



Digital Democracy Initiative



Civichive



GHANA

Assessing the State of Elections in Ghana (2020-2024):

Citizen Participation and the Impact of Misinformation



About BudgIT Ghana

BudgIT Ghana is a civic, nonprofit organisation dedicated to enhancing citizens' understanding of public spending and promoting transparency and accountability in governance. Founded in 2020, BudgIT Ghana has quickly become a pioneer in social advocacy, leveraging technology to simplify complex government data.

Through innovative tech tools, creative visual intelligence methods, infographics, online interfaces, interactive applications, and grassroots sensitisation, BudgIT Ghana delivers clear and accessible information about government activities to the public. Our work focuses on fiscal analysis, civic technology, election transparency and data representation, health advocacy, extractives, and education, ensuring citizens have the necessary information to demand accountability and promote institutional improvement.

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Executive Summary



I. The scale and rapid spread of fake news and disinformation in Ghana is alarming. The relationship between the government, agencies, CSOs, and citizens has been negatively impacted by the access, usage, and dissemination of quality information and facts. Thus creating spaces for fake news, alternative truths, and media disinformation to thrive in the country.

II. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), through CIVICUS, under the Digital Democracy Initiative to “Enabling and Amplifying Action for Civic Space and Inclusive Democracy” supported this report conducted on the status of elections in Ghana during the fourth republic (2020-2024). The emphasis of this report is to analyze and understand the role of misinformation, disinformation, and other factors particularly as concerns citizen involvement and participation in the electoral process and participatory governance.

III. This report examines the state of elections from 2020 to 2024, focusing on the prevalence and impact of electoral misinformation. The study draws insights from 830 survey respondents across all 16 regions in Ghana, in-depth stakeholder interviews, and analysis of official statistics and institutional reports.

IV. Our Key findings include:

1. The State and Evolution of Electoral Misinformation;

- a. Transformation from basic digital manipulation in 2020 to sophisticated AI-generated content in 2024.
- b. 69.7% of survey respondents encountered election-related misinformation.
- c. Emergence of coordinated false narratives and clone websites impersonating legitimate news sources.

2. The Sources of Information and its Spread Patterns;

- a. Hybrid media environment, with traditional media maintaining dominance (television 87.9%) while digital platforms gained influence (WhatsApp 63.6%, Facebook 57.6%).
- b. Regional variations in information access and verification practices.
- c. Growing sophistication in misinformation distribution techniques.

3. The Impact on Electoral Trust;

- a. National polls show that the Electoral Commission trust is 33%, while 74.2% of survey respondents reported decreased confidence in electoral processes.
- b. Economic pressures (e.g., 22.85% inflation) compounding trust issues.
- c. Persistent challenges in scaling fact-checking initiatives to match misinformation spread.

V. Based on these findings, we recommend five key areas for action:

- a. Detection and Prevention through enhanced AI systems, website monitoring, and digital forensics teams to combat sophisticated misinformation.
- b. Platform management focuses on WhatsApp and Facebook monitoring, supported by rapid response systems and improved platform coordination.
- c. Trust Building through improved EC communication, local language programs, and engagement with traditional authorities.
- d. Verification Infrastructure development, including regional verification desks and expanded fact-checking networks.
- e. Media Literacy Enhancement through educational integration, community-based programs, and multilingual resource development.

These recommendations draw from both successful local innovations and global best practices, aiming to address the evolving challenges in Ghana's electoral information ecosystem.



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1.0 Introduction



The introduction of biometric verification in 2012 represented a significant technological advancement in Ghana's electoral process, demonstrating the country's commitment to electoral integrity and transparency.

1.1 Context of Ghana's Fourth Republic

Ghana's fourth Republic, established in 1993⁵ following years of political instability and military rule⁶, marks three decades of continuous democratic governance, positioning it as one of Africa's most enduring democracies. This period has witnessed eight successful general elections and peaceful power transfers between political parties in 2000, 2008, and 2016.⁷

The introduction of biometric verification in 2012⁸ represented a significant technological advancement in Ghana's electoral process, demonstrating the country's commitment to electoral integrity and transparency. This period also coincides with the adoption of New Media and heavy use of digital campaigns by political parties as the main channels for dispensing messages and mobilizing support and followership.

However, recent years have presented new challenges to key democratic institutions. The challenges include a decline in institutional trust⁹ and civil rights.¹⁰ These issues are further complicated by mounting economic pressures and the pervasive spread of digital misinformation. As economic hardships, including rising inflation and unemployment, fuel public frustration, misinformation amplifies discontent by distorting facts, spreading false narratives about government policies, and deepening political divisions. The rapid spread of misleading content on social media platforms has eroded confidence in

electoral institutions, making it easier for falsehoods to manipulate voter perceptions and harder for citizens to discern credible information. This intersection of economic instability and misinformation has intensified political polarization, heightened distrust in governance, and, in some cases, discouraged voter participation, posing significant risks to democratic stability.

1.2 Overview of the 2020-2024 Electoral Period

The 2020-2024 electoral period represents a critical phase in Ghana's democratic evolution. The 2020 elections, conducted amid the COVID-19 pandemic,¹¹ achieved the highest voter turnout to date and resulted in the country's first hung parliament,¹² marking a historic shift in legislative-executive dynamics.

The 2020 general elections in Ghana took place on 7 December 2020 with the two major political parties, that is, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), along with several others including the Convention People's Party (CPP), Progressive People's Party (PPP), and the People's National Convention (PNC) among others, contesting for the presidential and parliamentary seats respectively. This saw the incumbent president, Nana Akufo-Addo of the NPP, re-elected with 51.59% of the vote against his main rival, the NDC's candidate, former president John Mahama, who polled 47.4% of the vote.¹³

⁵ Oxford Business Group, "Overview of Ghana's democratic landscape," Oxford Business Group, April 29, 2024, <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/reports/ghana/2024-report/country-profile/tenets-of-stability-prior-to-the-next-round-of-elections-democratic-institutions-are-poised-to-help-address-key-economic-concerns-overview/>

⁶ Oduro, Franklin, Lisa-Marie Selvik, and Kendra Dupuy, 2022, "Ghana," In Oxford University Press eBooks, 112–36, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192867322.003.0005>.

