

# GOVERNANCE

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### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: A SOLUTION TO WINNER-TAKES-ALL POLITICS IN GHANA?

*The Winner – Takes- All (WTA) Politics project is an initiative of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). The WTA project forms part of a larger governance research project which dates back to 2014. The aim of this project is to promote a “More inclusive and accountable system of Governance in Ghana”. At the end of an almost two year consultation and research process a report was produced by*

*the IEA WTA Advisory Committee and the Board.*

*A copy of the Winner -Takes -All Politics report was submitted to The President of Ghana and disseminated to key stakeholders. All subsequent papers on the subject including this paper have been developed based on themes/issues identified in the final report.*

***Presented by Dr. Ransford Gyampo<sup>1</sup>***

### Summary

*This paper is the first in a series of publications aimed at contributing to the debate over the “winner-takes-all” politics in Ghana. It discusses the winner-takes-all as an electoral formula within the context of Ghanaian politics. It highlights the dangers of the winner-takes-all politics such as the marginalization of perceived political opponents and the feeling of exclusion from the governance process by those who do not belong to the ruling party. The paper argues further that the winner-takes-all politics undermines the quest for national development, cohesion and the drive towards democratic maturity and consolidation. In proffering policy recommendations, the paper critically examines proportional representation as one possible mechanism for ensuring inclusive governance and dealing with some of the challenges associated with the winner-takes-all politics.*

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## 1. Introduction

Ghana's 1992 Constitution prescribed an arrangement for electoral competition and governance which leans on the winner-takes-all (WTA) as a *formula* for the selection of leaders. However, the WTA is not merely an electoral formula for determining winners in elections; it also entails two distinct but interrelated elements, namely, (a) "a single winner plurality voting system for majoritarian rule" and (b) the partisan monopolization of state resources and exclusion of political opponents from national governance. It is in this second regard that the WTA is considered most problematic as it manifests as "a zero-sum tendency in politics" characterized by marginalization and exclusion of actors in opposing groups from access to monetary and non-monetary resources.

The framers of the relatively liberal, competitive and democratic 1992 Constitution might reasonably have anticipated that a victorious political party at the polls would reach out to opposition parties to promote cooperation and collaboration for the national good (Abotsi, 2013). However, the nation's experience of constitutional democratic dispensation over the past twenty-two years amply testifies that this lofty expectation has not materialized. Instead, politicians in Ghana have interpreted the WTA beyond the confines of elections to a more literal meaning that enables state resources to be used for political compensation to supporters and political victimization of opponents and all others who do not belong to the ruling party as well as "contemptuous disregard for the opposition".<sup>2</sup> In this regard, elections have become "a do-or-die affair"<sup>3</sup>; political campaigns have been decidedly intense, fierce, ruthless, dirty, unyielding and perpetual events in the four-year political cycle. In

addition, parliamentary proceedings have been fraught with frequent boycotts by the minority as a result of entrenched positions and frustrations they experience from the majority (Oquaye, 2014). Given the dangers of WTA politics, concerns have been raised by many Ghanaians about the need to address the problem.

In a series of papers, we will discuss in detail, the operational meaning of WTA politics in the Ghanaian context, its incidence, as well as the possible measures that could be implemented to reduce its negative effects in Ghana. Data and information for this exercise were generated from a series of nation-wide public consultations on WTA politics held by the Institute of Economic Affairs between 2013 and 2014. Secondary sources such as desk review were used to augment information from the public consultations.

Series One of the Institute of Economics Affairs' (IEA) WTA Politics papers is devoted to proportional representation (PR) as a possible solution to WTA politics. It is divided into five sections: Section One defines the concept of WTA politics. Section Two critically examines WTA as a formula for selecting leaders and highlights its distinction from WTA politics. Section Three discusses the causes of the WTA politics as well as its practical implications and dangers. In section Four, the paper undertakes a thorough review of proportional representation (PR) as a possible solution to WTA politics. The concluding remarks are contained in Section Five.

## 1. Defining the Winner-Takes-All Politics

WTA, as indicated earlier, is not merely an electoral formula for determining winners in elections. It is also a political mechanism for facilitating the inclusion and exclusion of

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<sup>2</sup> The author is grateful to Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye, Political Scientist and a former Second Deputy Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, for this view. According to him, it would be difficult to locate who is responsible for what and who must be accountable to Ghanaians when all across the political divide are made part of the ruling government.

