



GHANA'S 2024 ELECTIONS

A PREVIEW



Disclaimer

The data in this report is only up-to-date as of Thursday, 12 September 2024. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability for any errors or omissions that may follow such events and invalidate the data contained herein.

Our researchers collated the available data through desk research, one-on-one interviews and polling. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy-edit the information gathered.

All 2024 projections in this report are based on SBM surveys and confidence interval estimations derived from historical electoral data dating back to 1996. These projections provide a statistical outlook on regional outcomes and voting patterns, highlighting potential shifts in party support ahead of the upcoming elections.



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In 2024, Ghana is set to experience one of the most fiercely contested elections in its Fourth Republic. As expected, the primary battleground for this election will be the state of the economy. Since multi-party democracy was introduced in 1992, no political party in the West African nation has secured more than two consecutive terms in office. This unique trend sets the stage for a significant test in the presidential and parliamentary elections on 7 December 2024, where more than 19 million eligible voters will be casting their ballots. The ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) aims to break the so-called “third-term curse.” At the same time, the main opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), led by former President John Mahama, hopes to stage a comeback after losing badly in 2016.

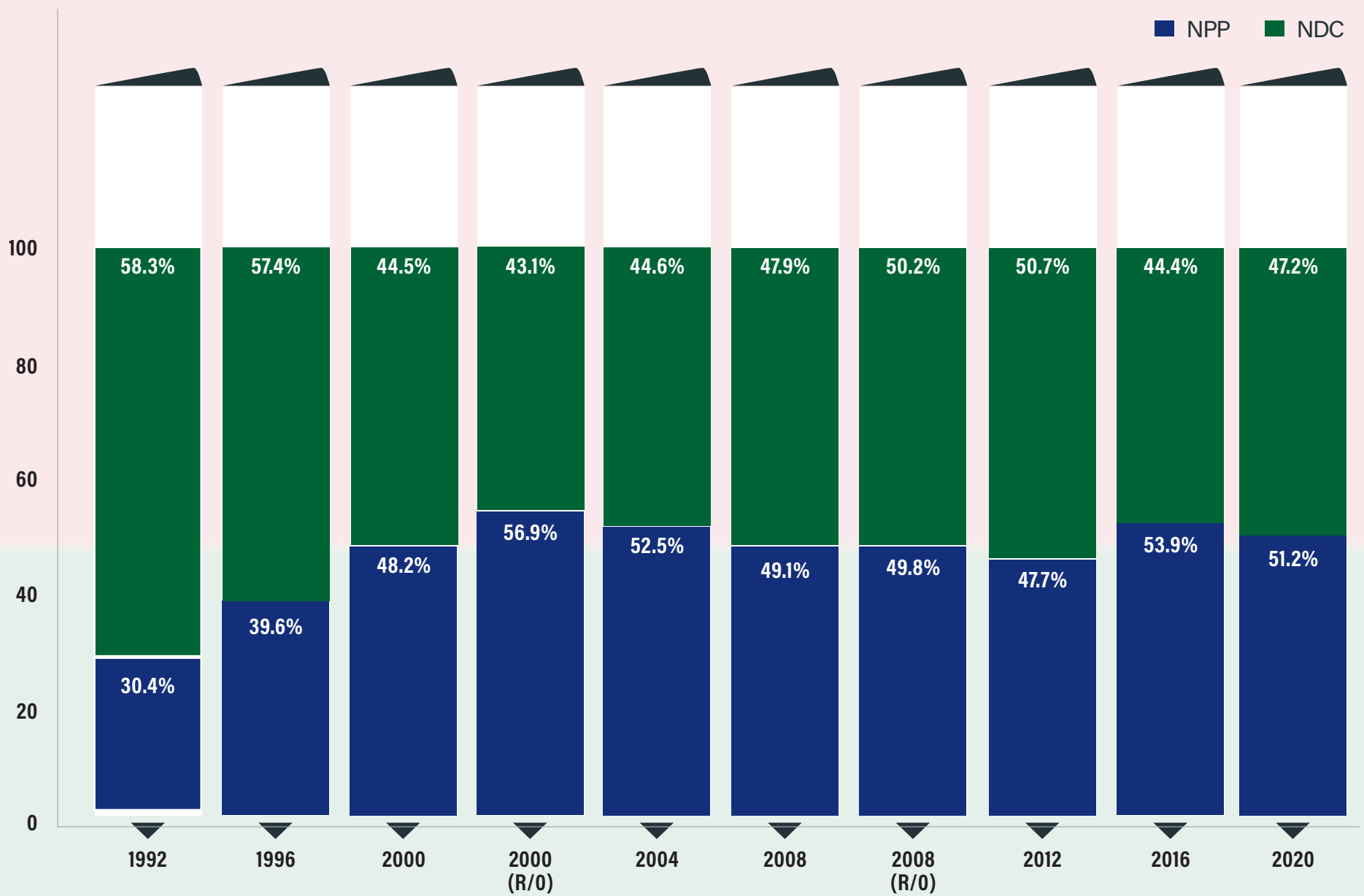
Historical Context and Election Trends

Since 1992, the NPP and NDC have been the dominant forces in Ghanaian politics, each securing victory in four presidential elections. The NDC took the early lead, winning the first two elections in 1992 and 1996 under the leadership of Jerry John Rawlings. However, the NPP, led by John Agyekum Kufuor, made a breakthrough in 2000 after a runoff, securing its first victory in the Fourth Republic.



GHANA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS (1992-2020)

Since 1992, Ghana has held eight general elections, with the two dominant political parties (NPP and NDC) winning four each. The NDC obtained its first electoral victory in 1992, securing 58.30% of the valid votes. However, since 1996, the party's winning percentage has fallen below 51%. In contrast, the NPP won power in the 2000 elections through a runoff and has consistently maintained a victory margin of over 51% in all subsequent wins.



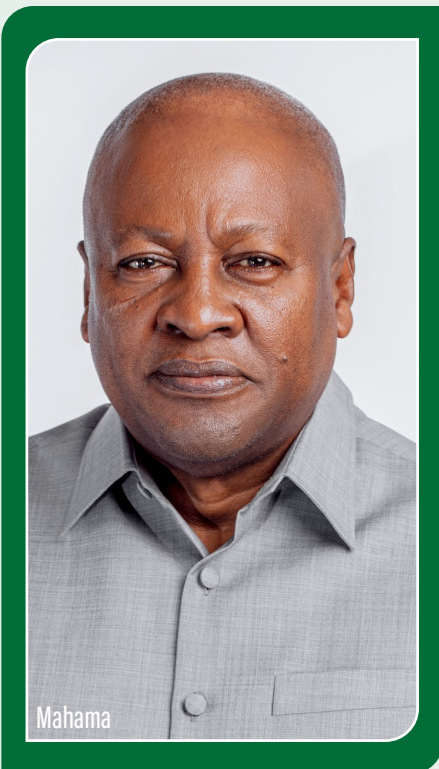
Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

NPP retained power in 2004 but lost to the NDC in 2008 when the election went to a second round. Mahama secured the presidency for NDC in 2012 but was defeated in 2016 by Nana Akufo-Addo of NPP, making it the first time an incumbent president lost a re-election. The 2016 election also recorded the highest margin of victory since 2000, with current President Akufo-Addo receiving 53.9% of the votes.



