



2024 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING, ARTS, MATHEMATICS & EDUCATION JUNE 6 - 8, 2024  
PRINCE WAIKIKI RESORT, HONOLULU, HAWAII

# UNDERSTANDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA. HOW VOTING DETERMINES DEVELOPMENT



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## **Understanding Rural Development in Ghana. How Voting Determines Development**

### **Synopsis:**

The concept of rural development and other infrastructures are determined during election times. In Ghana, it's not uncommon to identify countless uncompleted projects, which were started by a previous administration. Once there is a change in government, those projects, if any, including rural roads are left uncompleted. In Ghana, despite its multiparty political system, it's safe to argue that it's a two-party democratic system. Since 1992 the only two parties that have won presidential election.

## **Understanding Rural Development in Ghana. How Voting Determines Development**

The Ghanaian rural-urban imbalance in education, health facilities, infrastructure (roads) and standards of living is of great concern. The country's development trajectory has shown a great deal of overconcentration of development projects in the urban areas. We suggest that this divide is best understood as an example of the *Matthew Effect* (ME) that can be further explained and ameliorated effectively by policy changes grounded in Habermasian theory. We then examine the campaign manifestos of the two leading political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and National Patriotic Party (NPP) to see if any of their proposed development policies meet the challenge of the ME.

It was found that political parties use rural development as a slogan during political campaigns to win votes, but campaign promises for rural districts are not kept once a political party wins power to govern. More disheartening, given the lack of national rural development policy, is that developmental projects are more likely to be abandoned in rural districts when there is a change of government. Unfortunately, this has been the case since the genesis of the Fourth Republic. Recommendations for national rural development policies are provided to improve the rural neglect.

**Key Words:** *Rural, Development, Meta-analysis, Policy, Fourth Republic.*

### **Introduction**

In addition to its physical geography and remoteness, "Africa has been held back by the fragmentation of its political and economic geography... and the fragmentation of [countries within Africa] compounds this (Venables, 2010: 481). Ghana is illustrative. Notwithstanding the abundance of raw materials from rural Ghana for export, the underdevelopment in rural districts is conspicuously inescapable in the country. Rural policies in the country combine elements of political, administrative, and effective leadership for development (Ayee, 2008). However, rural development has given way to what could be described as urban bias where projects are expected to be completed (e.g., the Pokuase Interchange near Accra and Asafo Interchange)<sup>1</sup>.

Rural development is a complex issue, comprising both social and economic concerns. Nevertheless, the dominant explanations for the widening geographic inequality in Ghana focus

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<sup>1</sup> See list of road interchanges in Ghana: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_road\\_interchanges\\_in\\_Ghana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_road_interchanges_in_Ghana)

on the inexorable dynamics of agglomeration and globalization as they reshape the economy, benefitting some areas, urban, and harming others, rural districts. We think these explanations leave out a crucial factor, the effects of specific regulatory choices on economic geography and rural development. Escalating geographic inequality goes together with serious problems of national concern, which have direct effect on the populace. Rural areas that are left behind not only fail to keep up with their thriving urban peers but also stagnate as opportunities for development evaporate (Osei, 2017). These trends suggest a troublesome maldistribution of personal opportunity, economic growth, and poor road networks in the rural areas. Health and educational disparities, for example, track closely regional inequality (Dunford, 2007), as do rates of alcohol and drug abuse (Doku et al., 2012), employment, and rates of upward mobility (Hurd and Johnson, 1967). These problems, not forgetting lack of infrastructures such as roads, quality school buildings, and health facilities, are all too evident in Ghana. Astounding progress in some urban areas is accompanied by stagnations and dismal decline in rural districts, exacerbated often by various forms of resources extraction by foreign interests.

*Galamsey*, for example, is a practice, which involves illegal mining in the rural areas is destroying the future of these communities.<sup>2</sup> While mineral surface mining is not a new phenomenon in the rural districts of Ghana, the illegal and uncontrollable rate of *galamsey* destroys farmlands, water bodies, and rivers that affect rural development. This practice also pollutes the pristine river bodies that serve as source of drinking water for rural residents where pipe borne water are completely absent. “Apart from depriving the country of its agricultural land, the practice has resulted in the pollution of major water

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<sup>2</sup> Galamsey is illegal small-scale and gold mining in Ghana. Others also argue that the term was derived from the phrase “gather them and sell.”

bodies, depriving many rural communities of their primary source of livelihood”<sup>3</sup>. Despite the financial fluctuations in Ghana’s economy since the Fourth Republic, urban centers enjoy dynamic development more regularly than rural areas, which experience an abject neglect even though most of the raw materials such as cocoa, timber, gold and other minerals that support Ghana’s economy come from these areas, such as the Western, Ashanti, Central, and Eastern Regions. In addition to the lack of proper school buildings, potable drinking water, and electricity in rural areas, the neglect of paved roads connecting the rural areas affects development significantly in the country.