<sup>3</sup> See IEA Issues Paper on Winner-Takes All for Public Consultations.

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individuals, groups and classes of persons from the spoils of political power, national governance as well as the conferment of economic advantages to only those who win political power (Hacker and Pierson, 2010a; Attafuah, 2013; Hacker and Pierson, 2010a; Abotsi, 2013; IEA, 2014). Viewing WTA politics purely from how it creates inequality and confers economic advantages to those in power, Hacker and Pierson (2010b) argued that WTA politics occurs when the ruling class undermines workers' rights and ability to unionize in a manner that reduces wage equality, creates economic insecurity among people, as well as down-plays the well being of the poor. One way to curb this situation is the kind of reforms that ensure that the interests of all citizens are reflected in public policy (Hacker and Pierson, 2010b). Contrary to conventional wisdom, the dramatic increase in inequality of income in developed countries like the United States (US) has not been the natural and inevitable result of increased competition from globalization, but rather the deliberate work of political forces (Hacker and Pierson, 2010a). Those at the very top of the economic ladder tend to develop and use political muscle to dramatically cut their taxes, deregulate the financial industry, keep corporate governance lax and labor unions hamstrung (Hacker and Pierson, 2010b). Therefore, instead of a rising tide lifting all boats, "yachts are rising, but dinghies are largely staying put" in the US, and "there is reason to suspect that the dinghies are staying put in part because the yachts are rising" (ibid: 20). Hacker and Pierson (2010a) argued that governments over the past thirty years have "abandoned the middle class" in the US in favor of making "the rich richer" by cutting taxes (estate and capital gains taxes) and tax rates for the wealthy, and eliminating or preventing any countervailing power or oversight of corporate managers. This for them epitomizes WTA politics in the US.

The experience of WTA politics in many African countries, however, goes beyond the conferment

of economic advantages on only the rich. Generally, post-electoral political transitions have been the most stressful moments for many countries in Africa. Victorious political parties after elections quickly "sweep the political and economic stakes" of the state as they consolidate themselves in power (Abotsi, 2013). The process of state capture moves *in tandem* with the ruthless perpetration of a regime of victimization and recrimination against political "enemies" in opposing political parties and their associates in business, industry and commerce (IEA, 2014).

The Ghanaian experience of WTA politics is akin to what pertains in some developing countries particularly of African origin (Dennis, 2007). It entails "state capture"<sup>4</sup> or the partisan monopolization of state resources, facilities and opportunities, as well as the exclusion of political opponents from national governance (Attafuah, 2013; Abotsi, 2013; IEA 2014). Since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992, WTA politics has been a divisive syndrome that confers certain exclusive rights on the top party echelons and apparatchiks after elections to the neglect of the rest of the citizenry (Gyampo, 2010). The key effects of this anti-democratic and inhumane system of political transition include compulsory retirements; dismissals (for instance, Apollo 568 under the Busia government); termination of appointments; cancellations and withholding of entitlements; forcible ejections from duty-post accommodation; wanton seizure of state vehicles and property in the care of political opponents by party apparatchiks without recourse to due process of law; reckless abrogation of contracts; and wanton persecution of some real and perceived political opponents. These negative tendencies are what many Ghanaians perceive as symptoms of WTA politics.

It is also a political sub-culture that excludes all other Ghanaians who are not part of the ruling party from national governance and decision making in a manner that polarizes the nation and

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<sup>4</sup>The author is grateful to Prof Ken Agyemang Attafuah, acting Dean of the Central University Law School, for this view.

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dissipates the much needed talents and brains for national development (IEA, 2014). In effect, one omnibus feature and result of WTA politics is the “dangerous feeling of exclusion” from the governance process by those who are not part of the ruling party/government (Attafuah, 2013). It has been aptly argued that for the sake of responsiveness and political accountability, it may not be a sustainable proposal to call for “a purely all-inclusive governance system” where virtually “everybody across the political divide” is included in the governance process<sup>5</sup>. Nonetheless, the visible and palpable feeling of exclusion from the governance process by those who are not members of the party in power often associated with WTA politics cannot also be part of good governance. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has characterized all the regimes of Ghana's Fourth Republic (IEA, 2013; Attafuah, 2013). For instance, political parties that have won elections have monopolized all state resources; there have been compulsory retirements of people suspected to be “political enemies; termination of appointments; cancellation of contracts that has resulted in needless judgment debts and unnecessary financial loss to the nation; and forcible ejection of public officials from duty-post residence, etc (IEA, 2014). Indeed, incoming governments have used their victory to signal a new “era” as a result of their control over power and resources. As has oftentimes been the case under all regimes in the Fourth Republic, the assumption of political authority has been used as a means of demonstrating control and the consequent marginalization of perceived political opponents from access to key resources and occupation of certain public offices (Abotsi, 2013).

