the presidency necessarily devolved upon the Todome chief and remained with him thereafter. Nana Komla Dihie III shared the distaste of the other divisional chiefs for what they all saw as a crude attempt to bring money and family influence to bear with intent to completely rewrite the Likpe Constitution. In their collective opinion, the Akyeamehene affair boiled down to the fundamental issue of whether hallowed tradition should be amenable to purchase by the highest bidder - or the most endowed litigant. In his capacity as acting president, the Todome chief made his own position very clear by delaying the processing of the enstoolment forms of Vincent Asamoah. However, he soon found himself at the centre of a legal tussle that would break his resolve altogether.

The arrival of Robert Alloh on the scene emboldened the divisional chiefs to stand up to Vincent Asamoah. In 1994, when the Nana Soglo Allo III was effectively incapacitated, and his son was starting to take an active interest in the Akyeamehene dispute, the divisional chiefs wrote a strongly worded denunciation of Vincent Asamoah to the Regional House of Chiefs, with copies to President Jerry Rawlings and the Regional Minister. The memorandum charged that Vincent had relied upon the elevated position of Dr. Obed Asamoah to intimidate his

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87 Nana Bulley was suspended on a motion proposed by Nana Kofi Sekyere II of Agbozome and seconded by Vincent Asamoah. EKF, Minutes of meeting of Likpe Traditional Council, dated 20 January 1995. The final blow came early in 1997 when the Bala chief was found guilty in the courts for misappropriation and, having been deterred from launching an appeal by Dr. Asamoah, was forced to abdicate.

88 Nana Ntri II was a retired soldier who became Avedzeme chief in succession to Nana Agya Mensah II. He has since died.

89 ASF, Memorandum on Likpe Chieftaincy Affairs, dated 6 May 1994.
opportunities. Amongst other things, it claimed that the Asamoah brothers had visited Nana Komla Dihie and that Obed had threatened to have him imprisoned if he continued to obstruct Vincent's plans. The memorandum further asserted that Vincent Asamoah harboured designs upon the Paramountcy itself. This despatch, which was no doubt acutely embarrassing to Dr. Obed Asamoah, was followed by the issue of a writ for libel against the divisional chiefs and the other signatories by Vincent Asamoah. Whereas the latter had considerable financial resources at his disposal, the divisional chiefs could only hope that Robert Alloh would come to their aid.

The chiefs initially resolved to fight the case and recruited the services of Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, a prominent lawyer from Likpe-Agbozome, to fight their case. Apart from any consideration of legal fees, one imagines that Kakrabah-Quarshie would have relished the opportunity to fight this particular case. He was a fierce political opponent of Dr. Obed Asamoah, who he regarded as having sold out from the moment he became a member of the Rawlings government in 1982. Kakrabah-Quarshie subsequently defended a number of political opponents of the PNDC regime. Towards the end of the PNDC period, he had publicly castigated Asamoah, who was himself a lawyer, for having falsely pronounced that Ghana had no political prisoners. On a more personal level, he was resentful of the manner in which Obed and his brother had thrown their weight about in the Hohoe area. Just as Kakrabah-Quarshie became involved in the libel case, a letter of retraction, purporting to come from the divisional chiefs was circulated.90 Although the Avedzeme chief wrote to state that he stood by the original memorandum,91 Nana Komla Dihie had apparently decided to make his peace with Vincent Asamoah rather than incur financial damages which he could not hope to pay. From being one of Vincent Asamoah's fiercest critics, the Todome chief suddenly became his most powerful ally by virtue of his position as acting president of the Traditional Council. Although Kakrabah-Quarshie indicated that he

90 ASF, withdrawal letter to President of Volta Region House of Chiefs (17 July 1994)

91 ASF, Nana Mensah Ntri II to Acting President of Likpe Traditional Council (18 July 1994), copied to President of Regional House of Chiefs,
was prepared to continue with the libel case, he withdrew on the understanding that his legal services were no longer required.

Meanwhile, as the Likpe Stool dispute was brought to the attention of the Volta Region House of Chiefs, both sides recruited firms of lawyers to present their case. Whereas the Lemboe family turned to the Ho-based firm of Mawudoku & Co, which was also used by Vincent Asamoah, the Kalegatos initially approached Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie. The latter indicated that he was only too willing to fight the case, but soon backed off from it. The Kalegatos then took their business to the chambers of Akuffo-Addo, Prempeh and Co. based in Accra. At this point, a small digression is essential. On the national political stage, Nana Akuffo-Addo is a highly significant political figure, insofar as he represents a fresh embodiment of an old power network. Hailing from one of the most eminent families in the Eastern Region, it was fairly predictable that he should have been drawn to the legal profession. It was equally natural that he should became immersed in party politics with the return to constitutional rule in 1992, and that he should find a home in the NPP. Akuffo-Addo has sometimes been tipped as a future Presidential candidate, although the old guard of the NPP have regarded him as too experienced, and apparently expect him to wait his turn. From the point of view of a political rising star, legal practice conferred sufficient status as well as the financial means to establish a political base. As an active member of the NDC in the United Kingdom, Robert Alloh belonged to a different political camp altogether. However, family connections and the fact that Nana Akuffo-Addo's firm was reputed to be amongst the best, ensured that the Allo case would be referred to his practice. From the point of view of our unfolding story, a still more intriguing twist is that the case landed on the desk of Tony Akoto Ampaw, who also happened to hail from the Hohoe area. Akoto Ampaw was a well-known left-winger who had fallen foul of the PNDC on a number of occasions during the 1980s. Finding himself on the radical end of Nkrumahist politics, his ideas were very different to those of Akuffo-Addo.