The core problem of underdevelopment in rural districts, ramifies through the economy as rural areas supply most of the raw materials such as cocoa, timber, gold and other minerals that support Ghana’s economy. In addition to the lack of proper school buildings, portable drinking water, and electricity, which are considered basic amenities, it is the neglect of paved roads to rural areas that have affected development in these rural areas. The next section looks at the genesis of the Fourth Republic, but it should be noted that both civilian and military governments from 1957 to 1992 made attempts to improve life in the rural areas but political instabilities at the time and lack of national rural policies by the various government did not see materialize. As Awoonor (1990) noted, “for too long, we (*governments*) continue to pay lip-service to the rural people who remain our final moral and economic bulwark” (266).

### **The Road to The Fourth Republic**

The struggle for Ghana’s political independence is beyond the scope of this chapter however, as Awoonor (1990) noted, the struggle for independence through “resistance and

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<sup>3</sup> See the rate at which *galamsey* is destroying farmlands, rivers, and the vegetation in rural communities: <https://www.change.org/p/environmental-protection-agency-stop-the-menace-of-galamsey-small-scale-mining-in-ghana-and-save-our-water-bodies>

struggle against repression, oppression, and exploitation” (116) during the colonial era is well documented. Unfortunately, this struggle for independence continued after the Europeans lost direct administrative power over the then Gold Coast (Amenumey, 2018). Politically, Ghana is a relatively young country that has struggled to maintain political stability since its independence from the evils of American slavery and British colonial rule until 1957. However, the political independence was not void of external interference as powerful nations such as the United States of America, Britain, and the West in general continue to meddle in the internal affairs of the first country south of the Sahara Desert to gain political independence. This interference was because of the Cold War where both the West and East wanted to influence the politics of African countries by luring them into their political agenda (McFerson, 2010). The United States, for example, through its clandestine spying agency, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), succeeded in removing the first president of Ghana, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, from office by influencing the Ghana Army Forces through a military coup on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1966 as the West saw, ideologically, that Dr. Nkrumah was leaning toward the East. There were other military coups in 1972, 1978, and 1981<sup>4</sup>. Given these series of military coups punctuated with civilian administrations, the resultant effect was that politically, governing Ghana became unstable from 1966 to 1982. This period saw series of military coups until Jerry John Rawlings’ second military coup, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1982, which undeniably, but debatable though, brought political stability, which eventually led to a democratic civilian rule in 1993, establishing the genesis of the Fourth Republic with a new Constitution. The various governments during this period were short-lived (Amoah and Mills, 2019) hence it was impossible for those governments to implement any meaningful policy, if any, for rural development as struggling for, and

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<sup>4</sup> See military coups in Ghana: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Military\\_coups\\_in\\_Ghana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Military_coups_in_Ghana)

maintaining political power was the order of the day. After a decade of military rule under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) led by Chairman Jerry John Rawlings, the 1992 general elections, which ushered in the Fourth Republic only saw Rawlings transferring power to himself from military rule to civilian under the NDC political party (Oquaye, 2004: 487-536). While the PNDC approach to rural development is discussed through local participation, and decentralization, the next section looks at rural development and policy formation through the lenses of the ME and Habermas in the Fourth Republic.

### **The Matthew Effect and Rural Development**

The *Mathew principle* or *Mathew effect of accumulated advantage*, describes the tendency to accrue economic advantage in proportion to the initial level of wealth enjoyed (Merton, 1968). As we use the ME to describe and explain the rural-urban imbalance reinforcing inequality related to economic wealth, urban bias and other developmental resources, our purpose is to suggest that the development projects going on in Ghana tend to favor urban areas intentionally. That is, the ME is a function of the recourse by default to market mechanisms, market thinking, and market solutions over social and cultural factors in political decision-making. Those with initial economic advantages experience a positive feed-back loop whereby their experience with employing economic resources develops a facility in dealing with economic resources that encourages more investment and encourages more success. Those beginning with less resources enjoy less facility and so less success and less investment. This dynamic increasingly governs access to the essentials of development, decent health care, sound education, and political voice. Thus, the dominance of market thinking sharpens the sting of economic inequality and its social and political consequences.