## **2. Explaining the Winner-Takes-All as an Electoral Formula**

The winner-takes-all (WTA) is also referred to as the Plurality Voting System or First-Past-The-Post (FPTP). It entails a single-winner voting

system often used to elect executive officers or members of a legislative assembly which is based on single-member constituencies (O'Neill, 2006; Ayelazuno, 2011). It is the most common system, used in Canada, India, United Kingdom (UK) and US. In this voting system, the winner of an election is the person with the most votes. In other words, a simple majority of votes is what is important as there is no requirement that the winner gains an absolute majority of votes (ibid).

The Majoritarian System, as it is referred to, is an additional but less common type of the WTA. The slight difference between the Majoritarian System and the traditional WTA is that the winning candidate in the Majoritarian System is required to earn a majority of votes (at least fifty percent plus one) in order to be declared a winner (Nicholson, 1992).

The Majoritarian System employs one of three means for producing a winner. First, it may require a second election (run-off between the two leading parties) in the event that no candidate earns a majority of votes in the first round of election as exemplified by the Ghanaian presidential elections of 2000 and 2008. Alternatively, a second election may be held for all the parties that contested the first round. The winner in the run-off election would be the candidate or party that obtains a plurality of votes – that is, more votes than any other candidate. The third mechanism, the Alternative Vote (AV) is a preferential system where the voter has the chance to rank the candidates in an order of preference. The voter puts a '1' by his first choice, a '2' by his second choice, and so on, until he no longer wishes to express any further preferences or runs out of candidates. Candidates are elected outright if they gain more than half of the first preference votes. If not, the candidate who lost (the one with least first preferences) is eliminated and his votes are redistributed according to the second (or next available) preference marked on the ballot paper. This process continues until one candidate has half of the votes and is elected (Dyck, 2006). This

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<sup>5</sup>The author is grateful to Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye, Political Scientist and Former Deputy Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, for this view. According to him, it would be difficult to locate who is responsible for what and who must be accountable to Ghanaians when all across the political divide are made part of the ruling government.



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mechanism could be described as a way of conducting a run-off election in advance. However, given its technical and complicated nature, it does not seem appealing to many countries (O'Neill, 2006). Indeed, in a UK-wide referendum in 2011 the British were asked if they wanted to replace the FPTP with the AV system for electing members of parliament. The referendum produced a definitive NO vote against AV<sup>6</sup>. Given the literacy rate and huge numbers of rejected ballots that characterizes the conduct of elections in Ghana, it may also not be suitable for Ghana. For instance, in the 2008 and 2012 elections, rejected ballots constituted 2.4% and 2.23 respectively of the total votes cast<sup>7</sup>. These spoilt ballots could have avoided the 2008 run-off, for instance, as the difference between the NDC that won the Presidential Elections and the NPP after the Tain constituency re-run was only 0.94%<sup>8</sup>.

As indicated earlier, the framers of Ghana's 1992 Constitution opted for the WTA as the general formula for the selection of leaders<sup>9</sup>. In particular, Article 50(1)(a) prescribes the selection of parliamentary candidates through a simple First-Past-The Post or Plurality voting system. In the presidential elections, Article 63(3) prescribes the Majoritarian System as a formula for selecting the President of the Republic (Ayelazuno, 2011). Generally, the WTA as a formula for selecting leaders is also used for local and/or national elections in 43 of the 191 countries of the United Nations, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Swaziland, Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia, Dominica, Botswana, Ethiopia, Barbados, India, France, Nepal, Pakistan, Malawi and Mexico<sup>10</sup>. These countries have opted for the WTA as a formula for selecting leaders for several reasons that may not be interrogated for now because that is not the focus of this paper. However, one paramount factor that cannot be

glossed over is that generally, it is a very simple, less complicated formula for selecting leaders and very much suitable for homogenous and developing countries where literacy rates are low and complex issues regarding electoral formulae could be a recipe for electoral fraud and chaos (Ball and Peters, 2005). The framers of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana were mindful of the nascent nature of Ghana's democracy and the low literacy rate in prescribing WTA as an electoral formula for the nation (Afari-Gyan, 1995; Committee of Experts, 1992). Indeed, educational levels were for instance low and over 60% of the population lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills at the time the 1992 Constitution was being drafted<sup>11</sup>.