⁷ Prempeh, H, Kwasi, 2024, "Ghana's December 2024 Elections Put the Resilience of the Country's Vaunted Democracy to the Test," APRI, December 2, 2024, <https://afripoli.org/ghanas-december-2024-elections-put-the-resilience-of-the-countrys-vaunted-democracy-to-the-test>

⁸ Vrankulj, Adam, 2012, "Following Election, Ghana Leads the World in Biometric Voter Registration and Verification," Biometric Update | Biometrics News, Companies and Explainers, December 18, 2012, <https://www.biometricupdate.com/201212/following-election-ghana-leads-the-world-in-biometric-voter-registration-and-verification>.

⁹ Ama, Nana, 2022, "COVID-19 and Ghana's 2020 Elections - Ghana Center for Democratic Development," Ghana Center for Democratic Development (blog), January 4, 2022, <https://cddgh.org/2021/08/covid-19-and-ghanas-2020-elections/>.

¹⁰ Ama, Nana, 2022, "COVID-19 and Ghana's 2020 Elections - Ghana Center for Democratic Development," Ghana Center for Democratic Development (blog), January 4, 2022, <https://cddgh.org/2021/08/covid-19-and-ghanas-2020-elections/>.

¹¹ Ama, Nana, 2022, "COVID-19 and Ghana's 2020 Elections - Ghana Center for Democratic Development," Ghana Center for Democratic Development (blog), January 4, 2022, <https://cddgh.org/2021/08/covid-19-and-ghanas-2020-elections/>.

¹² Nana, "COVID-19 and Ghana's 2020 Elections,"

¹³ BBC, (2020, December 9), Final results of Ghana election 2020: Nana Akufo-Addo wins 2020 elections - Ghana Electoral Commission, BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-55237020>



By 2024, the electoral landscape had undergone significant transformation, marked by advancements in biometric verification systems, shifts in traditional regional voting patterns, and the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping electoral discourse.

Amid these developments, the erosion of institutional trust and the spread of misinformation has raised fundamental questions about Ghana's democratic integrity. Misinformation, in the political landscape is conceived as the spread of false or misleading information regardless of intent, played a significant role in shaping political narratives during this period. It spread rapidly through a hybrid media ecosystem that combined traditional platforms such as radio and television with digital channels like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. The anonymity and speed of digital communication facilitated the unchecked circulation of manipulated images, AI-generated videos, and misleading political claims. In many cases, misinformation was strategically deployed to influence voter perceptions, suppress turnout, or discredit political opponents.

The impact of misinformation on Ghana's elections was profound. A survey conducted in 2024 revealed that 69.7% of respondents encountered election-related misinformation, while 74.2% reported

decreased trust in the electoral process as a result. This erosion of confidence in democratic institutions, particularly the Electoral Commission, posed serious challenges to governance and electoral participation. Moreover, the spread of misinformation disproportionately affected first-time voters, who often lacked the digital literacy skills to verify claims before sharing them.

Countermeasures to combat electoral misinformation included fact-checking initiatives, media literacy campaigns, and real-time response mechanisms developed by civil society organizations, media houses, and government agencies. Despite these efforts, challenges remained, particularly in scaling fact-checking operations to match the volume of misinformation circulating online. Moving forward, strengthening misinformation detection systems, fostering inter-institutional collaboration, and integrating digital literacy into civic education will be critical in safeguarding Ghana's democratic process. This report examines these dynamics through a comprehensive analysis of Ghana's electoral landscape from 2020 to 2024. It specifically investigates the state of election-related misinformation, its sources and spread patterns, its impact on electoral processes, and the countermeasures implemented during this period.

1.3 Research Questions

This report seeks to answer the following research questions:

- a. What is the state of election and misinformation in Ghana?
- b. What are the sources and types of misinformation circulating during elections in Ghana?
- c. How does misinformation spread in Ghana?
- d. What are the impacts of misinformation on the electoral process in Ghana?
- e. What measures are being taken to address misinformation in Ghana?

1.4 Significance of Study

This study addresses critical gaps in understanding the interplay between electoral information, integrity and

misinformation in Ghana's evolving digital landscape. Through analysis of two election cycles (2020-2024), this report aims to:

- a. Provide empirical evidence of misinformation's evolution and impact on Ghana's electoral processes, particularly the shift from basic digital manipulation to sophisticated AI-generated content;
- b. Offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, and stakeholders based on documented effectiveness of various countermeasures across both election cycles;
- c. Advance knowledge of verification practices and resilience-building in Ghana's multilingual and multi-platform information environment;
- d. Suggest practical ways to build stronger defenses against misinformation in future elections.



2.0 Methodology



The quantitative component involved an online survey with 830 respondents across all 16 regions, focusing on demographics, electoral participation, and misinformation exposure.

2.1 Research Design

This report adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating online surveys and interviews to analyse the state of Ghanaian elections. This approach ensures the capture of both depth and breadth in understanding the electoral landscape.

2.2 Data Collection

Quantitative Data:

The quantitative component involved an online survey with 830 respondents across all 16 regions, focusing on demographics, electoral participation, and misinformation exposure. Key features include:

- a. **Sampling Technique:** Random and snowball sampling through online distribution via professional networks and social media platforms (LinkedIn, WhatsApp).
- b. **Tool:** Google Forms provided automated descriptive statistics.
- c. **Structure:** The survey comprised 14 questions covering demographics, electoral participation, and information ecosystem.
- d. **Format:** The questions were designed in multiple-choice format and Likert scale options, allowing for practical data analysis, with an optional open-ended component for additional insights.
- e. **Accessibility:** Surveys were administered online through Google Forms.

Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including election officers,

journalists, community leaders, and civil society organisation representatives. Features include:

- a. **Focus Areas:** Stakeholders' perspectives on misinformation sources, spread patterns, assessment of impact, countermeasures, and recommended solutions.
- b. **Guiding Questions:** The interview consisted of 21 questions that guided the discussion, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the topics.
- c. **Process:** Each interview was recorded with the participant's consent, emphasizing a comfortable environment for open discussion while maintaining professional research standards.