### **Habermas and the Mathew Effect**

We suggest a way of thinking about the ME in the context of the urban-rural divide in the country, grounded in the thinking of Jurgen Habermas, that may help extricate Ghana from the deleterious effects of the theory. What follows is neither an analysis of Habermas' writings nor an endorsement of his theory. Nor is it a discussion of the merits and shortcomings of traditional understandings of either Habermas' thought or his approach to critical theory. Rather, it is a revisionist interpretation that explores the suggestive value of his thought on social evolution about the urban/rural development differential in Ghana. Our aim is to ask whether Habermas's way of framing and coping with the problems of social evolution might be reconceptualized in ways that are useful to understanding this differential and suggesting useful approaches to its amelioration.

Habermas understood social evolution (development) as a process involving a social evolution propelled by the differentiation of systems (dominant in urban areas) and *lifeworlds* (dominant in rural areas). The complexity of the first and the colonization of the second grow through stages marked by the appearance of new systematizing mechanisms and corresponding levels of complexity. As these stages proceed, they uncouple urban and rural values, attitudes and beliefs and the ME emerges. Both the urban-rural divide and the ME are thus the result of the colonization of the lifeworld of rural populations by the systemic imperatives of the economic and administrative systems of the urban areas as they become predominate in society. These systemic mechanisms suppress the economic and social integration of the urban and rural as a consensus-dependent coordination of action between the urban and rural cannot be attained given their divergent interests and values. Accordingly, the relationship assumes the form of "*colonization*" (Habermas, 1987:196).



Actions taken for developmental purposes in particular segment society into urban-rural domains where either the strategic action orientations or rural imperatives predominate, leading actors, governments, and other administrative units responsible for policy implementation, to focus on narrow, instrumentally defined objectives whose broader significance (e.g., for rural populations and their lifeworld) escapes them. Decisions as to development are understood and evaluate in functional terms, in terms of material reward: Roads, health facilities, shopping malls, and school buildings. Additionally, the interchange between the rural lifeworld and the economic and administrative systems of the urban areas takes place through the relatively less efficacious social and economic roles that rural members assume in their interaction with the economic and bureaucratic spheres that are dominated by urban actors (e.g., employer/employee; producer/consumer). However, resistance emerges as *system* roles cannot be disengaged or decoupled from *lifeworld* contexts in the same manner those of employer/employee. Both consumers and producers acquire their preferences, values and attitudes in self-formative processes that are inextricably tied to *lifeworld* (rural) contexts and cannot be detached from them.

Countless social struggles against urbanization, the administrative state, taxation, and trade regulations testify to the resistance people put up against colonization. Nevertheless, Habermas suggests, the capitalist system and the modern state have gained “wide acceptance and considerable permanence on the strength of their greater efficiency and superior level of integration” (321). To reclaim rural interests and to fight against colonization, enacting policies and developing practices that foster forms of solidarity between the urban and rural are necessary for development. For example, cooperative firms are often portrayed as *alternative’ organizations* (Cheney et al., 2014) whose democratic governance and focus on both social and

economic objectives distinguish them from the traditional, hierarchical model, where profit maximization is the priority and therefore dictates the location of developmental projects. This approach gains sustenance from analyses such as those concluding that effective development requires the physical transformation of the social and economic structures and institutions, processes, and relationships in a society (Seers, 1969). Bolstering this theoretical solution is the empirical reality that the market assumption that greater equity comes at a cost of less economic efficiency isn't necessarily true. For example, the Nordic model, a set of economic standards loosely followed by Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland, has given the world an example of how free-market capitalism and a generous welfare system can co-exist harmoniously. Such a system works mainly because these countries have a culture of collectivity, and taxpayers' money is spent in a way that benefits all and not only those residents in the urban areas (Iqbal & Todi, 2015).