Two key challenges of this system in Ghana must be pointed out. First, the First-Past-The Post system, could likely result in minority rule, particularly when more than two political parties or candidates contest an election. Secondly, the majoritarian system can, potentially, jeopardize the fragile electoral peace that has endured since 1992. It gives extra and strong incentive to the two dominant parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to engage in crude ethnic politics for their electoral advantage even when they have lost in the majority of the ten regions speaking from a hypothetical viewpoint. Furthermore, by turning the whole country into a single-member constituency, regardless of its ethno-regional divisions, the votes of minority regions could become insignificant in electing the president, a dynamic that can lead to political exclusion and, subsequently, conflict (Ayelazuno, 2011).

### 3. What Causes WTA Politics?

There could be several factors responsible for WTA politics in Ghana and in the view of some

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<sup>6</sup>See more details on this at: <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/alternative-vote/#sthash.CQSyfi5x.dpuf>

<sup>7</sup>See more details of rejected ballots since 1992 at [www.ec.gov.gh](http://www.ec.gov.gh)

<sup>8</sup>Ibid

<sup>9</sup>The Committee of Experts and Consultative Assembly that drafted the 1992 Constitution opted for the WTA formula because It is because it is simpler, workable, inexpensive and has been used since independence in 1957.

<sup>10</sup>See full list of countries that uses the Winner-Takes-All formula is selecting leaders at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plurality\\_voting\\_system#Examples\\_of\\_plurality\\_voting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plurality_voting_system#Examples_of_plurality_voting)

<sup>11</sup>For more details on this, see <http://www.futuresforkidsghana.org/education-in-ghana>

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Ghanaians, the root cause lies in the nation's Constitution (IEA, 2013; IEA; 2014; Attafuah, 2013). However in this paper, we argue that the 1992 Constitution of Ghana cannot be fully culpable for the promotion of WTA politics. At least in the UK, Canada and France, where the WTA electoral formula is used, there is no serious evidence of public complaint about the WTA politics and the feeling of exclusion by those who are not part of the ruling party (Dyck, 2006). Even though there are complaints about WTA politics in countries like the US, the works of Hacker and Pierson (2010a&b) show that its causes and manifestations are quite different from what pertains in Ghana. Ghana's 1992 Constitution, just as those of some advanced countries, provides some countervailing checks against WTA politics. For instance, the legislature is expected to play an oversight role over the exercise of power by the executive. Whether these checks are being rendered ineffective or not would be a subject for another discussion. Suffice it to say however, that parliamentary effectiveness in Ghana's Fourth Republic is a chimera as the legislature serves merely as a rubber-stamp of the executive decisions (Oquaye, 2014; IEA, 2014). Nevertheless, it is a truism that parliamentary checks have been provided for by the 1992 Constitution and the selection of the WTA as an electoral formula was never meant to be translated into a divisive political problem after elections. Indeed, the choice of WTA as a formula for selecting leaders lies in its capability of providing a stable and workable government; and providing, in the waiting, an alternative government capable of being strong and stable (Afari-Gyan, 1995; Committee of Experts Report, 1991). In addition, "it has the further advantage of simplicity and is relatively inexpensive to operate" (Committee of Experts Report, 1991:92).

What ought to be pointed out is that in a fledgling democracy like Ghana, politics tends to be a zero-sum game. Whoever wins an election can easily monopolize the use of all resources of the state which confers wealth, fame, prestige and makes winners of elections very powerful. Indeed,

political power grants "Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) on the verandas of those who gets them."<sup>12</sup> Power, wealth, and fame are what many political elites, more especially, in poor and developing countries clamor for (O'Neill, 2006; Handelman, 2006). Consequently, there is often the desire on the part of politicians to strengthen their hold over power through a variety of compensatory schemes and tactically systematic means of depriving and excluding political opponents of all resources, entitlements and positions and ultimately weakening them (Abotsi, 2013; Linton and Southcott, 1998). Through this, incoming governments are able to "fulfill electoral promises of providing for their followers, and exerting flexing power against opponents" (Abotsi, 2013). This is the crux of the matter.