2.3 Data Integration and Analysis

We combined our survey results with interview findings to understand Ghana's election information landscape. Our analysis involved:

- a. Data Verification and Integration
- b. Comparing survey findings with stakeholder interview insights
- c. Cross-checking reported incidents with official records
- d. Analyzing regional variations in misinformation experiences
- e. Pattern Analysis
- f. Identifying trends across different regions
- g. Understanding how information spreads in various communities
- h. Mapping verification practices across urban and rural areas



This integrated approach helped us:

- Observe both national trends and local realities
- Link statistical data to community experiences
- Develop evidence-based recommendations

2.4 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

The report follows strict ethical guidelines, ensuring data security and participant anonymity. While efforts were made to

achieve a representative sample, access to specific regions and demographics was limited due to technological constraints.

As a result, report limitations may include potential biases due to the overrepresentation of urban and educated demographics in the survey sample. However, these limitations were mitigated by being transparent in reporting sample characteristics, carefully considering bias in analysis, and providing additional qualitative data from underrepresented groups.

3.0 Ghana's Electoral Landscape



The Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) plays a central role in the entire election process, overseeing voter registration, candidate nominations, and vote tabulations.

3.1 Electoral System Framework

Constitutional Basis

The Ghanaian electoral system functions within a constitutional democracy established in 1992 and amended in 1996.¹⁴ The constitution establishes an independent Electoral Commission under Article 43.¹⁵ It details the requirements needed to qualify to be part of the Electoral Commission and its functions.

As the name implies, its primary function is to serve as the independent body responsible for organising and supervising all public elections. Article 46 of the Constitution guarantees the independence of the Electoral Commission, stating, "In the performance of its functions, the Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority."¹⁶

Electoral Commission role

The Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) plays a central role in the entire election process, overseeing voter registration, candidate nominations, and vote tabulations. The commission has, over the years, sought ways to improve trust and transparency in the electoral process. As a result, a biometric verification system was first introduced in the 2012 election,¹⁷ further establishing Ghana's commitment to transparent elections.

Voting System

While Ghana follows a multiparty democracy, its voting system has encouraged a dominant two-party system.^{18,19} Its political scene has been primarily dominated by two major parties—the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The presidential election is won by obtaining more than 50% (50% +1) of all valid votes cast.²⁰ In the rare case where no candidate achieves this threshold in the first round, a run-off election is held to determine a definite winner. This constitutional requirement has led to run-off elections twice in Ghana's democratic history—in 2000 and 2008.²¹

The 2008 run-off was particularly notable, resulting in one of Ghana's closest electoral contests, with the winner securing victory by less than one percentage point. While presidential elections require an absolute majority, voting for the parliament members follows different rules, with the first-past-the-post system employed across 276 parliamentary constituencies across 16 regions.²² Ensuring each constituency has a representative in parliament for a four-year term.

3.2 Key Developments in 2020 Elections

Electoral Outcomes

The December 2020 elections marked

¹⁴ Electoral System – Electoral Commission," n.d. <https://ec.gov.gh/electoral-system/>.

¹⁵ "Mode of Appointment of the Commission," n.d. Electoral Commission Ghana, <https://ec.gov.gh/mode-of-appointment/>

¹⁶ "Ghana 1992 (Rev. 1996) Constitution - Constitute," n.d. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ghana_1996.

¹⁷ Vrankulj, Adam. 2012. "Following Election, Ghana Leads the World in Biometric Voter Registration and Verification." Biometric Update | Biometrics News, Companies and Explainers, December 18, 2012. <https://www.biometricupdate.com/201212/following-election-ghana-leads-the-world-in-biometric-voter-registration-and-verification>.

¹⁸ ACE," n.d. https://acaproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/annex/vcy_gh/mobile_browsing/onePag.

¹⁹ Electoral System – Electoral Commission," n.d. <https://ec.gov.gh/electoral-system/>.

²⁰ Electoral System – Electoral Commission," n.d.

²¹ Musah, Atindow. 2017. "The Journey of Presidential Elections in Ghana from 1992 To 2016." Modern Ghana, July 13, 2017. https://www.modernghana.com/news/787795/the-journey-of-presidential-elections-in-ghana-from-1992-to.html#google_vignette.

²² GhanaWeb. 2024. "2024 Election: Parliamentary Contests to Watch Out for in the Central and Western Regions." GhanaWeb, December 4, 2024. https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/2024-Election-Parliamentary-contests-to-watch-out-for-in-the-Central-and-Western-regions-1962707#google_vignette.



Ghana's eighth general election since the inception of the Fourth Republic. This election stands out in history as a crucial moment in Ghana's democratic journey. The election was characterised by a high level of participation, with a voter registration base of over 17 million and a turnout of approximately 79%. Incumbent President Nana Akufo-Addo of NPP narrowly secured the re-election with 6,730,587 votes (51.59% of valid votes), defeating John Dramani Mahama of NDC, who secured 6,213,182 votes (47.36% of valid votes).²³

Regional and Demographic Patterns

The 2020 elections also highlighted long-standing regional and demographic voting patterns. Regional variations were prominent, with the Ashanti region having 72.78% of votes for the NPP, while the NDC commanded equally impressive numbers in its core territories. The Volta Region recorded an overwhelming 84.8% for the NDC versus 14.1% for the NPP.²⁴ This regional split reflects long-standing political

allegiances, highlighting the influence of regional dynamics on voting patterns.

Youth participation emerged as a significant factor, with citizens aged 18-35 forming the largest voting bloc (approximately 9.4 million voters).²⁵ This substantial youth turnout demonstrated the increasing engagement of younger generations in Ghana's democratic process.

Registration and Polling

The registration exercise was conducted between 30 June and 9 August. There were substantial improvements in electoral infrastructure. The Electoral Commission (EC) introduced 5,357 new polling stations compared to the 2016 elections, distributed across 275 constituencies. The total number of registered voters increased to 16,963,306 registered voters from 15,712,505 in 2016.²⁶ These measures improved accessibility and efficiency in the voting process.