### **What Accounts for this Urban-Rural Imbalance?**

Currently, the imbalance is understood largely as the inexorable result of globalization reshaping the economy (Tania, 2010). The effects of agglomeration alone disadvantage any significant rural development as seen in Ghana. The great potential gains and the disproportionate benefits that come from co-locating (the location-allocation model) in urban areas are well understood (Venables, 2010; Nkalu, et al, 2019). Location-allocation models, among other issues, are planned to assess suitable location for a single or group of facilities to serve a defined demand (Daskin and Maass, 2015) for example, projects in rural districts.

Globalization widens, deepens, and accelerates the agglomeration as urban areas act as still more intensive nodal points where people, capital, goods, and services intersect and develop privileged loci of health facilities, economic, political, and cultural power. These dynamics

suggest that it may be impossible to ameliorate rural development disadvantages as “regional divergence is an invisible-hand phenomenon, caused by market forces rather than any deliberate policy” (Krugman, 2019:9).

On the face of things, this geographic inequality or imbalance may appear as simply another instance of the ME. Assured that, “to all those who have, more will be given” (Matthew 25:29), sociologists (Merton, 1968), economists (Rigney, 2013), political scientists (Lindefores, et al, 2020), and public administrators (Gabis and Mitchell, 1988) went about identifying this robust principle of self-organization as it operated in their fields and disciplines. In political and administrative terms, the ME might be restated as *to those who have power, more will be accrue*. That is, it is well understood that material, economic, and human resources are fundamental to the accumulation, confirmation, and exercise of political and economic power (Galbraith and Bartel, 1983). Success in the struggle for resources begets the power not only to control people but to acquire still more resources and thereby influence policy and administrative decision-making ever more effectively (Schmalz, et al., 2018). Accordingly, once resources agglomerate in urban areas, so will political and economic power along with their attendant social advantages to the neglect of the rural areas where the resources, arguable, are more needed to improve the quality of life. For our purposes, it is important to note that empirically the principle apparently applies to regional differences in economic and political resources, and that even “small differences in initial status amplify over time to generate cumulative advantages” (Azoulay, et al., 2014: 92).

However, the dynamic of the parable may not be inexorable, as the Parable of the Talents suggests (Mathew 25:14-30). A fearsome master entrusts money to three slaves. One, out of fear of losing the money and incurring the master’s wrath, fails to invest. A second, invests but

doesn't reap very much. A third reaps a large profit. From the first two, all the money is taken and given to the third. Some take this as an especially sharp critique of powerful interests, those motivated by profit to the exclusion of other considerations, preying on the fearful and less talented and seeing the function of money as making more profit for themselves. Hence, they reward those who increase their profit and punish those who do not. In other words, they systematically exacerbate material inequalities, making the rich richer, and the poor poorer; a metaphor critiquing the pursuit of profit over the well-being of the people the plight of rural areas in Africa (Hill, 2015). More importantly, the ME is not self-executing; it is a matter of agency. It is a matter of choosing to invest in areas that promise immediate returns. In the African context, Ghana in particular, this results in prioritizing urban areas over rural communities. Our argument is that a proper regulatory dynamic as implied by Habermas can powerfully influence economic geography to a more balanced urban-rural development, where the rural communities, through the agency (the government and other administrative ministries), will also see development by improving the road network in the rural districts, which in effect go a long way to change the face and condition in rural areas (Dinko, 2017).

### **Gathering Information for Analysis**

We used secondary data by gathering information on rural development from the manifestos of both the NDC and the NPP since 1992 (See Figure 1) and other publications. One of the major problems in social science methodology is sampling as studying a whole group is highly impossible (Monette et al., 2005). While resources, time, and financial constraints might prevent the study of the entire rural areas in Ghana, “we can get better information from carefully drawn samples than from an (*the*) entire” (130) country hoping that sampling

techniques are objectively and strictly followed (Babbie, 2001). There is substantial undercounts and other research errors, which may affect the outcome of a study even where a total population is involved. Therefore, studying the rurality of Ghana, we incorporated observational data and quantitative approaches to explain what is considered triangulation as this stratagem is one of the potential solutions to a problem of conflicting tasks (Gerring, 2012). The literature defines triangulations as the “use of several different research methods, *considered* valuable research strategy” (Babbie 2001:113).