#### **4. Will Proportional Representation be a Solution?**

In dealing with WTA politics, virtually all governments of the Fourth Republic have made some inclusive overtures by appointing professionals and people from other political parties as ministers, deputy ministers, board members, etc. For instance, Jerry Rawlings of the NDC appointed Prof Atta Mills, a pure academic, as his Vice President. President J.A. Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party appointed Dr. Kwesi Nduom from the Convention People's Party (CPP) as minister. Similarly, President John Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress also appointed Dr. Kwabena Duffuor of the CPP as minister. However, these appointments could at best be described as cosmetic in an attempt to create inclusive government as the appointees were few and more importantly, they were not from the major opposition party at the time. Forming a coalition government may also be seen as one quick solution to WTA politics. However, coalitions, apart from the fact that they are often unstable, may be seen as mule-like arrangements, applicable mainly to countries that practice the parliamentary system of government.

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<sup>12</sup>The author is grateful to Prof. Kwamena Ahwoi, of the GIMPA School of Governance and Leadership, for this view.

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Many Ghanaians have therefore called for the adoption of the Proportional Representation (PR) as a solution to the feeling of exclusion and marginalization associated with WTA politics by those political actors, ethnic groups, etc., who are often defeated in elections (IEA, 2014). It is feared that, if not checked, the feeling of exclusion and marginalization could be a recipe for political conflict and undermine national cohesion which is a necessary condition for development (IEA, 2013; Douglas, 1993).

What then, is PR? Like the WTA formula, the PR is also a formula for selecting leaders into parliament. It is sometimes referred to as full representation, and, as an electoral formula, it aims at securing a close match between the percentage of votes that groups of candidates obtain in elections and the percentage of seats they receive usually in the legislature (Nicholson, 1992; Douglas, 1993; Linton and Southcott, 1998). The PR formula is used in over 70 countries throughout the world including Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Japan, Germany, Italy, South Africa, South Korea, Norway, Namibia, Liberia, Lesotho, Scotland, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Israel (Mueller, 2000; Linton and Southcott, 1998).

Generally, there are two main forms of PR; namely, the Party List Formula and the Single Transferable Vote Formula. Under the Party List Formula, the parties list their candidates according to their priorities. In a closed list, voters vote for a list, not a candidate. Each party is allocated seats in proportion to the number of votes, using the ranking order on its list. In an open list, voters may vote, depending on the model, for one person, or for two, or indicate their order of preference within the list (Mueller, 2000; Bybee, 1998). On the other hand, the Single Transferable Vote formula uses a system of preferential voting to determine the results of elections. A constituency elects two or more representatives per electorate. Parties tend to offer as many candidates as they most optimistically could expect to win. Voters mark their ballot, allocating preferences to their preferred ranking for some or all candidates. A successful candidate must achieve a quota, being the total number of votes

received divided by the number of candidates to be elected plus one; that is, in a nine-member constituency the quota would be (the number of votes divided by 9 + 1) (Shugart and Wattenberg, 2003). It is only in a few cases that this is achieved at the first count (O'Neill, 2006). For the second count, if a candidate wins an election, his surplus vote (in excess of the quota) is transferred to his voters' second choices; otherwise, the least popular candidate is eliminated and his votes redistributed according to the second preference shown on them. If there is more than one candidate who cannot get enough votes after the transfer of votes of a least popular candidate, he too will be eliminated. This process continues for as many counts as are needed until all seats are filled either by the required number of candidates achieving a quota and being deemed to be elected or until there are only the number of candidates remaining as there are number of seats. Although the counting process is complicated, voting is clear and most voters get at least one of their preferences or candidates elected (Johnson, Harvey and Trevor, 2006).