²³ BBC News, 2020, "Ghana Election: Nana Akufo-Addo Re-elected as President," December 9, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55236356>.

²⁴ Statista, 2022, "Regional Distribution of Presidential Votes in Ghana 2020, by Party," November 29, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1193224/presidential-election-results-by-region/>.

²⁵ Kpessa-Whyte, Michael, n.d., "Exploring the Socio-Demographic Distribution of Independent Swing Voters in Ghana," Journal-article, Journal of African Elections, Vol. 20, <https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2021/v20i1a6>.

²⁶ Ghana: Registered Voters by Age 2020 | Statista, 2022, Statista, November 29, 2022, Accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1193170/registered-voters-in-ghana-by-age>

²⁷ Laxton, 2024, "Ghana 2020 National Elections," November 27, 2024, <https://www.laxton.com/case-study/ghana-national-elections/>.



In the run-up to the 2023 District Assembly Elections, the Electoral Commission of Ghana and other civil society organizations actively engaged in efforts toward voter sensitization and mobilization.

Historic Parliamentary Outcome

Another key outcome of the 2020 election was the hung parliament—a first in Ghana's history—where the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) secured 137 seats, with one seat secured by an independent candidate.²⁸ The outcome challenged the traditional winner-takes-all system that had characterised Ghana's democracy since 1992. It also demonstrated the growing demand among citizens for increased political diversity and accountability.

COVID-19 Impact and Adaptations

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges, prompting the EC to implement stringent health protocols, such as social distancing, increased the number of polls to reduce overcrowding, mandatory use of hand sanitisers at polling stations, and modifying campaigning processes to rely more on digital platforms.²⁹ These additional measures increased the overall cost of electoral administration³⁰ and posed logistical hurdles.³¹ Despite the increased challenges, the country managed to maintain a stable electoral process.

Technological Implementations

The 2020 elections saw significant technological enhancements. Enhanced biometric systems were complemented by introducing facial recognition as a verification method as an alternative to the thumbprint authentication.³² Mobile solutions

also streamlined voter registration and results transmission,³³ demonstrating the EC's commitment to leveraging technology for transparent elections.

2023 District Assembly Elections

The District Assembly elections are held every four years and, by statute, are non-partisan. The prime focus of these elections is to ensure local governance through which the assembly members and unit committee members are elected to represent their respective electoral areas.

In the run-up to the 2023 District Assembly Elections, the Electoral Commission of Ghana and other civil society organizations actively engaged in efforts toward voter sensitization and mobilization. Despite these efforts, the elections faced major challenges. Although classified as non-partisan, some candidates received tacit support from political parties, a scenario that influenced electoral outcomes and jeopardized the independence of assembly members.³⁴

Voters Trends and Statistics

Between 2020 and 2024, voter participation in Ghana displayed both challenges and growth in contrast with previous years. Voter turnout in the 2020 general elections stood at 79%, reflecting a leap of public interest in governance despite reports of isolated incidents of voter intimidation and logistical constraints in certain regions.³⁵

²⁸ Francis, 2024, "A Hung Parliament? Never Again!" The Business & Financial Times, December 1, 2024, <https://thebftonline.com/2024/12/02/a-hung-parliament-never-again/>.

²⁹ Agbele, Fortune, Ghadafi Saibu, and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2021, *Managing Elections Under Covid-19 Pandemic Conditions: The Case of Ghana*, Edited by Electoral Management Network, Toby S. James, Alistair Clark, Erik Asplund, and Andrew Robertson, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/Managing-Elections-Under-Covid-19-Pandemic-Conditions-The-Case-of-Ghana.pdf>.

³⁰ Ama, Nana, 2020, "The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Implications for the Conduct of the 2020 Elections in Ghana - Ghana Center For," Ghana Center for Democratic Development(blog), April 14, 2020, <https://cdgh.org/2020/04/the-covid-19-pandemic-and-its-implications-for-the-conduct-of-the-2020-elections-in-ghana/>.

³¹ Selormey, Edem E., and Gildred Asiamah, 2021, "Running an Election During a Pandemic: Lessons from Ghana," African Argument, September 30, 2021. Accessed December 4, 2024. <https://africanarguments.org/2021/09/running-an-election-during-a-pandemic-lessons-from-ghana/>.

³² Lithuania, Vilnius, 2024, "Press Release: Ghana Elections with Voter Management System Based on MegaMatcher ABIS - Neurotechnology.com." (C) 2024 Neurotechnology. December 18, 2024. Accessed December 1, 2024. https://www.neurotechnology.com/press_release_megamatcher_abis_ghana_elections.html.

³³ Laxton, 2024, "Ghana 2020 National Elections," November 27, 2024. <https://www.laxton.com/case-study/ghana-national-elections/>

³⁴ African Elections Project, (2023, December 15), *The 2023 District Assembly Elections: A Comprehensive Analysis*, African Elections, <https://www.africanelections.org/news/the-2023-district-assembly-elections-a-comprehensive-analysis/>

³⁵ Donto, E. (2024, December 7). Ghana Elections: Voter Turnout Likely Plunged to 61%. Bloomberg.com. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-12-08/ghana-elections-voter-turnout-likely-plunged-to-61?utm_source=google&utm_medium=bd&cmpid=google

YEAR	POPULATION <small>(DATA FROM WORLD BANK)</small>	REGISTERED VOTERS	VALID VOTES	VOTERS TURNOUT <small>NOTE - THIS IS THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTE CAST (VALID VOTES AND INVALID VOTES)</small>
1992	15,653,336	8,229,902	3,978,070	50.2%
1996	17,462,496	9,279,605	7,145,774	78.2%
2000	19,278,856	10,698,652	6,381,387	60.4%
2004	21,272,323	10,354,970	8,625,785	85.1%
2008	23,563,825	12,472,758	8,465,834	69.5%
2012	25,996,449	14,031,793	10,995,262	80.2%
2016	28,481,946	15,712,499	10,713,734	69.3%

Source: <https://ec.gov.gh/>



As the December 2024 elections approached, the EC introduced several measures to enhance the process. The creation of 276 single-member constituencies and 40,975 polling stations across the country, including 328 special voting centres, to improve accessibility and voter turnout.