The 2024 Election Dynamics

The NPP, represented by the current Vice President Mahamadu Bawumia, is vying to break the historical cycle of alternating power between the two major parties. Historically, the NPP and NDC have each served two consecutive terms before losing in subsequent elections. Now, the NPP is determined to break this pattern with Bawumia hoping to lead the party to a third straight victory. For Bawumia, this election marks his debut as a presidential candidate, having served as Akufo-Addo's running mate in the last three elections.



On the other hand, Mahama, former president and NDC's flagbearer, is seeking a return to the presidency. His quest for a second term is particularly significant, as he was the first sitting president in the country's history to lose an election in 2016, subsequently losing again in 2020. If Mahama wins, he will become the first former president to reclaim the presidency after losing it. His campaign is focused on unseating the NPP and ending the party's eight-year rule.



The Role of Emerging Third Forces

Though Ghana runs a multiparty system, the dominance of the NPP and NDC has left little room for other political parties to gain significant traction. However, the 2024 elections may see the emergence of new challengers that could disrupt the traditional two-party race. Alan Kyerematen and Nana Kwame Bediako have emerged as new faces aiming to make their mark in the upcoming elections.



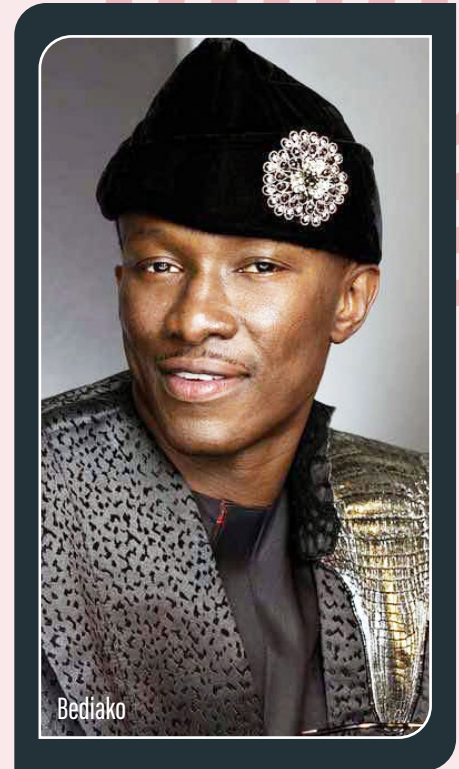
Ghanaians are increasingly seeking a third political force capable of challenging the dominance of the NPP and NDC. As the elections approach, efforts to establish a formidable third force are intensifying. Smaller political parties and movements are exploring partnerships and alliances to strengthen their chances.

One such figure is Alan Kyerematen, a former NPP member who broke away from the party after failing to defeat Bawumia in the NPP's internal primaries. Kyerematen, a key figure in the NPP for many years, cited unfair practices and favouritism in the primaries as reasons for his departure. He now leads the Alliance For Revolutionary Change (ARC) and is expected to siphon off votes from the NPP, particularly in its traditional Ashanti strongholds.



Another potential disruptor is Nana Kwame Bediako, an entrepreneur and leader of the New Force Movement. Inspired by Nigeria's Peter Obi, Bediako positioned himself as a fresh alternative to Ghana's political duopoly. He aims to attract disillusioned voters and the youth seeking a change from NPP and NDC's long-standing dominance.

Despite the numerous alliances and the emergence of independent candidates, many Ghanaians wonder about the ability of the emerging third forces to challenge the two big parties. The prevailing view is that, at best, these smaller parties might succeed in pushing the election to a runoff.



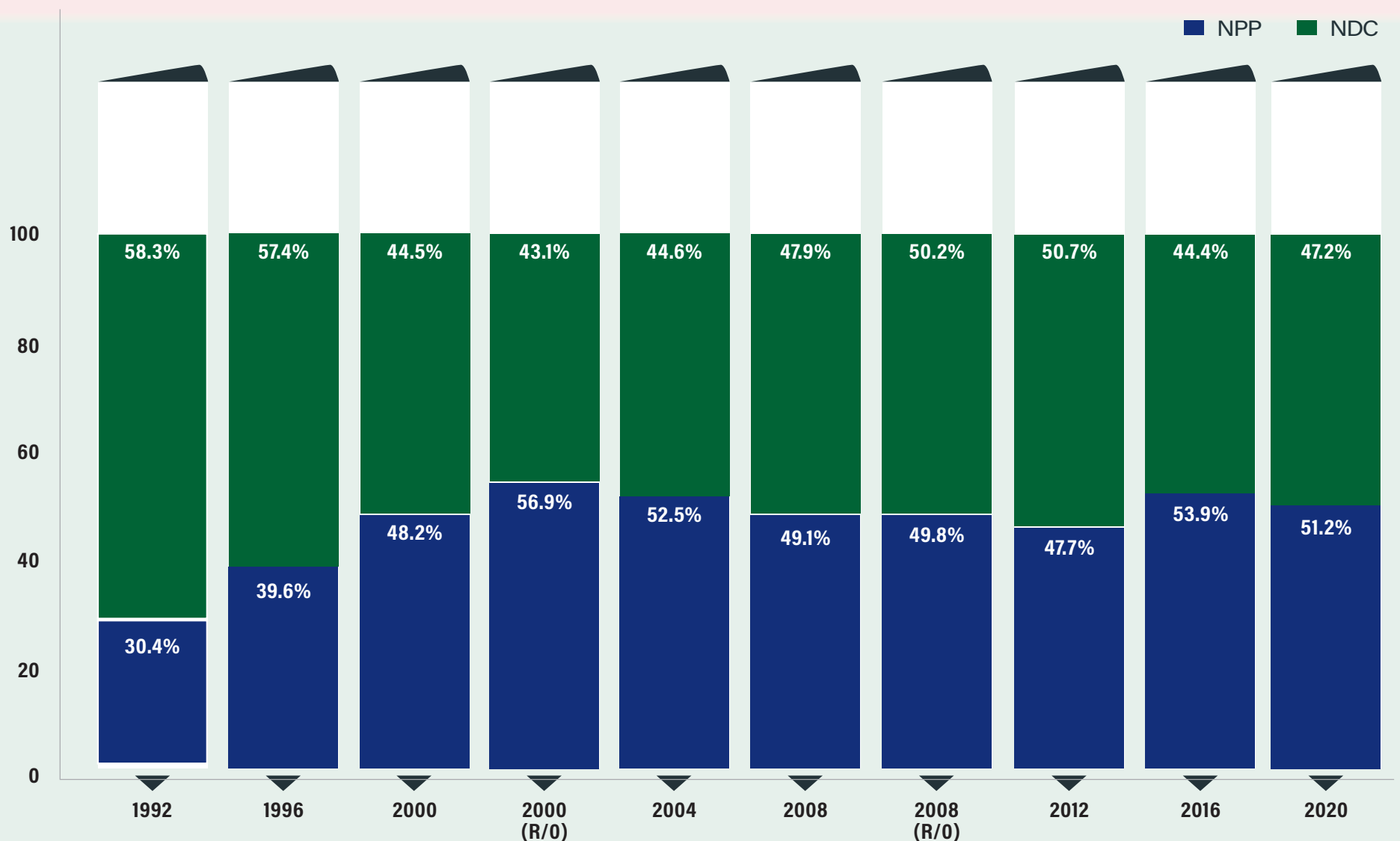
Bediako



The Electoral System and Historical Precedents

Ghana's presidential election is determined through a two-round system, also known as an absolute majority vote system, meaning that a candidate must win 50% plus one of the total votes to be declared the winner. If no candidate achieves this majority in the first round, a runoff election is held between the top two contenders. Ghana has experienced two runoff elections in 2000 and 2008. In both cases, third-party candidates played a crucial role in forcing the election into a second round by garnering significant shares of the vote.