The data on Ghana’s rurality were gathered from journal publications, peer reviewed and various websites, which were qualitatively used to justify the findings through elaboration. That is our Internet search utilized word and phrase searches. This study also used mixed method approach with emphasis on content analysis, however, the meta-analysis, which is “an analysis of combined results of several studies” (McNabb 2018: 499) seemed more appropriate for studying rural development in Ghana. According to Babbie (2001) and (McNabb 2018) meta-analysis, which is usually used in statistical methods for contrasting and combining results from different studies, is utilized in this chapter on rural development by examining the conclusions and results of other studies on rurality. We looked at the various definitions, which helped in our definition in rural development and did a phrase search, “rural development” in all the pre-election manifestos of both political parties since 1992 (see Figure 1). Meta analysis, seen as a subset of systematic approach to case report, case control study, and cohort study, was used to examine and determine the various variables that are lacking in rural areas hence the need for national rural development policy. The phrase “*rural development policy in Ghana*” was used for the Internet search while in the manifestos of both political parties, we specifically searched for any rural development related policies.

### **Applying the Solution to Ghana**

Attempts to bridge this gap has become a slogan for political campaigns as development projects in the rural areas have failed and most of them are left uncompleted (Asare, 2023<sup>5</sup>: Al-Hanssan (2007): Harding, 2015). For example, the one-Dam one-District campaign slogan by the NPP did not see the light of day in some rural districts. The literature on rural development in Ghana is a mix bag as much attention is focused on developmental projects in the cities and not

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<sup>5</sup> See a list of uncompleted projects including E-Blocks:  
<https://gongonbeater.com/articles/78/phenomenon+of+uncompleted+projects+in+ghana>

rural districts (Afukaar et al., 2019). Even though Ghana is categorized as developing country, the disparities in development among urban and rural district is a matter of great concern, which needs major transformation from both government and the people (Diao et al., 2019). Many reasons account for this but those that stand out for this rural under development include but are not limited to the following (1) The lack of a national framework or policy fostering solidarity between the urban and rural regardless of which party is in power, (2) the application to rural areas plans created for cities rather than those including alternative ways of organizing governance for developing more socially and culturally inclusive plans, (3) the lack of continuity in the policies proposed by competing political parties regarding rural developmental projects, (4) the lack of infrastructure maintenance in the rural districts, and (5) The lack of policies directed at developing a culture of collectivity.

Development is therefore concerned about the ability of leadership to effectively transform the thinking and practices of the urban and rural citizenry toward a more socially responsive approach than provided by market rationales and values alone. Additionally, development involves changes in the structure of production along with qualitative improvement in the living standards of the rural residents through the eradication of poverty, hunger, squalor, social and deprivation (Yago, 1983). This means rural development through effective leadership and policies should have the capacity and ability to harness the material and human resources of both *system* and *lifeworld* to improve the living conditions of the people on sustainable basis.

### **Is there such a National Policy on Rural Development?**

There is no known national rural policy or rural agenda for Ghana that any party that wins power must execute however, through the various manifestos (See Figure 1 below) of the two main political parties, we used word search and examined the manifestos to identify any

rural policies since 1992. We found limited access to basic social services, if any, and underdeveloped infrastructures usually characterize poverty in the rural areas. While education, health, and other economic activities are lacking in rural areas, we paid particular attention to road transportation, which hauls raw materials in the hinterland to urban centers and seaports for export. In our attempt to identify any national policy for rural development neither the NDC nor NPP in their manifestos did refer to any national policy. In fact, according to Harding (2015) road construction in rural Ghana is determined by how loyal a particular region, district, or constituency, is to a government in power. According to Danso (2007) and Ayithey (2005), is the lack of visionary leadership arising from the absence of political and policy continuity that has affected the provision of national policy for rural development.

Amoah and Mills (2019) note that since independence most policy issues for development are curtailed once there is a change in administration, government. Looking at developing policies since the first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, in the 1960s through to the Fourth Republic the various governments, both civilian and military, have not continued the policies of previous administration in Ghana (105-110). In well-established democracies the “party systems have been expected to provide broad frameworks of preferences within which specific policies can be formulated (Heineman et al., 2002:84). Unfortunately, in Ghana and arguably, most of the African countries, partisan politics has become so divisive to such an extent that party A does not continue the activities and policies of Party B hence since there is no well-defined national policy framework, uncompleted projects, especially in the rural districts, will continue to be in existence. Asare (2023) citing uncompleted E-Blocks that were started by the NDC government, argues that there are several other abandoned projects and as he puts the

problem is even worse in rural areas

(<https://gongonbeater.com/articles/78/phenomenon+of+uncompleted+projects+in+ghana>).