Demographic analysis showed a rising number of first-time voters among the youth, while urban centers continued to dominate in voter registration compared to rural areas. However, there has been a marginal decline in turnout for district-level elections, such as the 2023 District Assembly elections, which saw a participation rate of approximately 65%. This trend underscores the need for enhanced voter education and engagement, especially at the grassroots level, where political apathy appears more pronounced.

Digital platforms also played a significant role in shaping voter trends, with social media increasingly influencing voter decisions. However, this came with challenges, such as the spread of misinformation, which at times distorted public perceptions of key electoral processes.

3.3 The 2024 Election

Political Landscape

For the first time, both presidential candidates hail from the north of Ghana,³⁶ roughly comprising the five northernmost regions of the country. Historically and spatially, the country's poorest region, the North, is also the site of intractable and volatile communal conflicts that tend to be exploited politically and thus assume a binary partisan character, particularly during elections. While this unprecedented

representation highlighted political evolution, it raised concerns about regional dynamics and communal tensions:³⁷

The northern region's transformation was evident in changing voting patterns:

- NDC's declining influence: 61.10% (2004) to 52.60% (2020)³⁸
- NPP's growing presence: 34.30% (2000) to 46.40% (2020)³⁹
- Significant voter base of 1.2 million registered voters⁴⁰

Electoral Infrastructure

As the December 2024 elections approached, the EC introduced several measures to enhance the process. The creation of 276 single-member constituencies and 40,975 polling stations across the country, including 328 special voting centres,⁴¹ to improve accessibility and voter turnout. As regards electoral security, the 2024 election was very competitive. Dr. Bossman Asare, deputy chair of the Electoral Commission, oversaw the implementation of these measures, emphasizing the commitment to transparent and efficient electoral processes.⁴²

Stakeholder Context

Electoral management procedures sparked both praise and controversy:⁴³

- Results to be announced 72 hours after polls close.

³⁶ Lawal, Shola, 2024, "Ghana Elections: Who Is Running and What's at Stake?" *Al Jazeera*, December 7, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/7/ghana-elections-who-is-running-and-whats-at-stake>.

³⁷ —, 2024b, "Ghana Elections: Who Is Running and What's at Stake?" *Al Jazeera*, December 7, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/7/ghana-elections-who-is-running-and-whats-at-stake>.

³⁸ Agyei, Isaac, 2024, "Election 2024: The Trends - Who Wins Where?" *MyJoyOnline*, December 7, 2024, https://www.myjoyonline.com/election-2024-the-trends-who-wins-where/#google_vignette.

³⁹ —, 2024b, "Election 2024: The Trends - Who Wins Where?" *MyJoyOnline*, December 7, 2024, https://www.myjoyonline.com/election-2024-the-trends-who-wins-where/#google_vignette.

⁴⁰ —, 2024c, "Election 2024: The Trends - Who Wins Where?" *MyJoyOnline*, December 7, 2024, https://www.myjoyonline.com/election-2024-the-trends-who-wins-where/#google_vignette.

⁴¹ GhanaWeb, "2024 Election: Parliamentary Contests to Watch Out for in the Central and Western Regions."

⁴² Ibrahim, Abubakar, 2024, "EC Fully Ready for December 7 Elections" – Bossman Asare - *MyJoyOnline*, November 19, 2024, https://www.myjoyonline.com/ec-fully-ready-for-december-7-elections-bossman-asare/#google_vignette.

⁴³ BBC News Pidgin, 2024, "Ghana Electoral Commission Decision to Restrict Media Access for Collation Centres During Di 7 December Election Cause Uproar," November 27, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cn7m312dvnn0>.



- b. Hierarchical collation process
- Constituency level tabulation
 - Regional level verification
 - National Collation Centre's final declaration

- c. Enhanced security measures for ballot transportation

However, the commission's decision to limit media representation to eight outlets per constituency collation centre sparked controversy amongst media stakeholders, raising concerns about transparency in results reporting.⁴⁴

Socio-Economic Context

The election took place against a backdrop of significant economic challenges:⁴⁵

- a. Inflation averaging 22.85% (January November 2024)
- b. Rising unemployment rates
- c. Persistent power outages affecting

- d. Increasing cost of living pressures
- e. Electoral Commission trust fell to 33%, lowest since polling began in 1999⁴⁶

These economic factors proved decisive in shaping voter decisions and campaign narratives.⁴⁷ Both major parties focused their campaigns on addressing these challenges, with the NPP emphasizing private-sector solutions while the NDC advocated for more substantial state intervention.⁴⁸

We conducted comprehensive research across all 16 regions to understand how these political, technological, and economic factors influenced Ghana's electoral landscape. The following section presents our analysis of survey data from 830 respondents and key stakeholder interviews, providing insights into how voters navigated this complex electoral environment.

⁴⁴ ———, 2024b, "Ghana Electoral Commission Decision to Restrict Media Access for Collation Centres During Di 7 December Election Cause Uproar," November 27, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cn7m312dvnoo>.

⁴⁵ Osae-Kwapong, John, 2024, "Ghana's Election 2024: Technology and the Changing Nature of Political Competition," Centre for International Governance Innovation, December 5, 2024, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/ghanas-election-2024-technology-and-the-changing-nature-of-political-competition/>.

⁴⁶ Osae-Kwapong, John, 2024, "Ghana's Election 2024: Technology and the Changing Nature of Political Competition," Centre for International Governance Innovation, December 5, 2024, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/ghanas-election-2024-technology-and-the-changing-nature-of-political-competition/>.

⁴⁷ "Ghana Decides 2024: Comparing NPP & NDC Policy Visions," 2024, September 10, 2024, <https://intelligensia.com/ghana-decides-2024-comparing-npp-ndc-policy-visions/>.