One key advantage of the PR system is that it promotes political inclusivity and gives a voice to the marginalized in the decision-making process in a manner that ensures national cohesion and unity (Dennis, 2007). However, it has been criticized because it could encourage the unnecessary proliferation of groups, ethnicity and political parties (Shugart and Wattenberg, 2003; Mueller, 2000). Again, the whole formula is highly complex and mathematical and may not lend itself to quick understanding by the ordinary politician or the masses (Douglas, 1993; Nicholson, 1992; Bybee, 1998). Its tendency to breed confusion, conflict and increase the percentage of spoilt ballots in a country like Ghana with a relatively low literacy rate and high incidence of rejected ballots in General Elections since 1992, cannot be under-estimated. For instance, in the 2008 presidential elections of Ghana, an overall percentage of 3.42 of the votes cast were rejected (i.e., 2.4% in the first round election and 1.02% in the run-off) (Gyampo, 2009). In 2012 too, results published by the Electoral Commission for the presidential

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elections indicate that 2.23% or a total of 251,720 ballots cast were rejected out of the 11,246,982 votes cast.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to promote inclusive politics and reduce the feeling of marginalization associated with WTA politics, Ghana may opt for a Customized Variant of the PR by adopting and modifying the Party List formula. The Customized Variant may combine the features of the Party List formula with an Affirmative Action programme that ensures that representation includes marginalized groups such as women, youth and the disabled. In other words, under this Customized Variant, political parties in parliamentary elections would receive seats in proportion to the number of votes garnered during the elections. In this regard, votes cast for candidates in elections would not be deemed to have been wasted and the dangers of electing people who actually have support from only a small segment of the voter population may be checked. In addition, some arithmetic computations may be worked out by the Electoral Commission to determine the percentage of seats to be occupied by marginalized groups based on their size and demographic strength. This is crucial in ensuring proper representation and full inclusivity in the governance process in a manner akin to what pertains in other African jurisdictions such as Rwanda and Kenya.

Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah enacted the Affirmative Action Act (AAA), supporting the participation of women in local, regional and national decision-making processes with 10 mandatory women appointees to the national assembly/legislature. However, subsequent constitutions (1969, 1979 and 1992) have failed to apportion any mandatory percentage(s) to women

in parliament (Allah-Mensah, 2005). Through similar actions, Rwanda got many women included in its governance process at the parliamentary level (Douglas, 1993; Calomer, 2004; Handelma, 2006). Similarly, in Kenya, there are deliberate affirmative arrangements to allocate some seats to young people in parliament as a way of dousing the feeling of marginalization and exclusion among them.<sup>14</sup> This system of representation is also known as qualitative representation in that it broadens the entire system and ropes in the vulnerable. Indeed, it introduces an affirmative action element into the process of political representation.

In sum, PR could serve as an electoral formula as well as a consensus-building mechanism that fosters inclusion and minimizes the feeling of exclusion of large numbers of people simply because their preferred party or candidate lost out in an election based on a simple majority. Nevertheless, the nation may not easily accept the idea of changing its electoral formula from the WTA to PR. Indeed, there is the need for caution in advocating for the PR because of certain challenges and requirements that must be met before the PR is adopted. Generally, one major consideration for adopting PR is the level of fragmentation and heterogeneity among the population (Dyck, 2006). Many countries of Scandinavian origin that adopted the PR did so because they were heterogeneous and deeply fragmented. Their adoption of the PR was therefore crucial in addressing vote wastage and under-representation of marginalized groups (Nicholson, 1992; Handelma, 2006).

In Ghana, one key argument advanced in support of the call for the adoption of the PR system is the exploitation of ethnicity and regionalism by politicians in a manner that undermines the

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<sup>13</sup>See website of the Electoral Commission of Ghana for more details: [www.ec.gov.gh](http://www.ec.gov.gh). The high incidence of rejected ballots could have prevented the run-off in 2008 and Election Petition at the Supreme Court in 2013.

<sup>14</sup>In Kenya, there are specific constitutional provisions that guarantee seats for young people in the Legislature. This is a deliberate measure to ensure the representation of youth interest in decision making. For example, Article 97(1) (c) talks about the composition of their National Assembly including 12 members nominated by Parliamentary Parties according to their proportion of members of the National Assembly to represent the youth. Again, the Kenyan Senate also has membership that provides for youth representation while Article 100(1) (c) of the constitution enjoins the legislature to enact laws to promote youth representation in parliament.