According to Asafo-Adjei et al (2020) argue that most of the uncompleted road projects in the rural districts are not due to the cost and benefits regarding the importance of the roads but politics play a major role in deciding, which roads need to be completed. The authors maintain that political considerations (decisions) overrides the economic importance of rural roads to the economy. In their article, *Accessibility and Transport Needs of Rural People in Ghana: How Relevant Are Appraisal Models*, Asafo-Adjei et al., noted that most of the decisions to construct rural roads are not entirely technical or professional decisions but political. In their study evaluating the benefits and impact of rural roads, they also found that “selection of roads is not even done by the technical men here. It is done by the politicians. They bring their list, and they ask you to go and carry out your studies. The engineers have a bit of influence on the decision that which road to construct but most often some of the lists come from the politicians” (133).

**Figure 1. NDC and NPP Manifestos for Election Campaigns from 1992-2020<sup>6</sup>**

| Year | NDC Theme                     | NPP Theme               | NDC Content   | NPP Content   |
|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1992 | Continuity and Stability      | Development and Freedom | Introduction: The Economy; The Social Contract: Mind Body and Spirit, Security, Ghana and the world | Introduction: Positive Change; The Economy; Building Prosperity for All; The NPP’s Policies for Selected Areas of the Economy, Developing and Managing Human Resources; Ghana and the World |
| 1996 | Always for People, Always for | Development and Freedom | Introduction: The Economy; The Social Contract: Mind  | Introduction: Positive Change; The Economy; Building Prosperity for All; The NPP’s Policies for Selected Areas  |

<sup>6</sup> For a complete manifestos and reviews of the both parties since 1992 visit:

[https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&q=npp+and+ndc+manifesto+since+1992+on+rural+development&tbm=isch&source=univ&fir=nSHzP-D0iUIGqM%252CR0bc18-HZYkzPM%252C\\_%253BKVP\\_wY7jj5fW5M%252CR0bc18-HZYkzPM%252C\\_%253BSGL-bqv9YaR9VM%252CQtCevtkVaH9sBM%252C\\_%253BPMUun\\_o1ZL2N0M%252CFsRYksg2gEsEyM%252C\\_%253BxlJyh2eowiMQXM%252CP6YWLYioVcBYM%252C\\_%253BBEB9AEVr9DzsEyM%252CWZtyCIH98vSISM%252C\\_%253B64jiQVYBUSko4M%252CChgzaa0n81SqFM%252C\\_%253BtiAIU\\_DBQXEjwM%252CYBLrkvhCwROz0M%252C\\_%253BaEmhfkWOP5eyLM%252CTIaoGgFVV8qzAM%252C\\_%253BSwd5WXPviviKSM%252CI4jmIEj-P0ezEM%252C\\_&usg=AI4\\_kRlPfurM0HvqNWoa4Go8joQX0dEog&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwia0OfCwsjAhVkmGoFHedC8QQjKegQIShAC&biw=1728&bih=890&dpr=2#imgrc=nSHzP-D0iUIGqM](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&q=npp+and+ndc+manifesto+since+1992+on+rural+development&tbm=isch&source=univ&fir=nSHzP-D0iUIGqM%252CR0bc18-HZYkzPM%252C_%253BKVP_wY7jj5fW5M%252CR0bc18-HZYkzPM%252C_%253BSGL-bqv9YaR9VM%252CQtCevtkVaH9sBM%252C_%253BPMUun_o1ZL2N0M%252CFsRYksg2gEsEyM%252C_%253BxlJyh2eowiMQXM%252CP6YWLYioVcBYM%252C_%253BBEB9AEVr9DzsEyM%252CWZtyCIH98vSISM%252C_%253B64jiQVYBUSko4M%252CChgzaa0n81SqFM%252C_%253BtiAIU_DBQXEjwM%252CYBLrkvhCwROz0M%252C_%253BaEmhfkWOP5eyLM%252CTIaoGgFVV8qzAM%252C_%253BSwd5WXPviviKSM%252CI4jmIEj-P0ezEM%252C_&usg=AI4_kRlPfurM0HvqNWoa4Go8joQX0dEog&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwia0OfCwsjAhVkmGoFHedC8QQjKegQIShAC&biw=1728&bih=890&dpr=2#imgrc=nSHzP-D0iUIGqM)