⁴⁸ GhanaWeb, 2024a, "Election 2024: NPP Offers Superior Economic Policies - Richard Ahiagbah," GhanaWeb, November 14, 2024, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Election-2024-NPP-offers-superior-economic-policies-Richard-Ahiagbah-1959904>.

4.0 Data Analysis and Findings



In terms of educational background, 95.5% of respondents reported tertiary education, significantly above the national average of 21.99% among adults in 2023.

4.1 Demographics Profile and Survey Coverage

The study captured data from 830 respondents across Ghana's 16 regions, with a demographic distribution that provides insights into our sample's strengths and limitations. Youths between 25-34 years constituted the majority (66.7%) of respondents, followed by those aged 18-24 (16.7%) and 35-44 (15.2%). Only 1.5% of respondents were aged 45-54, indicating a potential underrepresentation of older demographics.

In terms of educational background, 95.5% of respondents reported tertiary education, significantly above the national average of 21.99% among adults in 2023.⁴⁹ This skew toward higher education levels suggests potential sampling limitations and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Regional distribution of respondents showed strong representation from both urban and rural areas.

Major Urban Centers:

- Greater Accra Region dominated with 30.3% of respondents.
- Ashanti Region represented 12.1% of the

sample

Northern Regions:

- Combined representation from Upper West Region (18.2%), Northern Region (10.6%), and Upper East (4.5%) regions provided robust coverage of Ghana's northern territories.

Other Regions:

- Western 6.1%, Eastern 3.0%, Central 3.0%, and Volta 3.0% regions.
- Emerging regions include Ahafo (3.0%), Western North (1.5%), Bono (1.5%), and Savannah (1.5%).

4.2 Information Ecosystem and Media Consumption

The study reveals a complex hybrid information ecosystem where traditional and digital media platforms coexist and interact. Our analysis identified distinct patterns in how electoral information flows through various channels and how different demographic groups access and verify this information.

Media Platform Usage and Trust

The media landscape in Ghana showed distinct patterns of platform usage and trust levels across different demographics:

Platform Type	Usage Rate	Trust Level	Primary Users	Key Strength
Television	87.9%	High	All demographics	Real-Time Coverage
Radio	45.5%	High	Rural Communities	Local Language Access
Whatsapp	63.6%	Medium	Urban, Youth	Rapid Information Sharing
Facebook	57.6%	Low-Medium	Urban, Youth	Public Discourse

⁴⁹ Ghana Tertiary School Enrollment - Data, Chart | TheGlobalEconomy.com." n.d. TheGlobalEconomy.Com. https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Ghana/Tertiary_school_enrollment/#:~:text=Tertiary%20school%20enrollment%2C%20percent%20of%20all%20eligible%20children&text=Historically%2C%20the%20average%20for%20Ghana,percent%20was%20recorded%20in%202022.



Traditional media, such as television (87.9%), remains the most influential means of receiving information, characterized by:

- Extensive reach across demographics,
- Higher perceived credibility
- Real-time coverage of events and news.
- Strong older and rural penetration

Radio (45.5%) serves as a crucial secondary traditional medium, particularly important for:

- Rural Community Access
- Immediate information dissemination
- Multiple local language programming

Traditional media generally commanded higher trust levels compared to digital platforms.

Digital Platform Usage

Survey results demonstrate the growing importance of digital platforms:

- WhatsApp emerges as the dominant digital platform (63.6%) for information characterized by:
 - Main platform used for political

discourse and broadcasts

- Facilitates rapid content dissemination through messaging forwards and group sharing.
- A key driver of misinformation due to its encryption and lack of oversight.

- Facebook (57.6% of respondents) serves as a key platform for:

- Community engagement
- Public discourse.
- Amplifies political messaging and serves as a medium for campaign strategies

Information Verification Behaviors

Our analysis identified four primary verification approaches used by voters:

- Official source checking (75% of respondents)
- Multiple news source consultation (70%)
- Fact-checking website usage (30%)
- Community leader consultation (10%)

Only 3% of respondents indicated no verification practices, suggesting widespread awareness of misinformation risks.



A detailed examination of these challenges reveals specific patterns and impacts across different platforms and communities.

4.3 Electoral Misinformation Landscape

The evolution of misinformation tactics between 2020 and 2024 revealed increasingly sophisticated approaches to manipulating electoral information. Survey data showed that 69.7% of respondents encountered election-related misinformation, with 74.2% reporting reduced trust in electoral processes.

The hybrid media environment in Ghana—where traditional media like television and radio coexist with digital platforms—created complex challenges for information integrity. While platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook enabled the rapid

spread of false information, traditional media maintained higher trust levels. As one respondent noted: "Most frequent election in Ghana has been about character assassination of candidates, falsehood of media houses, and most media houses are now politically aligned, making me lose trust in the media."

A detailed examination of these challenges reveals specific patterns and impacts across different platforms and communities. The following section analyzes the types of misinformation encountered, presents key case studies, and evaluates the effectiveness of various countermeasures implemented during this period.

5.0 Misinformation Analysis and Impact

5.1 Types and Patterns

The 2020-2024 period witnessed significant challenges with electoral misinformation, affecting both election cycles in distinct ways. Survey data revealed that 69.7% of respondents encountered election-related misinformation, with 74.2% reporting reduced trust in electoral processes.

Digital platforms played a key role in disseminating false information:

- WhatsApp and Facebook emerged as primary channels⁵⁰
- Content included fabricated candidate claims
- Misleading voting procedures circulated widely

- False election results spread rapidly

As one respondent noted: "Most frequent election in Ghana has been about character assassination of candidates. . . . making me lose trust in the media."

Website Cloning

A notable trend in misinformations was the emergence of cloned news websites designed to mimic legitimate media outlets. These sites spread fabricated election results, misleading campaign promises, and false allegations against candidates. During both election cycles, sophisticated impersonation attempts targeted voters

⁵⁰ International Republican Institute. 2024. "Ghana 2024 Elections: A Risk Assessment of the Online Information Space | International Republican Institute." September 3, 2024. <https://www.iri.org/resources/ghana-2024-elections-a-risk-assessment-of-the-online-information-space/>.

through various channels. The fact-checking coalition has identified numerous cases of cloned websites attempting to

impersonate legitimate news sources. Some examples include:

CREDIBLE PORTALS	CLONES	REACH
ghanafact.com	ghanafactcheck.com	National
bbc.com/news	thebbcghana.com	International
myjoyonline.com	joynewsroom.com	Regional
graphic.com.gh	graphicgh.com	National
citinewsroom.com	citynewsonlinegh.com	National

Source: Ghana Fact, December⁵¹

These websites sought to confuse voters and propagate false narratives, contributing to the erosion of trust in legitimate news outlets.