92 Robert Alloh's mother belonged to the royal line in Tafo in the Eastern Region.
Hence we encounter an intriguing situation in which a chiefly aspirant of NDC persuasions took his case to a firm of lawyers which was run by a prominent NPP politician and which employed the services of a committed Nkrumahist active in the service of the PCP. This might be taken as a simple illustration of the separation between the political and legal spheres. But at another level, this is a perfect illustration - in microcosm - of the interconnectedness of the Ghanaian elite. Although their politics might differ, members of the intellectual elite are often closely associated with one another through ties of marriage and schooling. Hence political opponents are often not averse to working or, for that matter, socializing together. This is perhaps one reason why Ghanaian politics has not assumed the zero sum quality that it has in many other African states.

In the run-up to the 1996 elections, the struggle for power in Likpe had reached a state of virtual deadlock. While Vincent Asamoah had triumphed in the face of the Osibo appeal to the High Court, three of the divisional chiefs had since appealed, through the firm of Akuffo-Addo, Prempeh and Co., against his being formally gazetted.93 The grounds were that he had not sworn the customary oath of allegiance to the Bala chief, who was by now a sworn enemy, or to the Paramount stool which was vacant.94 By tying the Akyeamehene issue to resolution of the Likpe Stool dispute, they managed once again to prevent Vincent Asamoah from clinching victory. The Likpe Stool dispute was, however, held up in the Regional House of Chiefs with little prospect for an early hearing.95 This state of low-intensity conflict which prevailed in the midst of such uncertainty might have provided the cue for crafty politicians to go in search of easy votes. But as we shall see, what was remarkable about these elections was the

93 The High Court dismissed the appeal in 1993.


95 The Regional House of Chiefs was in no hurry to sit on the case because successive Presidents were allegedly seeking to postpone hearings in destoolment proceedings against themselves.
very limited degree of cross-fertilization between chieftaincy affairs and party politics.

3.2. The Elections in Hohoe North Constituency
At this point, I wish to put local political intrigues on one side and return to a consideration of the 1996 elections in Hohoe North constituency. In 1992, the NDC had managed to capture a solid majority of the votes in the Presidential election, with Rawlings polling no fewer than 31,553 (or 92.5%) of the 34,768 votes cast. Because of the opposition decision to boycott the ensuing Parliamentary election, it is difficult to be precise about how the Hohoe North result would have panned out, but it is probable that the NDC would have taken the seat very comfortably. In 1996, there was every likelihood that the Parliamentary seat would still be fiercely contested. Apart from the fact that the Presidential and Parliamentary polls were to be held concurrently, the opposition parties had come to look on the 1992 boycott as a historic blunder. When nominations closed, four parties had fielded Parliamentary candidates in the constituency.

3.2.1. The Selection of Candidates
What is significant about the selection of the candidates in Hohoe North is that local factional alignments seem to have played no real part in proceedings. In the case of the NDC, the primaries were certainly a highly contentious affair. At an early stage, there were indications that the sitting MP, Pat Pomary, would face a serious challenge for the nomination. The reason for her vulnerability was located as much in Accra as in Hohoe itself. As has already been noted, the NDC was worried that its existing crop of MPs would be unable to hold its own against the big guns of the NPP. Dr. Obed Asamoah felt that Pat Pomary lacked sufficient political weight to be an asset either to the NDC in Parliament or to the Hohoe North constituency more generally. Pomary believed that the fact that she was not a native of the area, although she had lived and worked in Hohoe most of her

96 This was a widely held view. Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie himself noted that Pomary was anonymous in Parliament whereas, in the neighbouring constituency of Hohoe South, Kosi Kedem had spoken both frequently and eloquently. Interview, Accra, 21 August 1996.
life, was what really counted against her. There are also rumours to the effect that she had crossed swords with Vincent Asamoah, although the source of their disagreement is unclear. As the effective head of the constituency executive, Vincent Asamoah began to look for an alternative candidate. In view of the analysis presented above, it is noteworthy that he did not feel it imperative to seek out a candidate who was particularly well-disposed towards his own chiefly ambitions. A candidate from Likpe was more or less ruled out of the question because it would have looked too much like a case of Bakpele aggrandizement. Cynics also wondered whether Dr. Asamoah would have really relished the prospect of nurturing another local son who might later challenge his pre-eminence. But more simply, there was not much that any MP could do to advance Vincent Asamoah's cause in the field of chieftaincy.