GHANA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS (1992-2020)



Data source: Electoral Commission of Ghana



Historical data supports this notion, as Ghana's elections have typically gone to a second round whenever smaller parties managed to secure more than 2% of the total valid votes cast. The challenge for any emerging third force will be to break through this pattern and present a credible alternative that resonates with the broader electorate. In 2000, third forces obtained 6.7% of the vote, while in 2008, they captured 2.91%, tipping the balance between the NPP and NDC.

As the election approaches, the combined weight of emerging third-party candidates like Kyerematen and Bediako could once again send the election to a runoff. With voter sentiment shifting and political allegiances less certain, these candidates may draw enough votes away from NPP and NDC to prevent either of the main parties from achieving a first-round victory.



2024 Presidential Election: SBM Polling

1. BATTLE OF THE NORTH

| REGION | AVERAGE VOTE SHARE (1996-2020) | | 2024 (SBM PROJECTION) | |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| Northern | 39.19% | 56.19% | 48.58% | 50.85% |
| North East | 33.86% | 52.03% | 55.80% | 43.50% |
| Savannah | 33.86% | 61.70% | 32.45% | 67.25% |
| Upper East | 28.86% | 60.13% | 34.80% | 64.50% |
| Upper West | 27.39% | 62.78% | 28.50% | 69.85% |

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana & SBM Estimates

■ NPP ■ NDC

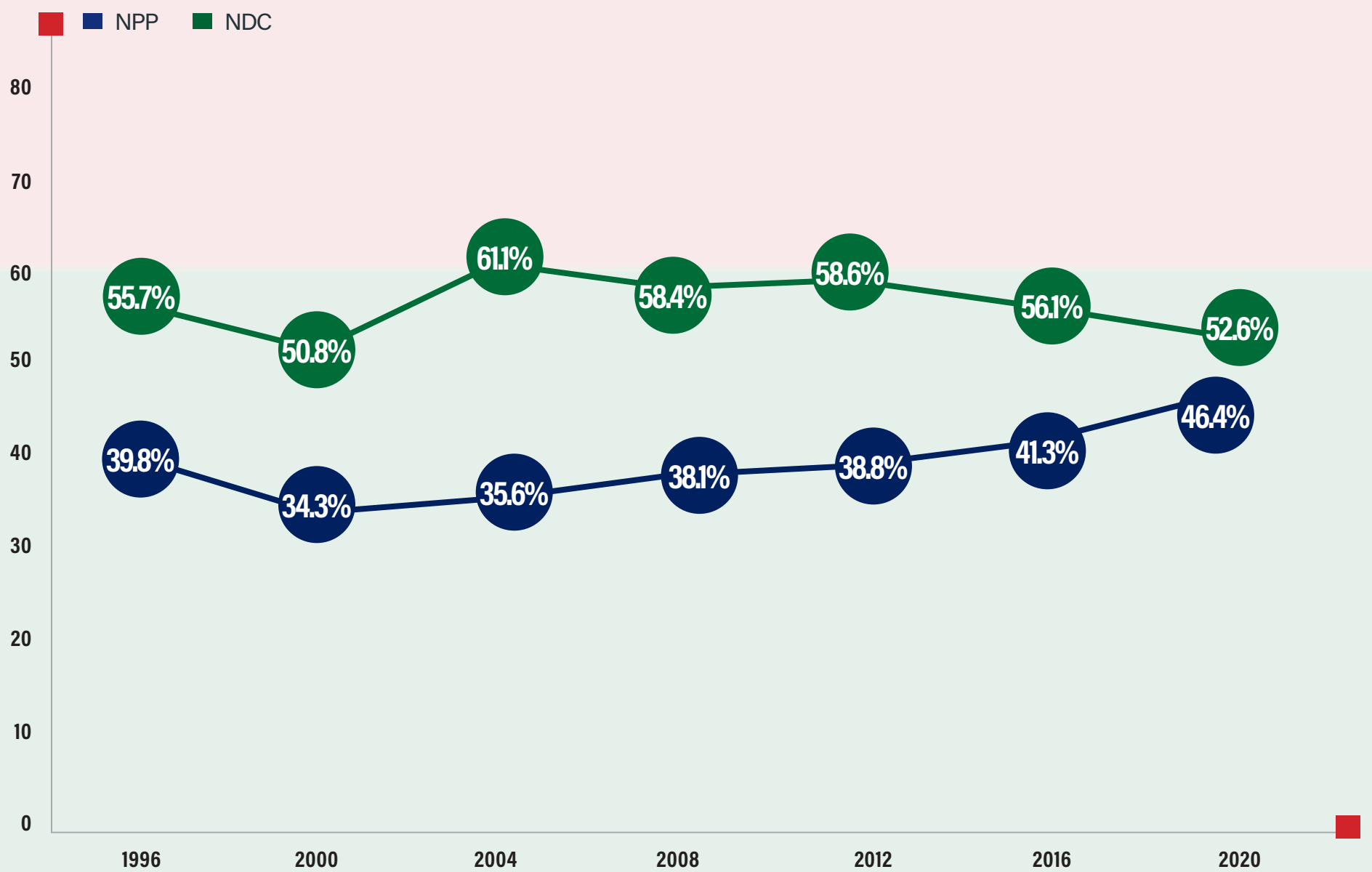
In the 2024 Presidential election, the NDC is expected to easily maintain three (Upper East, Upper West, and Savannah) out of the five regions and battle the NPP for the Northern region. In the North East, Bawumia's candidacy is expected to help the NPP maintain its win and improve its vote share from 51.40% to 55.8%.

Ghana's northern belt has historically leaned toward NDC, a trend that has persisted since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1992. NPP has traditionally struggled to win presidential elections in the then three northern regions—Northern, Upper East and Upper West. However, in 2020, the political landscape in the North began to shift following the creation of two additional regions—Savannah and North East—in 2018, making a total of five regions.



For the first time in 2020, the NPP secured a win in the North East region, which is the home region of Bawumia, now the party's 2024 flagbearer. His deep personal and political ties to the region played a significant role in the party's breakthrough, where they garnered 51.40% of the vote. As the election approaches, the NPP aims to leverage Bawumia's influence to solidify and expand its presence in the northern regions.