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nation's population homogeneity and marginalizes some ethnic groups (Frempong, 2006). In this regard, ethnic undertones have manifested in voting patterns in the Northern, Volta and Ashanti regions since 1992.<sup>15</sup> If Ghana is a truly homogenous country, former President J.A. Kufuor would not have been criticized for appointing only one Ewe, (Major (rtd.) Courage Quashigah) as a cabinet minister and presiding over an Akan party. Similarly, President John Mahama was criticized for appointing a number of his ministers and other officials from the Northern regions. Some Ghanaians are likely to support the adoption of PR because they feel that the nation is fairly heterogeneous. As a result, any system that caters for political and ethnic minorities and provides such groups with some level of inclusion and participation (even when they are not in charge) is acceptable.

Without down-playing the argument that Ghana is fairly heterogeneous and that the adoption of PR is suitable in promoting the interests of political and ethnic minorities, it has also been argued that Ghana is a relatively small unitary state with a fairly homogenous population and does not fully meet the requirements for the adoption of the PR system (Shillington, 1992; Handelma, 2006). There are about 92 ethnic groups in Ghana with the major ones being the Akan (49.1%) Mole Dagbani (16.5%), Ewe (12.7%), Ga-Adangbe (8.0%), Guan (4.4%), Gurma, (3.9%), Grunsi (2.8%), and Mande-Busanga, (1.1%).<sup>16</sup> The ethnic diversity has nevertheless not seriously dented and compromised the homogenous nature of its population (Frempong, 2006; Handelma, 2006). In addition, the works of Arthur (2009); Fridy (2006); Frempong (2006); Nahomi and Noah (2013); and Adjei (2012) point to ethnic voting patterns in Ghana's electoral politics. However, the kind of divisive ethnic cleavages of the magnitude that warrants the adoption of PR is not

what is witnessed in Ghana today (Shillington, 1992; Chazan, 1982).

It is significant to note that even though Nigeria's population is heterogeneous with over 250 ethnic groups<sup>17</sup>, their adoption of federalism (akin to PR) has not solved the fragmentation and feeling of marginalization by some ethnic minorities (Handelma, 2006). In this regard, the call for PR as a solution to the WTA politics may be simplistic and not based on any realistic verifiable indicators. It may encourage an unnecessary proliferation of groups, ethnicity and political parties in a manner that could render the selection of representatives extremely difficult and prone to corrupt influences. Indeed, one major challenge likely to threaten the viability of the option to implement PR in a developing country like Ghana is the complexity of the formula for selecting leaders that does not lend itself to easy understanding by the ordinary politician and the masses. Its tendency to breed confusion cannot therefore be under-estimated. Finally, as a developing country fighting poverty and under-development, the feeling of marginalization alone cannot be the basis for inclusion in the governance process without recourse to meritocracy, competence, transparency, accountability and capabilities of representatives in governance and decision-making (Douglas, 1993; Young, 1976).

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the PR system as a possible alternative to the WTA or FPTP and a solution to the WTA politics. In this regard, the pitfalls and challenges of both systems have been critically examined. The paper has argued that the politics of the WTA with its attendant marginalization of perceived political opponents and feeling of exclusion by those who are not part of government cannot be a healthy democratic

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<sup>15</sup>See voting patterns at [www.ec.gov.gh](http://www.ec.gov.gh)

<sup>16</sup>Ghana Statistical Service Report (2000)

<sup>17</sup>Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has more than 250 ethnic groups. The most populous and politically influential ones are the: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, and Tiv 2.5%. See more details at <http://start.csail.mit.edu/startfarm.cgi?query=How+many+ethnic+groups+exist+in+Nigeria>.

practice. In Ghana, it amounts to an unnecessary centrifugal amalgamation of power<sup>18</sup> by the President and ruling party in a manner that undermines constitutionalism, national cohesion and the drive towards democratic maturity and consolidation. The adoption of PR may serve to reduce some of the negative tendencies associated with WTA politics given the feeling of marginalization by political and ethnic groups which do not belong to the ruling party. However, given the fledgling nature of Ghana's democracy, and the complexities associated with PR, the question that ought to be posed is whether the nation is ready for a change in its electoral formula. The framers of the 1992 Constitution had genuine reasons for choosing the WTA as an electoral formula over PR. It was also an act of wisdom and prudence that the Constitution Review Commission did not reopen the debate over the nation's electoral formula. If the status-quo is to be maintained, then an effective countervailing authority (both formal and informal) is necessary to check whoever emerges victorious in an election "does not take it all".

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