For whatever reason, Vincent Asamoah conferred his endorsement on a Mr. Daketse from Wli. When it came to the vote of the constituency caucus, Pat Pomary protested at the partiality of Vincent Asamoah and the choice of his hotel as the venue for the decisive meeting. She later alleged - and this was widely rumoured in Likpe as well - that members of the caucus had actually been bribed. In the final event, the vote went against Pomary, who finished last out of four, as well as against Vincent Asamoah's preferred choice of candidate. Pomary might have opted to contest the seat as an independent, but finally accepted the offer of becoming the Volta Regional Organizer of the 31st December Women's Movement and withdrew from the Parliamentary fray altogether. The nomination was actually won by Nat Aduadjoe from Fodome, who had hitherto held a senior executive position in the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation. He satisfied Dr. Asamoah's criterion of being a 'big man', but his personal record soon became problematic when Rawlings sent Aduadjoe on leave, prior to forced retirement, on account of management lapses within

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97 Interview with Pat Pomary, Hohoe, 15 September 1996.

98 EKF, letter from Pat Pomary, MP, to Secretary of Regional Executive Committee of NDC (dated 24 April 1996).
the Corporation. To save the blushes of the party, the President's public intervention had subsequently to be rescinded. The NDC, therefore, entered the election with a candidate who had limited, and possibly no, prior involvement in constituency politics. Aduadjoe was not really known in Hohoe and his critics even argued that his contribution to the practical upliftment of Fodome had been limited. In no sense, could Aduadjoe be considered as part of a local factional network. In many ways, he was less of a local actor than Pomary who had at least made Hohoe her home.

In the case of the PNC, the choice of candidate could almost be viewed as a dynastic affair. After the eventual capture of Hohoe by the CPP, in the face of fierce resistance from the Togoland Congress, the sitting MP for the duration of the First Republic had been Frank Tsaku. The Tsaku family, who were from Hohoe town itself, had been staunch supporters of the PNP during the Third Republic and were subsequently prepared to continue following Limann even after most of his followers had abandoned him. There was evidently some bad blood with Dr. Obed Asamoah which dated back to 1979 when Frank Tsaku had allegedly spurned the former's attempts to secure the PNP nomination. One of his sons recalls that Asamoah had threatened to seek nomination from a rival party. Frank Tsaku reputedly responded with the challenge that he would pay Asamoah a cow if the PNP could not beat him in his own area.100 In 1979, Dr. Asamoah duly stood for the UNC and lost by sixteen votes to the PNP candidate - in large measure because many Bakpele did indeed fail to back him. Dr. Asamoah is alleged to have born a grudge against the Tsaku family, who equally harboured the desire to best him on his own patch once

99 Aduadjoe held the position of Deputy Managing Director (Finance and Administration). Rawlings's intervention was widely reported in the press. See "GWSC MD, 2 others on forced leave" Daily Graphic 13 August 1996. President Rawlings later made a statement in which he said that the enforced retirement was in "no way intended as a disciplinary measure" and praised Aduadjoe for his contributions to the GWSC over thirty years. See report in Daily Graphic 26 November 1996.

100 Discussion with Odinga Tsaku, Hohoe, 10 September 1996
Although Frank Tsaku had died a few years previously, his widow took on the leadership mantle and worked hard at reactivating PNC party networks in the outlying villages. In 1992, their son, Stanley Harker, had been slated to stand for the PNC, but had withdrawn as a result of the opposition boycott. In 1996, it came as no great surprise when Harker stood for the seat once more, although his family apparently needed to apply a certain amount of pressure to get him to come forward. As a contractor in Ashanti, his day-to-day contacts with the constituency were necessarily somewhat limited, but the rest of his family and a loyal band of followers worked hard to remind voters of the Nkrumah tradition.

The Hohoe area had once established a reputation for itself as a hotbed of anti-CPP (or 'Ablode') activity in the Region. The NPP potentially stood a greater chance here, where the Busia/Danquah tradition had historic roots, than almost elsewhere else in the Volta Region. However, the poor showing of Adu Boahen in the Presidential vote of 1992, when he captured a mere 1,440 votes, was a clear sign that the United Party sympathies of the electorate had lost much of their potency. It was indicative that there was an obvious lack of prominent NPP loyalists from the area. The principal exception was Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, who entered the discussion above. Although he had once sought to acquire a CPP nomination, Kakrabah-Quarshie later became an enthusiastic supporter of the Busia regime. Not surprisingly, he conducted Adu Boahen on his brief tour through the constituency in 1992. With the exception of Major Courage Quarshigah and Colonel R.K. Agbo, Kakrabah-Quarshie was just about the only person of any note in the senior ranks of the NPP who came from the Volta Region. As I have mentioned, Kakrabah-Quarshie was very much perceived as a rival to Dr. Obed Asamoah and might therefore have been expected to relish an opportunity to

101 Dr. Asamoah allegedly blocked a German attempt to confer recognition on Frank Tsaku's father who had been a close associate of the early missionaries. Stanley Harker in fact took his surname from one of these missionaries.