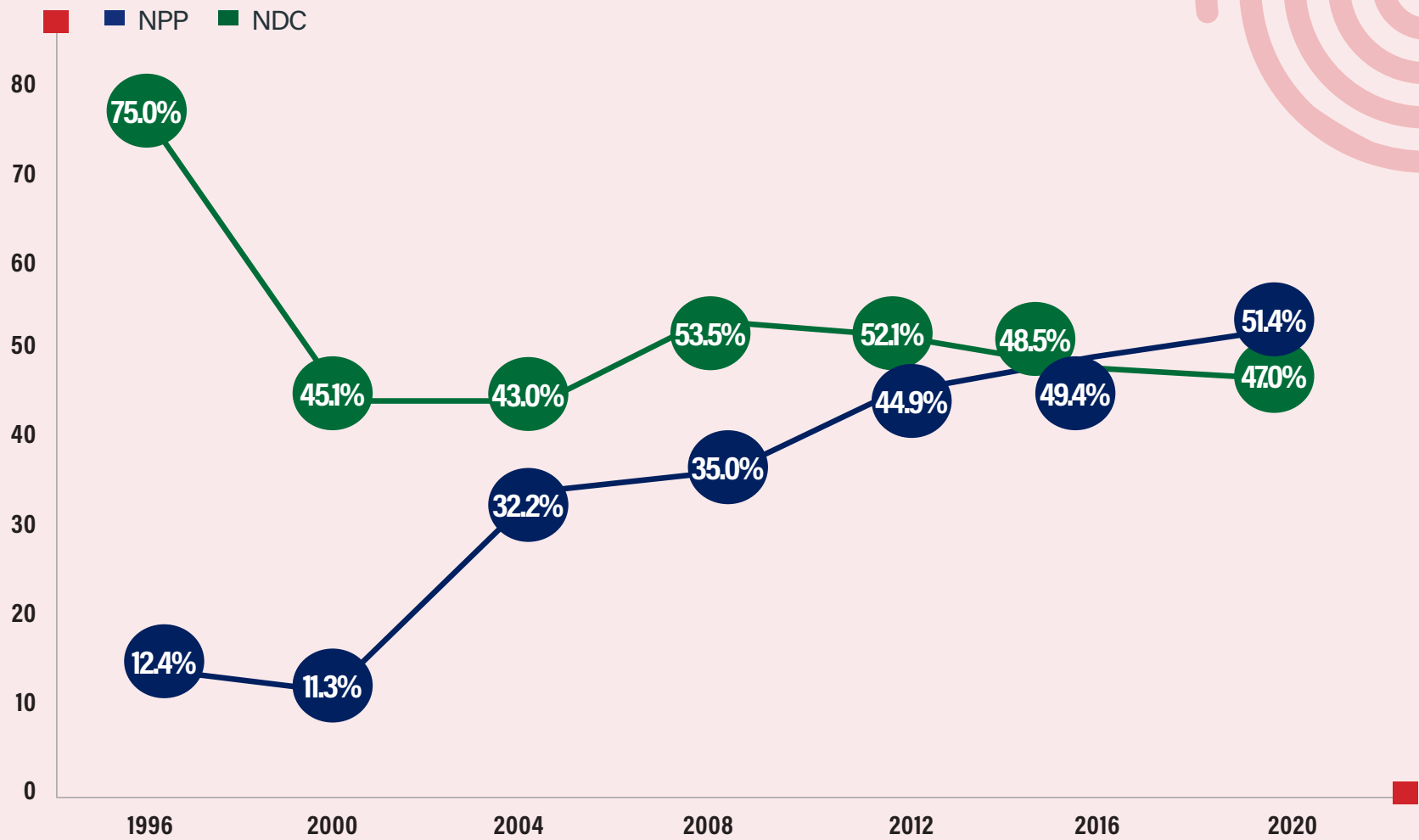
NORTHERN REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