|      |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---|
|      | Development   |   | Body and Spirit, Security, Ghana and the world  | of the Economy, Developing and f Managing Human Resources; Ghana and the World  |
| 2000 | Spreading the Benefits of Development                     | Agenda for Positive Change                          | Introduction: A Moral and Just society; the Social Contract; Mind, Body and Spirit; Security; Ghana and the World   | Introduction: Positive Change; The Economy; Building Prosperity for All; The NPP's Policies for Selected Areas of the Economy, Developing and f Managing Human Resources; Ghana and the World   |
| 2004 | A better Ghana  | Agenda for Positive Change: Chapter Two             | Introduction; the Economy Bases: The Social Sector; A Fair and Just Society; The national Infrastructure; Law Order and Society; Governance; Chieftaincy and Culture; Foreign Policy; Conclusion. | Introduction: Achievements; The Economy; Building Prosperity for All; The NPP's Policies for Selected Areas of the Economy, Developing and f Managing Human Resources; Ghana and the World  |
| 2008 | A Better Ghana: Investing in People, Jobs and the Economy | Moving Ghana Forward a Modern Ghana                 | Introduction; Governance; Economy; Investing in People; Infrastructure for Growth; Conclusion   | Introduction: Achievements- Promise Delivered; Strengthen our Democracy: Law and Order; Structural Transformation of the Economy; Modernizing our Society; Regional and Continental Integration                                       |
| 2012 | Advancing the Better Ghana Agenda <sup>7</sup>            | Transforming <sup>8</sup> Lives, Transforming Ghana | Introduction: Remains committed to the implementation of policies and investment in programmes that will enhance the productive capacity of our people, ...quality of life for all Ghanaians.     | This potential can only be harnessed and achieved with the right leadership: Transformational leadership and, competent management of national affairs...we will unleash the talents of the Ghanaian people and build a great nation. |
| 2016 | Changing Lives: Transforming Ghana <sup>9</sup>           | Change: An Agenda for Jobs <sup>10</sup>            | Introduction: Seeks to create opportunities for all to develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of economic prosperity for all Ghanaians...through strategic investments                   | A strong economy creates opportunities and inspires more people to start new businesses. In much the same way, a strong economy encourages existing businesses to make new investments, to grow, and expand.                          |

<sup>7</sup> NDC 2012 Manifesto: <https://www.codeoghana.org/assets/downloadables/NDC-2012-Manifesto.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> NPP 2012 Manifesto: [https://www.ghanareview.com/directory/2012\\_npp\\_manifesto.pdf](https://www.ghanareview.com/directory/2012_npp_manifesto.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> NDC 2016 Manifesto: <https://www.scribd.com/document/362637789/2016-NDC-Manifesto-Full>

<sup>10</sup> NPP 2016 Manifesto: <https://npp-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2016-manifesto-full.pdf>

|      |   |                                      |   |  |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 2020 | Jobs, Prosperity and More <sup>11</sup> | Leadership of Service. <sup>12</sup> | Introduction: Fixing the economy, promoting human development, providing infrastructure for growth, providing decent jobs, good governance. | Introduction: Protecting our progress, transforming Ghana for all. |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|

**Source:** Adopted from NPP and NDC Manifestos since 1992 on Rural Development ([http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=134759997&Country=Ghana&topic=Politics\\_1](http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=134759997&Country=Ghana&topic=Politics_1)). **See also:** Tracking the Political Party Manifesto Promises. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Tracking-the-political-party-manifesto-promises-1066984>

In Ghana, the lack of consensus between the two political parties has seriously affected the formulation of any national policy for rural development, especially roads. Figure 1 above, examining strictly the party manifestos, shows that each political party has completely different focus in its manifestos during campaign periods for elections however, both parties do not seriously focus on rural development. For example, our examination and analysis of the manifestos for the parties, rural development was not clearly defined by neither party. However, there is constant mentioning by the political parties promising to put in place strategies and policies in improving infrastructures throughout the country during political campaigns. Again, Asafo-Adjei et al., state:

“Political appraisal of roads might be necessitated by agitations from the people to address concerns in the community or based on political strategy of political party in government to win electoral votes. Whatever the motivating factor, roads have socio-economic significance. However, when political consideration is the central factor it appears to be biased because communities without political affiliations may suffer not getting roads constructed, rehabilitated or maintained” (133).