102 ASF, Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, to Alex Osei, Likpe-Mate (20 July 1964).
contest NDC dominance locally. Whereas he had held back in 1992, he
made an early expression of interest four years later. In the absence of
many other credible potential candidates, it was more or less a
certainty that Kakrabah-Quarshie would take the NPP nomination
once he did throw his hat in the ring. Only one other candidate came
forward and he was seen off without too much trouble. But
although Kakrabah-Quarshie hailed from Likpe-Agbozome, he did not
have very deep roots in the local political arena. He had made his
name as a human rights lawyer and opposition spokesman in Accra,
and reputedly made very few visits to his home community. Indeed
Nana Soglo Allo III had publicly humiliated him in front of Adu
Boahen when he publicly stated that Kakrabah-Quarshie was a
stranger to his home community. Despite his brief intervention in the
Likpe stool affair, he could not be construed as an active participant in
the hurly-burly of local politics.

In the case of the PCP, which represented a fusion of the PHP and NIP
support networks within the constituency, there was similarly a
dearth of willing candidates who stood a reasonable chance of taking
the seat. Kofi Akorlor who had been slated to stand for the PHP in
1992, decided that his moment had passed and he was content to
campaign on behalf of someone else. The constituency executive
decided to approach Tony Akoto Ampaw, one of whose parents hailed
from Hohoe while the other came from Lolobi. He was a potentially
attractive candidate in that he was comparatively young, had
impeccable Nkrumahist credentials and, as a lawyer, could be
presumed to have some financial means at his disposal. However
Akoto Ampaw had even less experience of the cut-and-thrust of local
politics than Kakrabah-Quarshie. He had very much made his
reputation as an opposition activist in Accra where he had repeatedly
fallen foul of the PNDC regime. Although he was one of the most
prominent figures in left-wing circles in Accra, he was virtually
unknown to people in his own constituency. Yet if he was interested in
sitting in Parliament, it made sense to stand for a seat in his home
area. Even then, it apparently took around two months for the

103 Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.
constituency executive to persuade him to throw his hat into the ring.104

At the national level, as we have seen, the NPP and the PCP were in an alliance and were supposed to draw up a single slate of Parliamentary candidates. In the case of Hohoe North, as elsewhere, the alliance proved unworkable. Kakrabah-Quarshie and Akoto Ampaw were well-known to each other, as practising lawyers and as prominent figures in opposition politics. Indeed, Kakrabah-Quarshie had defended Akoto Ampaw in his earlier brushes with the PNDC regime. Although there were many lines of personal communication between the two, the issue of who should stand down proved impossible to resolve. As early as August, Kakrabah-Quarshie was making it clear that he had no intention of stepping down:

There are certain areas where PCP people have been on the ground, it is true. And some of us [in the NPP] have been nursing our constituencies for four years. Now it would be difficult for me to say, after spending so much, I should leave my constituency for somebody. My people would not agree... Akoto Ampaw himself is not even known apart from in Lolobi... So that may be a consideration for him to say 'okay you go, I will help you to go', and if we win 'we will put you somewhere'. Because if he is going to start now, it is going to be difficult to go and start going round the constituency introducing himself.105

Kakrabah-Quarshie insisted that he had already incurred many electoral expenses, whereas Akoto Ampaw had not even visited Lolobi as yet. He later sought to reassure Akoto Ampaw that he was only interested in serving a single Parliamentary term, after which he would willingly pass on the mantle. For his part, Akoto Ampaw took the view that he had never actually solicited the PCP nomination, but had been reluctantly persuaded to accept it. If Kakrabah-Quarshie had asked him to step aside at an early stage, therefore, he would have been only too willing to do so.106 In the opinion of Akoto Ampaw, the

104 Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.

105 Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.

106 Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.
reasons given by Kakrabah-Quarshie were not sufficiently weighty to persuade him to back down so late in the day. Akoto Ampaw pointed that efforts had been made to settle the matter at the constituency level, but he claimed that Kakrabah-Quarshie had been unwilling to co-operate. Indeed the latter had apparently engineered the removal of three members of his constituency executive committee, alleging a Gbi ethnic conspiracy, when they had agreed to back Akoto Ampaw.\textsuperscript{107} The vacant executive positions were then filled by people from Likpe who were loyal to Kakrabah-Quarshie.

In the face of this local impasse, the Gbi Paramount Chief decided to intervene personally. When Kufuor was passing through on the campaign trail, the chief insisted that he remain in Hohoe until he had brokered an agreement between the rival candidates. Although Kufuor replied that this was really a constituency affair, he did agree to leave Quarshigah and Agbo behind to arbitrate the dispute. Akoto Ampaw recalls that a lengthy meeting between the arbitrators and a group of three executive members from each party was held, and that they eventually came down on his side. However, the NPP members failed to attend the public rally in Ho the following day at which a public announcement was to have been made.\textsuperscript{108} Hence on polling day itself, Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie and Tony Akoto Ampaw faced each other as adversaries.

\textbf{3.2.2. On the Hustings}

Once the campaigning began in earnest, local factional alignments appear to have had an equally limited bearing on proceedings. The candidates themselves displayed limited knowledge of, and even less interest in, chieftaincy politics. When questioned about the role that chieftaincy might play in the campaign, Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie indicated that he was aware of two disputes in Gbi, but thought that these had both been resolved.\textsuperscript{109} Likpe was the only theatre where he believed that chieftaincy affairs could exert an influence:

\textsuperscript{107} Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.