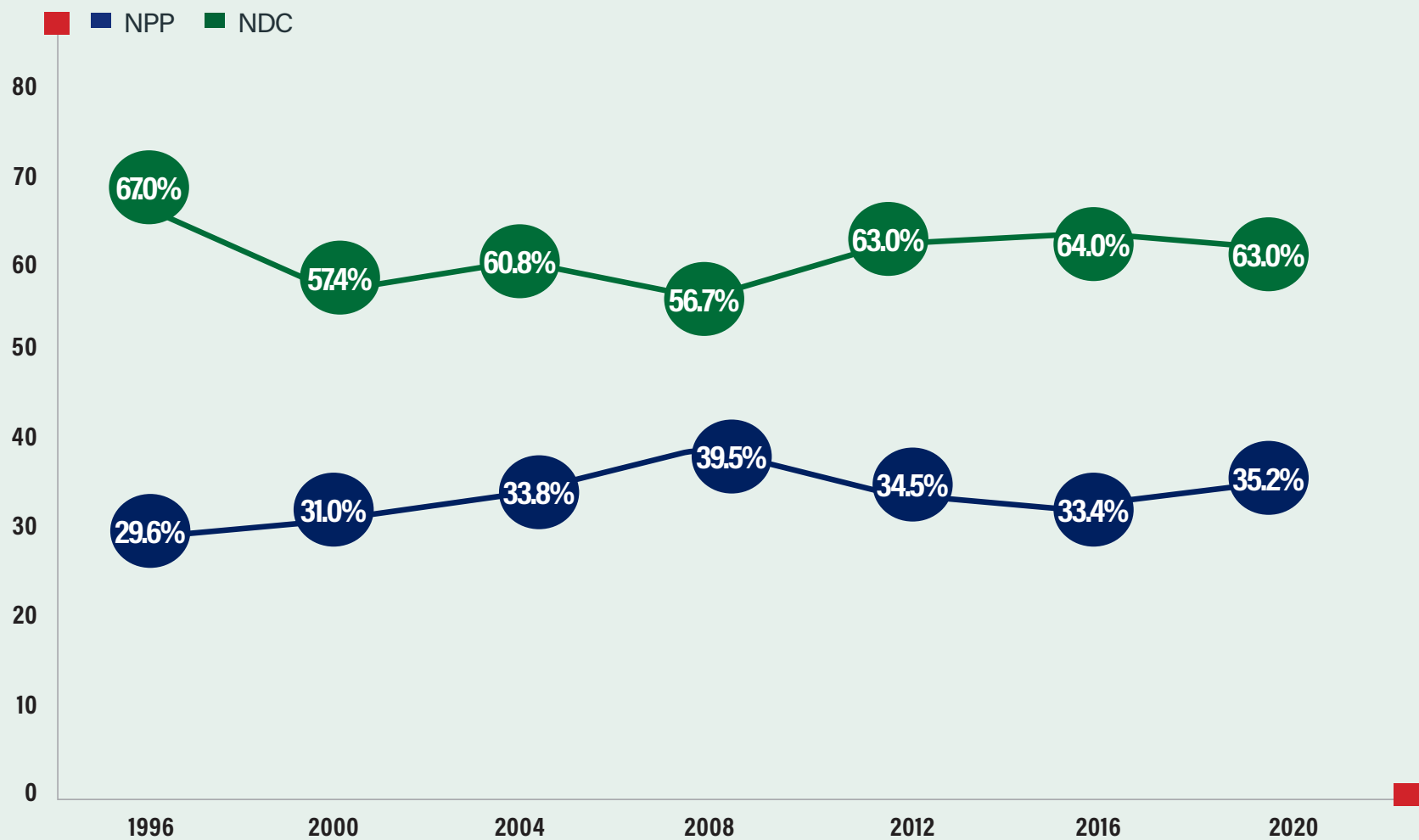


NORTH EAST REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

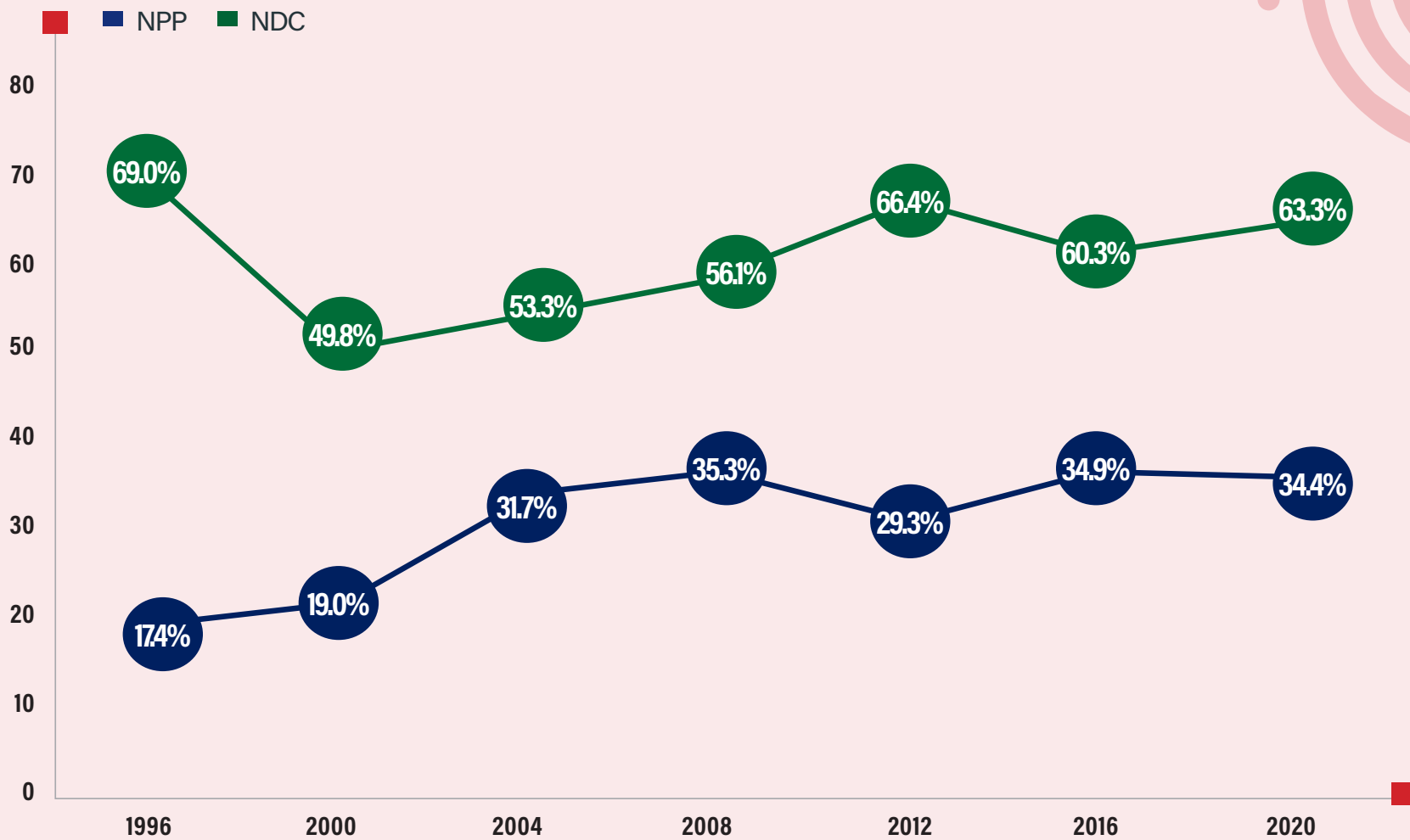
SAVANNAH REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

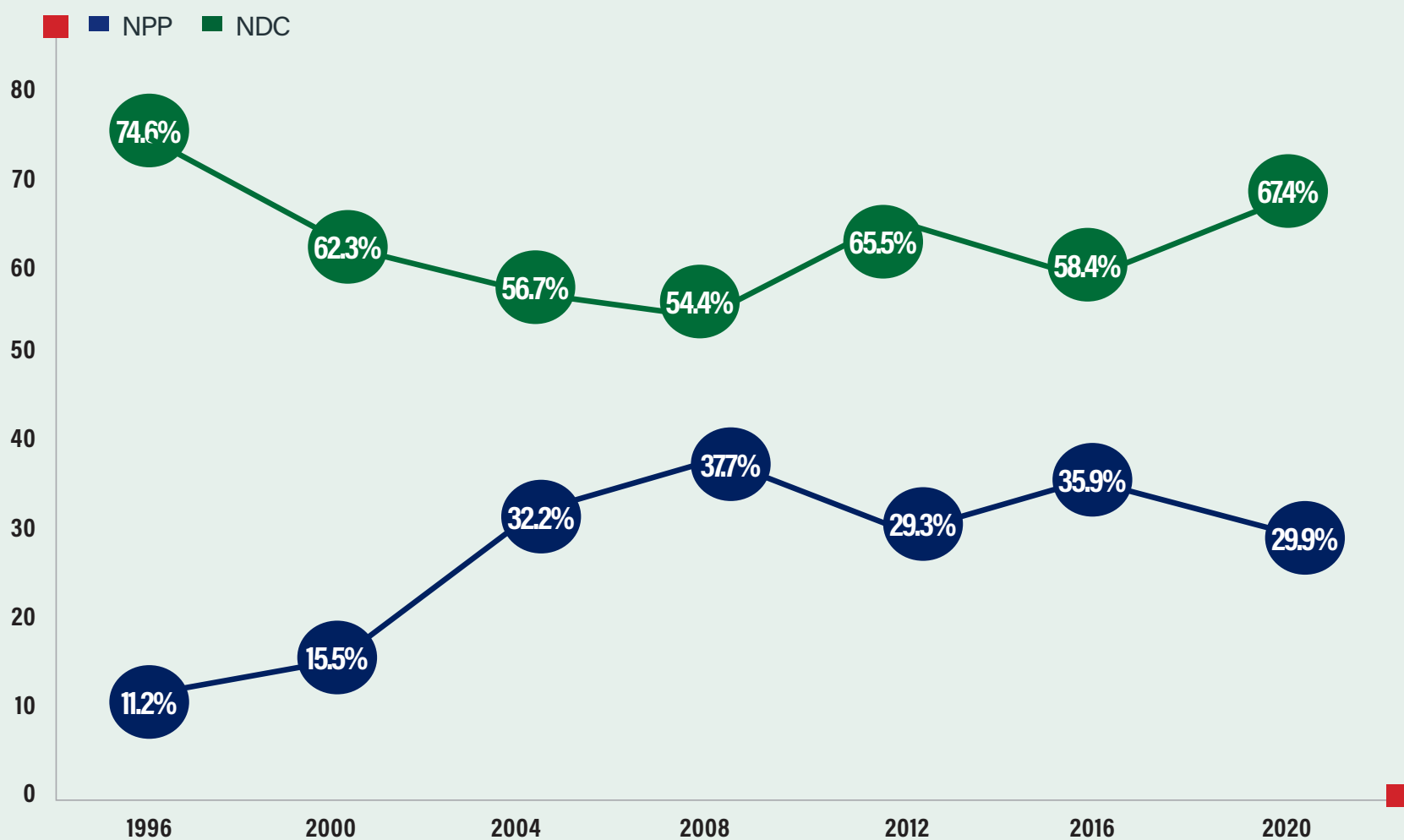


UPPER EAST REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

UPPER WEST REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana



Key Dynamics for 2024

In December's poll, the NDC is expected to hold onto three of the five northern regions- Upper East, Upper West and Savannah regions. The party has gained a stronger foothold in these areas, making them potential strongholds, though the degree of support may vary.