On the contrary, however, as noted by Quinoo (2023), the NPP government has plans to improve rural districts through revitalization policies. She writes,

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<sup>11</sup> NDC 2020 Manifesto: <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/opinion/full-document-read-the-ndc-2020-manifesto-here.html>  
<sup>12</sup> NPP 2020 Manifesto: <https://citinewsroom.com/2020/08/npp-2020-manifesto-full-document/>

The Ghanaian government has put into place a Rural Area Revitalization Policy to address these issues as part of a larger plan to build an inclusive and sustainable economy that benefits all Ghanaians, regardless of their location. This policy is a multi-faceted approach that focuses on several key areas, including agriculture, infrastructure development, education, health, and sanitation which this article focuses on.<sup>13</sup>

Such promising plans for rural development are not uncommon in the manifestos of both parties but the implementation of the said individual party policies has been the problem since 1992 since there is lack of national policy for rural development.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations.**

Rural development is accorded a “lowly development status” (Amoah and Mills, 2019: 96) by the various governments since Ghana’s independence. Given our understanding of the ME and Habermas analysis of the theory, we concluded that the absence of a nationally well-defined rural development policy in Ghana shows a clear biased toward development in the urban areas, which is possible to overcome. Governments since the Fourth Republic regularly neglect the opportunity to ensure comprehensive development in the rural districts. This neglect has been the practice by both leading political parties since Ghana’s political independence. If Ghana is to be developed, the rural areas cannot be left behind as the development of the rural districts through road networks has a direct impact on the overall economy of the country (Asafo-Adjei et al., 2020).

Rural development policy in Ghana since the Fourth Republic has and continues to evolve even though there is lack of policy continuity whenever there is a change of government. Examining the various manifestos of the two political parties since 1992 through 2020 none of

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<sup>13</sup> See first paragraph of the article: *Akufo-Addo’s policies that are revitalizing the rural areas of Ghana*.  
<https://www.africanleadershipmagazine.co.uk/revitalizing-the-rural-areas-of-ghana-heres-what-the-government-tries-to-do/#:~:text=The%20policy%20acknowledges%20that%20implementing,agricultural%20production%20in%20rural%20areas.>

the parties has solid and implementable rural policy but it becomes a slogan phrase at political campaigns during election times. Unfortunately, leaders have attempted to use urban policies to addressing rural development in Ghana. Unquestionably, the failure of continuous rural policy in Ghana is due to the political divide between the two main political parties; the NDC and NPP.

The ME/Habermas approach, alternatively, favors mutual development in urban and communities and a decentralization and democratization of development policy that would empower rural community development efforts (Antwi-Boasiako, 2014). In Ghana this change is critical as it affects necessarily both national and international economic policy.

Unfortunately, since 1992 any attempt by the two main political parties to improve conditions in rural areas has been limited as rural residents continue to experience lack of portable water, very poor school facilities, absence of health facilities, and struggle with technology, and reliable network connection.

Requisite is a bold new strand of strategies that target the human resource capabilities and prioritizes breaching of the *system/lifework* divide. This new approach must be comprehensive and ambitious enough to trigger self-propelling efforts to break out from the yolk of abject poverty in rural Ghana. Additionally, sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without targeting education, health, and infrastructure development, especially paved roads. An ambitious mass education strategies spearheaded by the national government is central if this is to be achieved. Rural education encourages innovation, good health, diversifies livelihoods options, and transforms the rural mindset from viewing economic activities as a way of life to a business venture. Educated farmers are more likely to transfer knowledge and innovate to improve productivity as compared to uneducated farmers. To achieve this, however, it requires a dedicated political will to move resources, transfer technology, and trained human capability to

rural areas. All these cannot be achievable if basic infrastructures, especially, paved roads are not provided. The chapter recommends that: To attain any significant improvement in rural communities, there must be a national policy, which needs to be executed regardless of which political party is in power. Thus, the rural populace should be involved and integrated in the formation and implementation of rural development projects if rural transformation is to be attained. While the rural road network and other infrastructures have seen some upgrades during the Fourth Republic especially in recent years, rural roads still need expansion as improved connectivity for rural areas will boost Ghana's economy.

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