\textsuperscript{108} Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.

\textsuperscript{109} Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.
Likpe, it is a major factor. You see, Obed's brother has been doing things which is dividing the chiefs and therefore those who support Obed's faction may ultimately vote for him, but the rest no.110

And yet while Kakrabah-Quarshie believed that he had support in many Likpe villages, he was pessimistic about winning a majority in Mate, despite the fact that this was the focus of opposition to Vincent Asamoah. The reason was partly that Robert Alloh also happened to be a staunch NDC supporter. Kakrabah-Quarshie was prepared to trade on local hostility to Dr. Obed Asamoah, alluding to his arrogant disregard for local people, but curiously he did not find it convenient to target the chiefly ambitions of Vincent Asamoah. There are two possible reasons for this unexpected reticence. One is that the Agbozome chief, Nana Sekyere, was allied to the Vincent Asamoah faction within the Likpe Traditional Council. In terms of the formal structure of chieftaincy politics, as outlined above, Kakrabah-Quarshie found himself associated with the faction that he did not personally agree with. However, it is conceivable pressures from his own village forced him to tear up the one political card that could have come in useful. In Mate, there were also unsubstantiated rumours to the effect that Kakrabah-Quarshie was financially stricken after his house in Dansoman caught fire, and that he had therefore accepted money from Vincent Asamoah in return for staying out of Likpe stool affairs.111 This is a perhaps a less credible explanation.

Of the four candidates, it was only Kakrabah-Quarshie who evinced any real interest in chieftaincy politics, even if he failed to follow through. The PNC camp were aware that the Asamoah brothers were unpopular in parts of Likpe, but displayed no obvious interest in exploiting the sources of discord. Akoto Ampaw was certainly well acquainted with the underlying issues, as one of the lawyers involved in the stool dispute, but he too steered well clear of the fray. This is significant because he no longer had any professional conflict of

110 Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.

111 Kakrabah-Quarshie believed that the fire had been deliberately started by NDC elements. Interview, Accra, 21 August 1996.
interest. Robert Alloh had already taken his case to another set of lawyers for the simple reason that Akuffo-Addo and Akoto Ampaw were too busy politicking to deal effectively with the dispute.\textsuperscript{112} The more likely reason is that Akoto Ampaw felt that the election ought to be fought on the substantive issues and that he should not sink to the level of exploiting local discord. It is important to note that he very much regarded himself as the candidate of the youth rather than the elders who customarily dominated the chiefly factions.

Nat Aduadjoe of the NDC had the least of all to gain from the conflation of chieftaincy struggles with party politics. If troubled waters could be stilled in places like Likpe, there was every likelihood that the NDC vote would not be split unnecessarily. The one person who threatened to upset the equilibrium was Vincent Asamoah for whom there was always a temptation to play the party card in the game of chieftaincy politics. Matters came to a sudden head in October when it was announced that President Rawlings intended to visit Likpe to commission the water supply project. The wing chiefs of Avedzeme, Bala, Bakwa and Mate despached a letter to the District Chief Executive, copied to the President and the Regional Minister, in which they detailed the machinations of Vincent Asamoah and went on to "respectfully petition that you kindly defer the coming of the President to Likpe since we cannot put up a pretence of unity, love and co-operation".\textsuperscript{113} Vincent Asamoah convened a public meeting in Todome on 11 November at which he denounced the rival faction as being disloyal to Rawlings and the NDC. An embarrassed Chief Executive, Mr. Puplampu, who was also alleged to be a friend of Vincent Asamoah, called the wing chiefs in and apparently gave them a dressing down. After consultations with both sides, it was agreed that a durbar would in fact be held in honour of the President, but that the customary formalities would be curtailed. In particular, the chiefs would not make speeches and they would not embrace Rawlings as was usual. On the day in question, Robert Alloh and his faction

\textsuperscript{112} The case was taken to Charles Hayibor, who also happened to be the son of the Anfoega Paramount Chief.

\textsuperscript{113} EKF, letter to District Chief Executive, Hohoe, dated 25 October 1996.
reached the durbar ground first and sat in state.114 His rival for the paramountcy delayed his arrival to await the moral support of youngmen from Todome and ended up being relegated to a more marginal seating position. On the last occasion when Rawlings had visited Likpe in 1988, he had exhorted the community to put chieftaincy disputes behind it. This time, he avoided the contentious issues altogether and within 75 minutes had departed for his next campaign appointment. The event passed off peacefully, with both factions making a public display of their NDC loyalties. The fallout in the longer term consisted of yet another libel suit issued by Vincent Asamoah against the wing chiefs. In summary, the paths of the local and the party political arenas had crossed momentarily and now went their separate ways once more. At no other point did chieftaincy affairs exercise a significant influence on the campaign.