The battle will likely be fiercest in the Northern Region, where the NPP and NDC are expected to compete intensely for votes. While the NDC has historically dominated this region, the NPP's growing influence, driven by strategic campaigning and Bawumia's candidacy, could shift the dynamics.

In the North East, NPP is poised to capitalise on Bawumia's candidacy to maintain and potentially expand its 2020 victory. The party is targeting an increase in its vote share and we project that it will see an uptick from 51.40% in 2020 to around 55.8%.

2. THE SWING REGIONS

| REGION | AVERAGE VOTE SHARE (1996-2020) | | 2024 (SBM PROJECTION) | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| Greater Accra | 48.79% | 49.26% | 45.80% | 51.80% |
| Central | 49.88% | 47.09% | 46.50% | 49.50% |
| Western | 53.77% | 42.63% | 47.80% | 51.50% |

■ NPP ■ NDC



Since 1992, three key regions—Central, Western and the capital, Greater Accra—have consistently voted in favour of the winning presidential candidate. No party had won the presidency without securing victories in all four of these swing regions until the dynamics shifted in 2020. In that election, President Akufo-Addo of the NPP managed to win the national election without winning Greater Accra, marking a significant change in voting patterns.

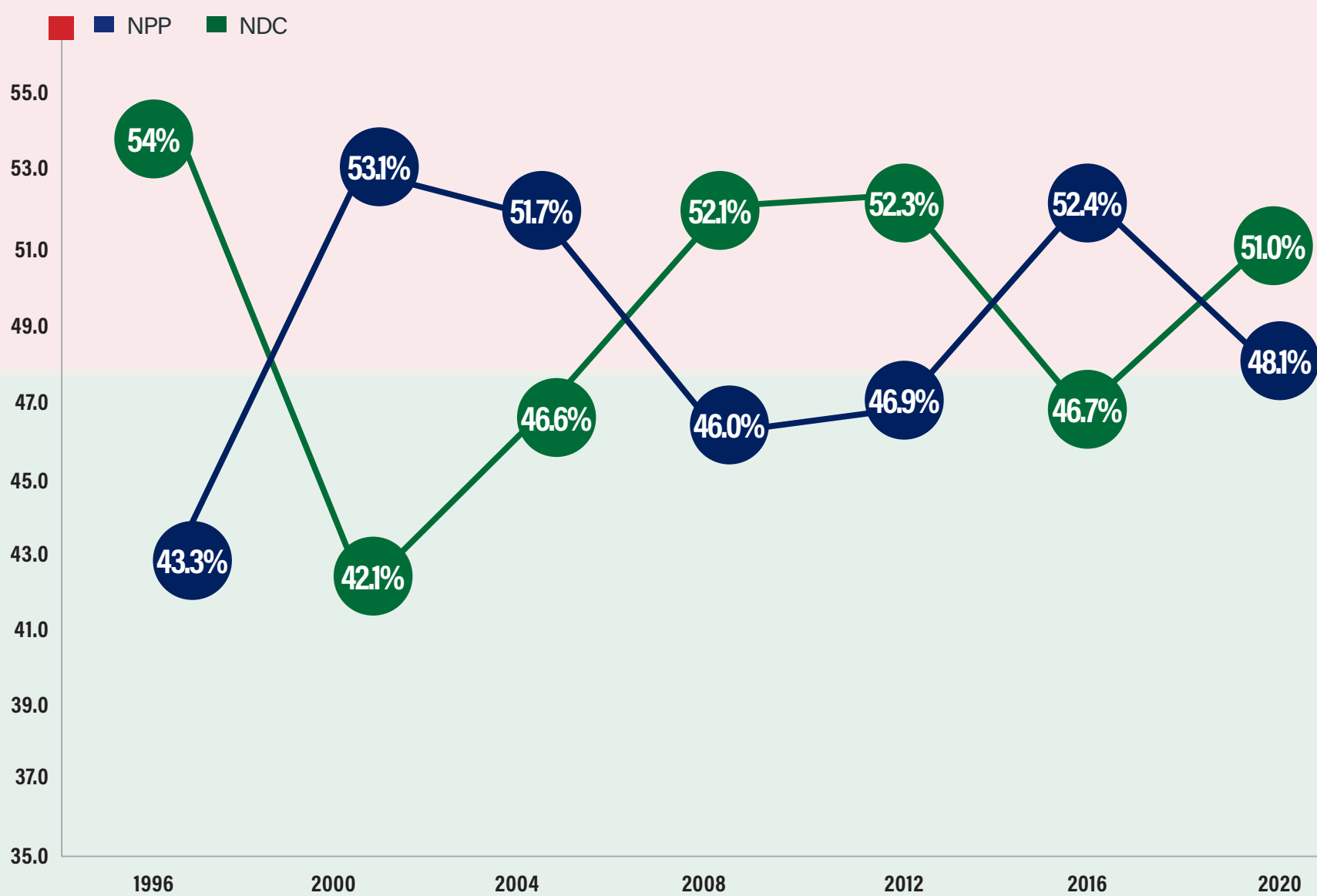
This shift was largely attributed to the NPP's growing strength in the northern regions, where they narrowed the vote gap between themselves and the NDC. Political analysts have referred to this phenomenon as the 'Bawumia Effect.' Bawumia, Akufo-Addo's running mate in 2016 and 2020, played a pivotal role in drawing more votes from the northern part of the country, significantly contributing to NPP's victories in both elections.

For the first time on 7 December, Bawumia will face off against former President John Mahama, both of whom hail from the northern belt. This geographical alignment is expected to intensify the battle for votes in the five northern regions, making them crucial battlegrounds alongside the traditional swing regions of Central, Western and Greater Accra. Any candidate hoping to win the presidency must amass substantial support in both these northern areas and the swing regions.



This year, the NDC is projected to maintain its hold on Greater Accra and reclaim its previous dominance in the Central and Western regions, similar to its performance in the 2012 election. Both the NPP and NDC will therefore have to focus on these regions, as well as the evolving dynamics in the North, to secure a path to victory in the polls.