Content Manipulation Trends

Content manipulation evolved from simple false information to complex narrative construction, including:

- AI-enhanced image and video manipulation
- Coordinated false narrative campaigns
- Strategic timing of false information release

Respondents highlighted the emotional and

social toll of misinformation, with one noting: "Leads to community members having feuds with each other." Another emphasized its divisive impact: "Election is a contest... misinformation... can easily result in a fight or violent actions."

5.2 Case Studies

Building on Lessons from 2020

The 2020 elections highlighted the challenges posed by doctored content, such as manipulated posts falsely reporting election results. For example, a manipulated BBC post spread false information about election outcomes, creating confusion and eroding trust in official processes:



[False Information about election results] Source: Ghana Fact, December 2020⁵²

⁵¹ ———, 2021, "Election 2020: Pay Attention! Don't Fall for Cloned Websites - Ghana Fact," Ghana Fact, August 20, 2021, <https://ghanafact.com/2020/12/election-2020-pay-attention-dont-fall-for-cloned-websites/>.

⁵² Ghanafact, 2020, "FAKE: Viral Screenshot of BBC Facebook Post on Ghanaian Election - Ghana Fact," Ghana Fact, December 11, 2020, <https://ghanafact.com/2020/12/fake-viral-screenshot-of-bbc-facebook-post-on-ghanaian-election/>.



In the December 2024 election cycle, a sophisticated digital impersonation scheme emerged targeting voters through WhatsApp.

These experiences informed more robust strategies implemented in 2024, such as improved fact-checking collaborations and real-time misinformation debunking. The Electoral Information Verification Center (EIVC), launched in 2024, directly addressed the weaknesses exposed in 2020 by providing rapid responses to emerging threats.

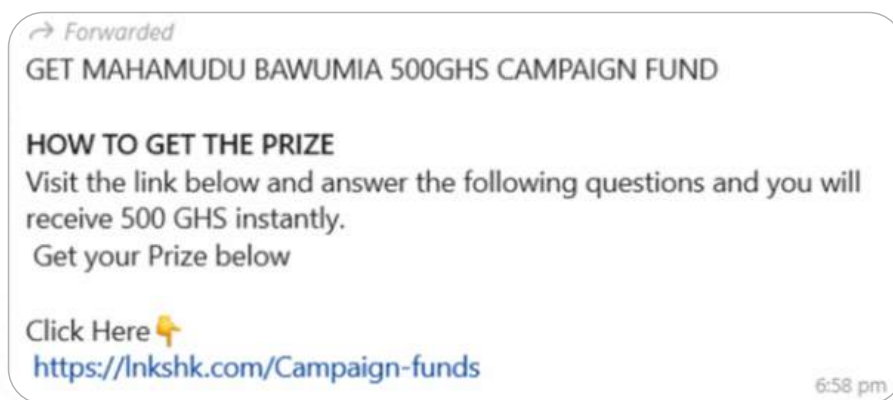
High School Policy Misinformation

At the height of the 2020 general election, the highly contested election between John Mahama who was seeking reelection, and Nana Akufo-Addo who was seeking the position. The political rivalry among their supporters. During one of his campaign speeches, President Mahama pledged to review the free senior high school policy. In response to this, the NPP interpreted this to mean that a vote for President Mahama's reelection would mean total cancellation of free Senior High School policy.

"During the 2020 election, I didn't vote for President Akufo-Addo because I read fake news on a facebook group that he was battling some forms of illness and he isn't fit for the presidency" A resident from Volta Region.

The 2024 Campaign Fund Scam

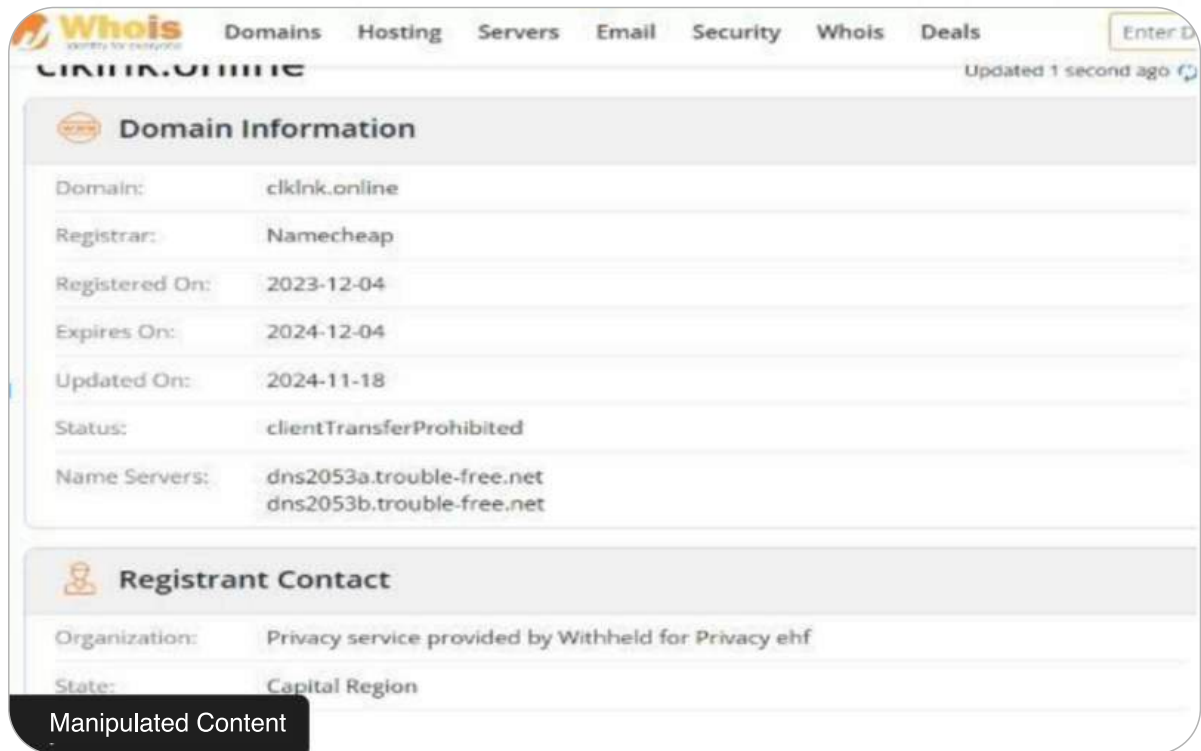
In the December 2024 election cycle, a sophisticated digital impersonation scheme emerged targeting voters through WhatsApp. The scheme involved fake campaign fund donations, impersonation of candidate communications, and integration of legitimate-looking verification processes, demonstrating the evolution of electoral manipulation tactics from simple misinformation to complex social engineering attacks.