All four candidates behaved as if the election would be won and lost on other terrain altogether. First of all, each of the candidates traded on the image of their respective parties at the national level. Because the NDC was the only party which had a visible presence from the national down to the constituency level, this was much the easiest task for Aduadjoe. Moreover, whenever people listened to their radios or watched their televisions, they were confronted with pictures and reports of President Rawlings on his rounds. By contrast, the other parties flashed fleetingly across the cognitive screen of the average voter. In September, when I conducted a pilot opinion survey in four villages across the constituency, it became clear that while people had an image of what the NDC represented, they were not really conscious of the other parties.115 It was sufficient for Aduadjoe merely to associate himself with Rawlings in order to be sure of cashing in a solid bloc of votes.

In the case of the PNC, Harker sought to convince voters that his party was the lineal descendant of the PNP, and hence also of the CPP. Luckily for him, everyone at least knew who Limann was. But the problem was that he was very much yesterday's politician, while

114 I am grateful for these details to Mr. Emilson Kwashie.

115 The villages were located in Gbi, Likpe, Santrokofi and Wli.
Mahama was a totally unknown figure. Campaigning was always going to be easiest in the Hohoe zongo, where the northern vote was operative, and in the former bastions of the PNP. Elsewhere, Harker was destined to face an uphill struggle. Akoto Ampaw and Kakrabah-Quarshie had complicated their own campaign strategies. Across Ghana, the NPP and the PCP endeavoured to sell the Great Alliance to the voters as a confluence of the two venerable traditions in Ghanaian politics. The image of Kufuor and Arkaah standing shoulder to shoulder on the same platform was in many ways a striking one, and one that was repeatedly used in the opposition media. However, it created difficulties in Hohoe North where voters wanted to know why candidates from the two parties were fighting each other. Kakrabah-Quarshie apparently told his audiences outright that there was no Alliance in Hohoe North, while Akoto Ampaw presumably sought to explain the concrete circumstances which had led to this anomaly. Either way, the effect was to confirm doubts about the viability of such an unnatural union in the first place. For Akoto Ampaw, the only recourse was to play the Nkrumahist card, but the PCP had much less credibility than the PNC in this respect. Kakrabah-Quarshie could draw some comfort from the fact that the name of the NPP, as the standing embodiment of the Busia/Danquah tradition, resonated at the local level. The problem was that the images associated with it were mostly negative. The abiding image of the Busia regime was of one that had systematically discriminated against the Volta Region. Kakrabah-Quarshie inevitably spent much of his campaign attempting to correct what he regarded as an inaccurate portrayal of the Busia years.

Secondly, the campaign turned on the practical local benefits which would ensue from the victory of each of various parties. Again, Aduadjoe found himself in easily the most favourable position. Across the constituency, the completion of development projects had been timed to coincide with the election, as in the case of Likpe water project, while many new ones were announced from the campaign platform. The message was that the NDC had honoured promises dating from the 1992 campaign and so could be trusted to deliver on the projects that were newly announced. Conversely, it was claimed,

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116 Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.
an incoming NPP regime would be tempted to scrap the projects that
the NDC had started. The opposition parties naturally made promises
of their own, but these were always likely to seem more distant.
Moreover, a long list of alternative projects risked confirming the
basis for the NDC’s warning.

The other candidates chipped away at the NDC platform by pointing
to the questionable manner in which contracts were awarded.
Kakrabah-Quarshie also made a point of highlighting the promises
that had not been honoured. For example, he claimed that electricity
poles had been dumped by the roadside in 1992 to convince
communities that their connection to the national grid was imminent.
In places like Alavanyo, the poles were allegedly still lying there,
which he took as visible proof for the bad faith of the NDC regime. In
the case of Likpe, Kakrabah-Quarshie recalled that he had been in
charge of the National Service Corps under the Busia regime, as a
result of which every village had received at least one well. He
contrasted this with the comparative neglect of the Rawlings years
and, in particular, the insouciance of Dr. Obed Asamoah. In an
interview, he blamed Dr. Asamoah for not doing more to assist his
people:

I can tell you Obed is hated in Likpe. One time the Traditional
Council sent a delegation to him about our roads. You know
what he told them? ‘You people didn’t vote for me. I went
there [into government] because of my education. You people
didn’t educate me, so you can't come and ask me anything’.

How can you talk to your chiefs like this? 117

Kakrabah-Quarshie also recalled that when a tarred road had come
to east Likpe, it had deliberately skipped Mate, and resumed at his
own village of Bala. 118 When Kakrabah-Quarshie wished to visit his
village of Agbozome, he needed to park his car and walk the last eight
miles. The claim that more could have been done by the NDC struck a
certain chord, although it was difficult to deny that electricity and
better roads had benefited much of the constituency.

117 Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.

118 Interview with Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, Accra, 21 August 1996.
The difficulty for the candidates in reaching their intended constituents was acknowledged on all sides. Nat Aduadjoe at least had a cadre of campaign workers and vehicles at his disposal. This made it possible for his supporters to travel from village to village, playing party songs over the loudspeaker, even when he could not physically be present. The other candidates had neither the resources nor the committed party workers needed to keep the campaign ticking over at an the same tempo. This was a genuine problem for Kakrabah-Quarshie and Akoto Ampaw who were required to handle their legal duties in Accra for most of the week - and the same was probably true of Harker as well. The typical pattern was that these candidates would remain at their workplaces for most of the week, returning to the constituency towards the weekend. For most of the time, therefore, there was little obvious sign of campaign activity other than the party colours that adorned the buildings.