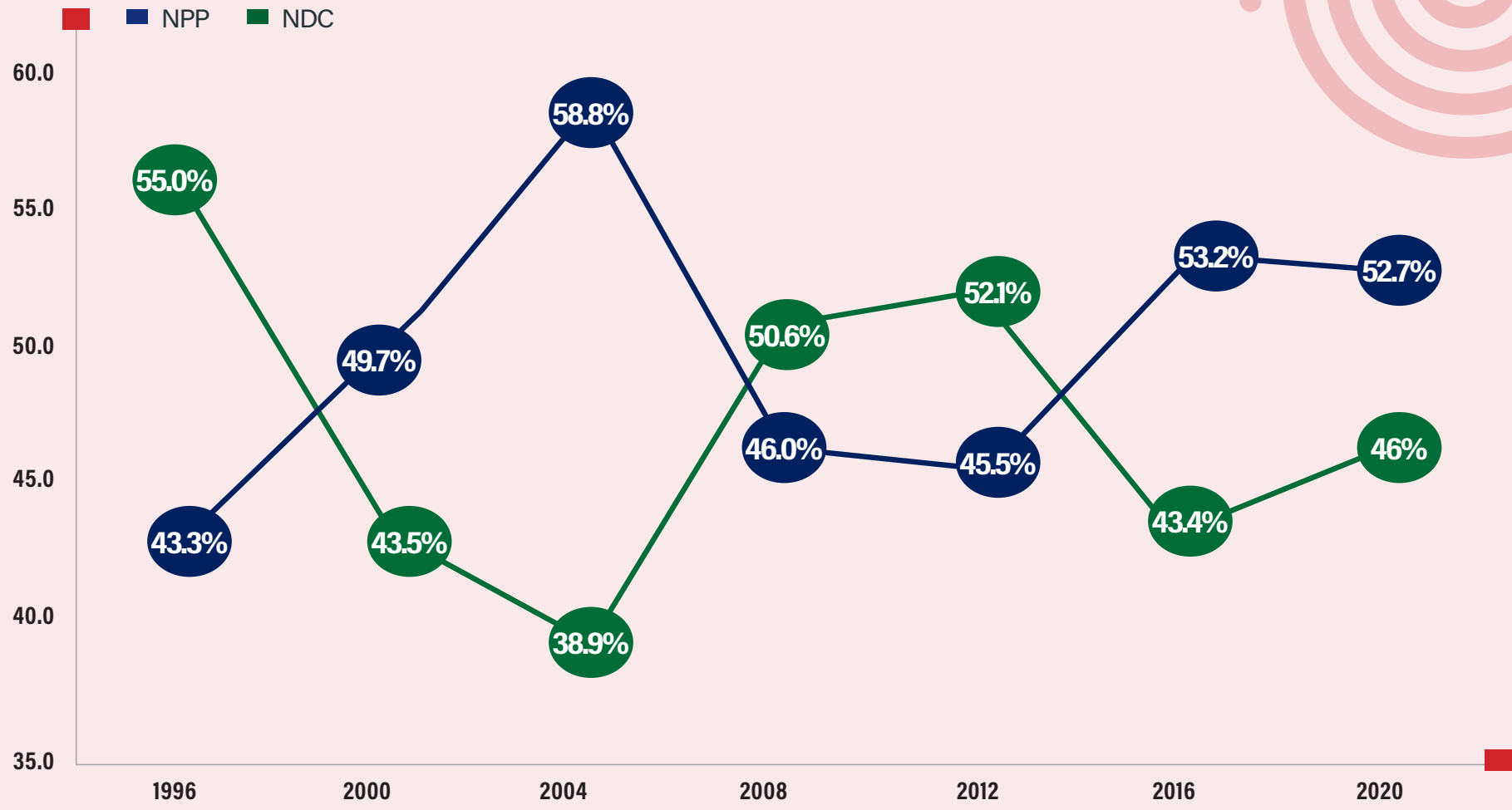
GREATER ACCRA VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