As has already been stated, this was an election that was fought through the media as never before. Some of the candidates spent almost as much effort on the national debate as on constituency campaigning. Kakrabah-Quarshie, in particular, wrote a column for The Statesman, the leading NPP newspaper. While some of his contributions dealt more generally with the record of the NDC regime and the Alliance alternative, he also penned two 'Open Letters' to the voters of the Volta Region. In the first of these, he berated the government for making extravagant campaign promises, when it had so far failed to deliver motorable roads and decent medical facilities. In the second, he warned the voters about voting for 'their man', Rawlings, on the basis that this could backfire if other Regions behaved in like fashion. He also cited the positive contribution that the Busia regime had made to Regional development. In these writings, Kakrabah-Quarshie endeavoured to secure two for the price of one by referring to the particular needs and experiences of the Hohoe North constituency. He pointed out, for example, that it was

Busia who had remedied the neglect of Hohoe - itself a form of CPP retribution for its prior 'Ablode' sympathies - by tarring the road between Ve-Golokwati and Jasikan. He also deemed Rawlings's visit to commission the Likpe water project, which he claimed had been started in the Busia years and was actually non-operational at the time of the visit.121

At one time, Kakrabah-Quarshie toyed with taking out newspaper, radio and television advertisements in support of his candidacy. The Statesman carried many such full-page advertisements by aspirant NPP Parliamentarians. The underlying problem, which Kakrabah-Quarshie was well aware of, was that there was a limit to the audience that could be reached in this fashion. Although the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times could be purchased from the Ghana News Agency office in Hohoe, very few copies of the The Statesman ever reached the area. Television advertisements were bound to be very expensive and the audience was comparatively small. Radio was a realistic alternative in that a private FM radio station had been set up in Ho, but there were questions about its geographical reach. In the end, Kakrabah-Quarshie and the other candidates accepted that there was no substitute for meeting the voters face to face. All of them sought to visit at least those villages which could be reached by road. When they arrived in a given community, it was normal to greet the chief. If time permitted, a public meeting would be held at which a few short speeches were made. The candidates also took the opportunity to distribute handbills, election posters and (depending on their financial means) tee-shirts. Given the limited resources and time available, the campaign bore the aspect of a hit-and-run raid more than an intensive effort to change voters' minds. Kakrabah-Quarshie also went to the trouble of erecting a large billboard outside the Hohoe lorry park where it could be seen by anyone travelling to and from town.

The Presidential and Parliamentary poll in Hohoe North passed off without significant incident. The results were accepted by all sides, although Akoto Ampaw expressed concern at evidence of under-age

121 Ray Kakrabah-Quarshie, "The bridges to the second millennium", The Statesman 8 December 1996.
voting and the inability of the party agents to fulfil their functions properly because of their distance from the polling booths.\textsuperscript{122} In the Presidential poll, Rawlings swept the board with 46,706 votes (a 94.3\% share) to the 2,500 votes of Kufuor and the miserable 313 votes of Mahama. In the Parliamentary poll, Nat Aduadjoe of the NDC took the seat comfortably enough, but his share of the vote (78.4\%) was significantly lower than that of Rawlings (see Table Three).

Table Four
1996 Parliamentary Election Results in Hohoe North Constituency
By Traditional Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Area</th>
<th>Nat Aduadjoe</th>
<th>Kakrabah-Quarshie</th>
<th>Akoto Ampaw</th>
<th>Harker</th>
<th>Total of valid votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gbi</td>
<td>14,146</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>1,935</td>
<td>18,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alavanyo</td>
<td>4,248</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>5,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akpafu</td>
<td>3,597</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>4,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S'trokofi</td>
<td>1,675</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>2,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lolobi</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likpe</td>
<td>6,984</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>9,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fodome</td>
<td>4,010</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wli</td>
<td>1,698</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>2,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbledi</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39,003</td>
<td>2,752</td>
<td>3,732</td>
<td>4,264</td>
<td>49,751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A simple explanation for this pattern is that Aduadjoe did not cut a very popular figure in the constituency. Insofar as the electorate had an image of him, it appears to have been an overwhelmingly negative one. Some of the allegations, which were repeated by his opponents, about a record of corruption in the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation, and involvement in bribery during the primaries, certainly rubbed off. Another obvious explanation is that the 'home boyism' played a part in squeezing the Aduadjoe vote. It is readily apparent that each of the candidates performed somewhat better in their own traditional area than across the board. Hence Aduadjoe won a massive majority in Fodome, but did not perform as well in other areas. Equally, Kakrabah-Quarshie only topped one thousand

\textsuperscript{122} Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.
votes in Likpe; Harker scored his best performance in Gbi; while Akoto Ampaw fared most successfully in both Gbi and Lolobi. But it is readily apparent that the 'home boy' factor was not sufficient to over-ride political loyalties. In no traditional area did Aduadjoe actually fail to win a majority of the votes. In some cases, his performance was actually better than one might have expected. In Likpe-Mate, for example, he won 729 votes to the 153 votes of Kakrabah-Quarshie, the 44 votes of Akoto Ampaw and the 63 votes of Harker. Even in Likpe-Agbozome, the home town of his NPP opponent, Aduadjoe managed to notch up 361 votes to the 486 votes of Kakrabah-Quarshie.

One has to conclude that Aduadjoe performed as well as he did because most voters were prepared to put their party loyalties above both 'home boy' ties and their assessment of the personal qualities of the NDC candidate. Akoto Ampaw recounted that some sympathisers in Hohoe had expressed the wish that he had stood as the NDC candidate on the grounds that he was sure to have won. Apart from the implausibility of such a scenario, this assessment is almost certainly accurate. In the circumstances that pertained, there was some slippage and where this occurred, it did not always take the form of a retreat into 'home boyism'. It is worth noting, for example, that whereas Mahama only secured 313 votes in the Presidential poll, Harker increased this tally to 4,264 votes in the Parliamentary election - and thereby took second place overall. Although 1,935 of those votes came from Gbi, the rest were spread fairly evenly across the constituency. This suggests that while Mahama was an electoral liability, a trace of loyalty to the PNP/PNC tradition, and possibly also to the Tsaku family, remained in Hohoe North.

In the wake of the election, the NDC stalwarts were evidently very pleased that the scale of their victory in Hohoe North had not fallen far short of the Regional average, which was crushing by any yardstick. The other candidates were apparently surprised at the scale of the NDC victory. Indeed Akoto Ampaw declared that he was shocked by the result because everywhere he went people had told him that they wanted to vote for him. Although he claimed that

123 Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.

124 Interview with Tony Akoto Ampaw, Accra, 11 December 1996.
Aduadjoe had lavished money on the voters, he did not see this as an adequate explanation for their behaviour on polling day. The key seemed to lie in the overwhelming popularity of Rawlings, which he encountered repeatedly on the campaign trail. Like Kakrabah-Quarshie, Akoto Ampaw could not see that the Rawlings regime had done enough for the Volta Region to warrant such popularity. Both believed that the voters in Hohoe North, and elsewhere in the Region, had responded to Rawlings as their 'son'. This echoed much of the press coverage of the results which accused the voters of the Volta Region of having voted tribalistically for a fellow Ewe. Rawlings had apparently spent part of his childhood in Hohoe, in which case he might also have been considered a 'local son', although very few people seemed to be aware of this part of his life-history. The problem with the simple ethnic explanation was that Hohoe North was not a purely Ewe constituency - and yet the Central Togo minorities were equally prepared to support the NDC. More to the point, the largely Akan constituencies in the north of the Region followed a similar pattern of voting. If there was a particularistic factor in operation, therefore, it was more Regional than it was ethnic. Moreover, it was rooted in fears about what an incoming NPP government might do as much as it was rooted in uncritical support for the NDC. Be that as it may, the fundamental point remains that voters in Hohoe North were guided by the larger picture far more than by local factors.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it remains to draw the admittedly somewhat disparate threads of this paper together. In the first section, I have sought to demonstrate the perceived importance of the lessons of history for the various parties contesting the 1996 elections. In the case of the opposition parties, I have argued that their readings of the past are fundamentally at odds with the political realities - strikingly so in the case of the PNC and the PCP, but perhaps even more fatally so in the case of the NPP. By contrast with the opposition, the NDC eschewed any attachment to the political traditions of the past, and indeed

125 These details are derived from a discussion with Mrs. Tsaku.
expressed its intention to fundamentally reshape the political landscape. Yet the irony of the present situation is that the NDC is reliving much of the CPP experience. It currently faces the riddle which has so far defeated the Nkrumahist camp: namely that of how to survive the departure of its towering leader. In that sense, the NDC is as much a captive to the larger forces of history as any of its adversaries. Whether its reading of the runes proves any more accurate in the longer term remains to be seen.

In the second section of the paper, I have demonstrated that the Parliamentary contest in the Hohoe North constituency was scarcely influenced by what was in fact a very bitter and protracted chieftaincy dispute in Likpe. That is in spite of the fact that one of the key actors was an influential player in both contexts. I have suggested that this may point to a reconfiguration of the points of contact between the national and local political arenas. This, in turn, is related to the insulation of chieftaincy from political interference under the new constitution, on the one hand, and a new style of political campaigning on the other. One of the ironies of the latter development is that while most of the intended media message never reached its rural audience, voters in Hohoe North were in fact guided by images of the national political scene more than by local factional alignments. In their wariness of the NPP, they were also guided by a very strong sense of the lessons of history. Hence, the paradox lies in the fact that there is a national discourse of politics, in which history is very much a living force- the politicians are, to that extent, correct - and yet there is also a substantial gulf between the perceptions of political actors at the centre and those of the voters at the periphery. At present, this tends to work in favour of the governing party on polling day. But if the other parties were to take a fresh look at the patterns of allegiance over the past three decades, to remould their tactics accordingly, and to explore other avenues of beaming their message to rural voters, the political pendulum could still swing away from the NDC.
Select Bibliography