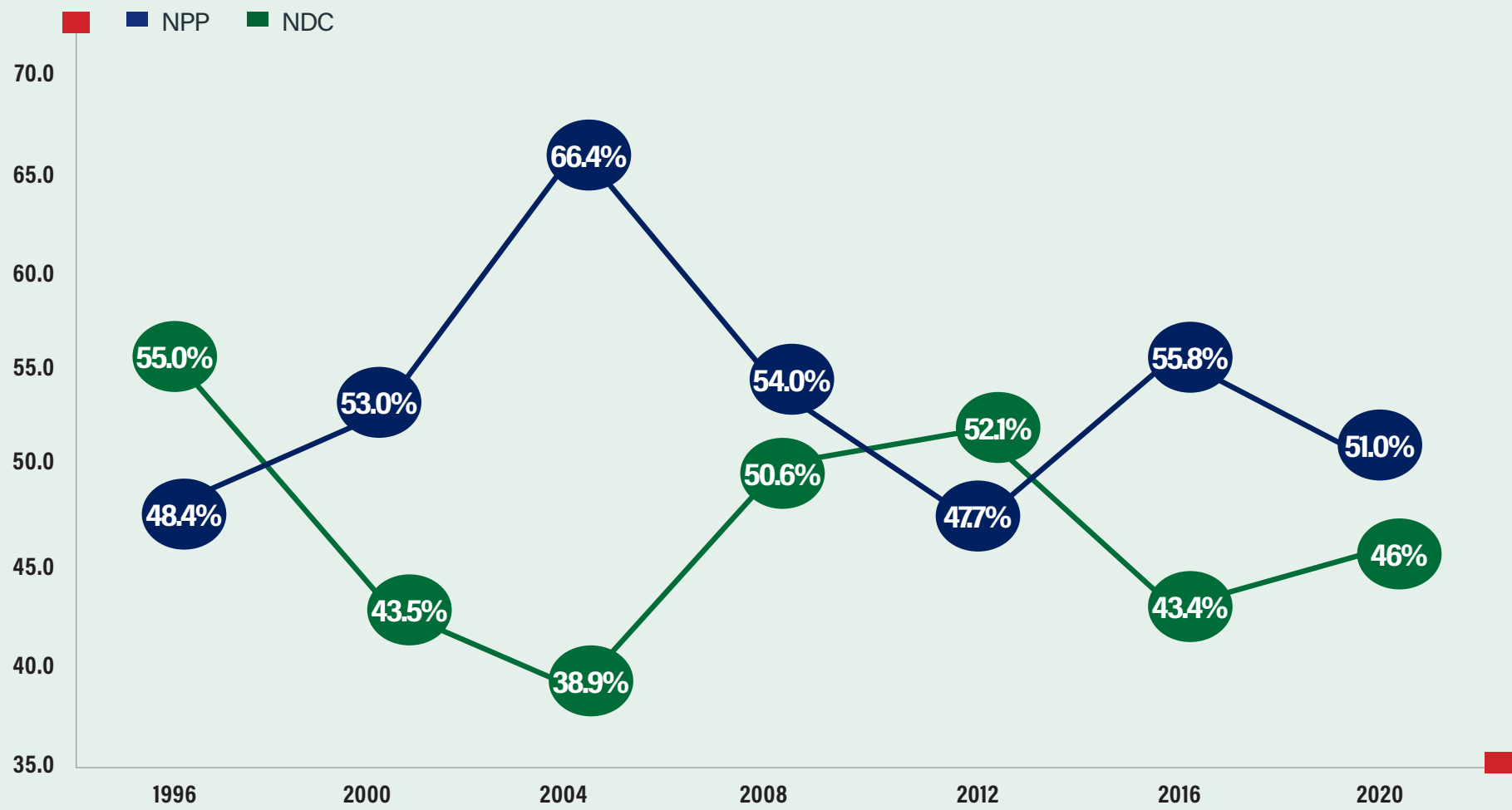


CENTRAL REGION VOTING TREND



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

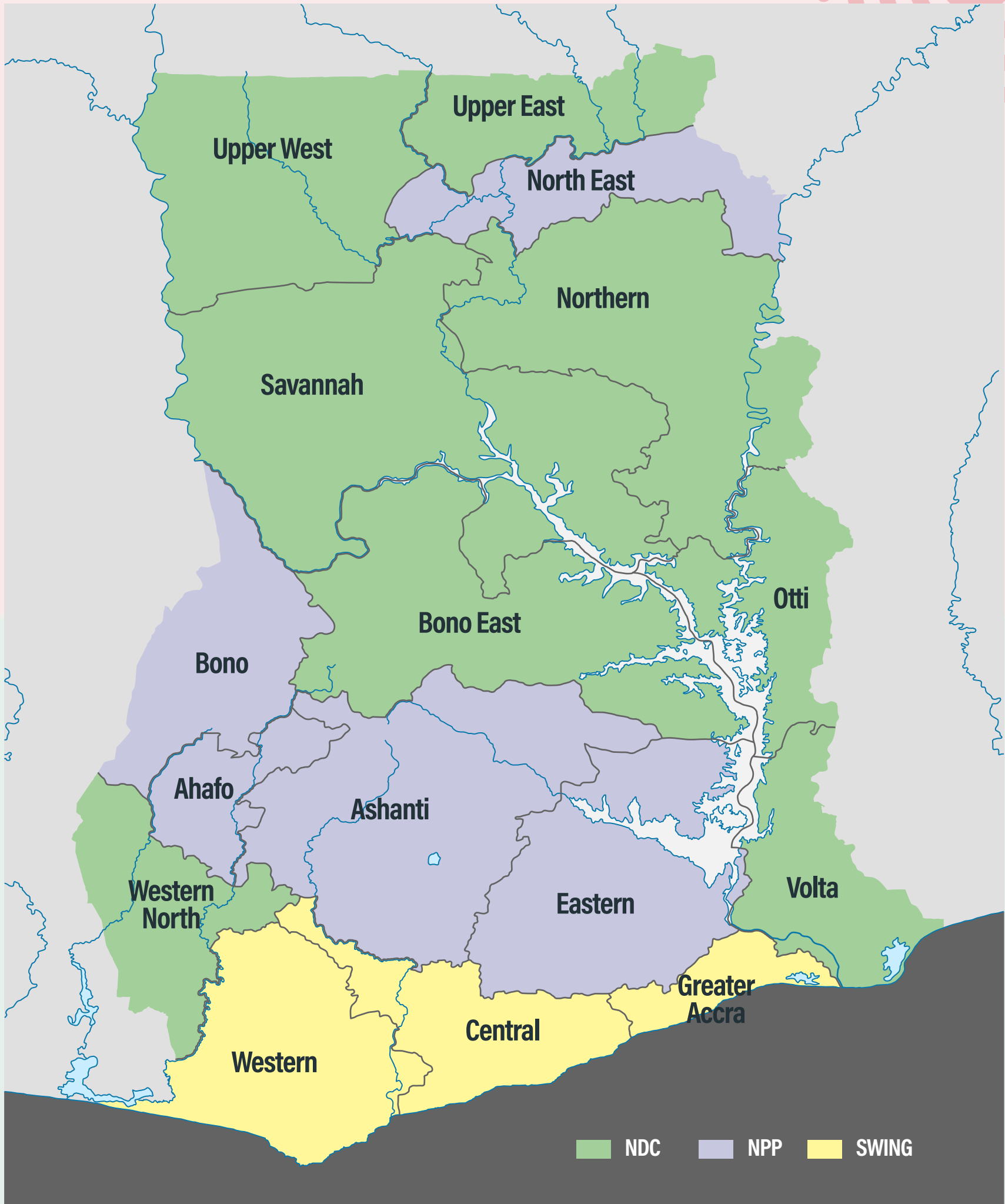
WESTERN REGION



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana



3. THE STRONGHOLDS



| Region | Greater Accra | Ashanti | Eastern | Central | Northern | Western | Volta | Upper East | Bono | Western North | Bono East | Upper West | Otti | Ahafo | North East | Savanna |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|--------|------------|--------|---------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|------------|---------|
| Share Of National Vote | 19.86% | 17.79% | 9.51% | 8.83% | 7.04% | 6.64% | 5.61% | 4.07% | 3.85% | 2.96% | 2.92% | 2.90% | 2.27% | 2.07% | 1.88% | 1.80% |
| 2024 SBM Projection (NPP) | 45.80% | 70.50% | 8.50% | 46.50% | 48.58% | 47.80% | 12.80% | 34.80% | 56.85% | 46.50% | 40.50% | 28.50% | 37.70% | 56.10% | 55.80% | 32.45% |
| 2024 SBM Projection (NDC) | 51.85% | 27.50% | 40.50% | 49.50% | 50.85% | 51.50% | 88.90% | 64.50% | 44.50% | 53.80% | 49.50% | 69.85% | 61.50% | 43.50% | 43.50% | 67.25% |



| REGION | SHARE OF NATIONAL VOTE | 2024 SBM PROJECTION (NPP) | 2024 SBM PROJECTION (NDC) |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| GREATER ACCRA | 19.86% | 45.80% | 51.85% |
| ASHANTI | 17.79% | 70.50% | 27.50% |
| EASTERN | 9.51% | 58.50% | 40.50% |
| CENTRAL | 8.83% | 46.50% | 49.50% |
| NORTHERN | 7.04% | 48.58% | 50.85% |
| WESTERN | 6.64% | 47.80% | 51.50% |
| VOLTA | 5.61% | 12.80% | 88.90% |
| UPPER EAST | 4.07% | 34.80% | 64.50% |
| BONO | 3.85% | 56.85% | 44.50% |
| WESTERN NORTH | 2.96% | 46.50% | 53.80% |
| BONO EAST | 2.92% | 40.50% | 49.50% |
| UPPER WEST | 2.90% | 28.50% | 69.85% |
| OTTI | 2.27% | 37.70% | 61.50% |
| AHAFO | 2.07% | 56.10% | 43.50% |
| NORTH EAST | 1.88% | 55.80% | 43.50% |
| SAVANNA | 1.80% | 32.45% | 67.25% |



Ghana is divided into 16 administrative regions, three of which are considered swing regions that can determine the outcome of presidential elections. The remaining 13 regions are traditionally split between NPP and NDC unevenly, with each party maintaining strongholds. Historically, the NPP has established dominance in five regions, including the Ashanti Region, which alone accounts for an average of 17.79% of the national valid vote, the second-highest share in the country after Greater Accra.

On the other hand, the NDC controls eight regions, including the Northern region, which contributes an average of 7.4% to the national valid vote. Although the NDC controls a greater number of regions, the combined electoral strength of these regions is lower than that of the NPP strongholds. The NPP's five regions hold an average of 35.10% of the national vote, while the NDC's eight regions account for a combined 29.57%. This disparity in vote power explains why the NPP has historically been able to win national elections by securing fewer regions, while the NDC typically needs to win a larger number of regions to secure a national majority. In essence, the NPP's strongholds have greater voting power per region, giving the party an electoral advantage despite controlling fewer regions compared to the NDC.

In the elections, the NDC is projected to secure victory in 11 regions, including all three swing regions, leaving only five regions for the NPP. The party is expected to face stiff competition from the NDC in the Northern, Western North and Oti regions. While the Ashanti Region, the NPP's stronghold, is predicted to remain loyal, the party's vote share is likely to dip slightly. The NPP is projected to win around 70.5% of the vote in Ashanti, down from the 72.8% it garnered in the 2020 presidential election.



ABOUT SBM

SBM Intelligence is an Africa-focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm that addresses the critical need for political, social, economic, and market data and big data analytics. We employ various data collection methods. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and conduct research to improve survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, South Africa, the United Kingdom, France and the United States.