[Fake WhatsApp message] Source: Ghana Fact, December 2024⁵³

⁵³ Ghana Fact, 2024, "HOAX: WhatsApp Message Claiming John Mahama Is Giving Out Ghe500 in Campaign Funds Is a Scam - Ghana Fact," November 25, 2024, <https://ghanafact.com/2024/11/hoax-whatsapp-message-of-gh%C2%A2500-john-mahama-campaign-fund-is-a-scam/>.

When investigated by fact-checkers, the link triggered malware warnings:



Whois Domains Hosting Servers Email Security Whois Deals

Updated 1 second ago

Domain Information

Domain:	clkink.online
Registrar:	Namecheap
Registered On:	2023-12-04
Expires On:	2024-12-04
Updated On:	2024-11-18
Status:	clientTransferProhibited
Name Servers:	dns2053a.trouble-free.net dns2053b.trouble-free.net

Registrant Contact

Organization:	Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf
State:	Capital Region

Manipulated Content

[Malware warning screenshot] Source: Dubawa Ghana Fact-Check, December 2024

False Attribution and Manipulated Content

A significant challenge has been the spread of false attributions to candidates. For

instance, a TikTok post falsely claimed Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang made statements about Free SHS policy:



[False Information about election results] (Source: Ghana Fact, December 2020)

Professor Opoku-Agyemang officially refuted the claim on her Facebook page



AI and Bots Content Manipulation

As our technology continues to evolve, and with the advancement of artificial intelligence, it becomes imperative to checkmate how these tools have the combined power to make lives easier and also cause division among citizens who might find it difficult to identify what is true, deepfakes, content/platform manipulation and so on.

Some of the respondents we interviewed shared how they saw a post on X which falsely claimed that the Vice-President and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) presidential candidate, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia is going to “introduce free visas to USA, Canada and all the European countries for individuals with Ghana card” and she believed it then only to realize that it was from an AI bot profile.





Ahead of the 2024 elections, Ghana's institutional response to electoral misinformation underwent significant transformation, developing from initially fragmented efforts into a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach.

Findings also revealed that over 171 bots accounts⁵⁴ on X were used to uniformly promote NPP's candidate while spreading coordinated fake news about NDC's candidate using several hashtags such as #mahamaisaliar and #DrunkmaniMahama which the candidate denied.

5.3 Mitigation Efforts and Effectiveness

Ghana's response to electoral misinformation underwent significant transformation between 2020 and 2024, evolving from primarily reactive measures to a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach. This evolution reflected a growing recognition of the complex nature of electoral misinformation and the need for coordinated responses across different sectors of society.

5.3.1 Institutional Responses

Ahead of the 2024 elections, Ghana's institutional response to electoral misinformation underwent significant transformation, developing from initially fragmented efforts into a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach. Early challenges in 2020 led to the strategic formation of the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition, which established comprehensive verification networks across regions⁵⁵. The evolution of these efforts included:

National Initiatives:

- a. The Ghana Commission for UNESCO launched "Verify First, Share with Caution," a social media initiative

promoting critical thinking and media literacy.⁵⁵

- b. The National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) 2024 spotlighted misinformation and its threats to digital democracy.⁵⁶
- c. Legal framework enforcement through the Ministry of Communications.⁵⁷

Technological and Educational Measures:

- a. The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) deployed experts to combat fake news during the elections.⁵⁸
- b. The Cyber Security Authority partnered with platforms like Meta to create rapid reporting mechanisms for misinformation.⁵⁹
- c. Educational initiatives emphasized verifying information and making informed decisions.⁶⁰

While institutional actions laid the foundation, civil society and media organizations amplified these efforts, targeting underserved communities and expanding outreach.

5.3.2 Civil Society and Media Initiatives

Civil society organizations emerged as crucial partners in the fight against misinformation, developing innovative approaches to reach diverse communities. The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) led comprehensive monitoring efforts through⁶¹:

- a. Deployment of 30 trained media monitors
- b. Coordination of 20 regional fact-checkers
- c. Partnerships with over 100 radio and TV stations

⁵⁴ Haskins, C., Siddiqui, Z., Bhattacharya, A., & Rios, L. (2024, November 12), AI-powered bots on X spread disinformation in Ghana's election, Rest of World, <https://restofworld.org/2024/ghana-election-ai-bots-x-twitter/>

⁵⁵ Abubekari-Sadiq, Osman, and UNESCO-Admin, 2024, "Ghana Commission for UNESCO Launches Campaign to Combat Mis/Disinformation Ahead of December Polls - Ghana Commission for UNESCO," UNESCO Ghana Commission, July 12, 2024 <https://unesco.ghana.gov.gh/ghana-commission-for-unesco-launches-campaign-to-combat-mis-disinformation-ahead-of-december-polls/>

⁵⁶ "Ghana Launches NCSAM 2024 With a Call to Tackle Disinformation," n.d., Cybersecurity Authority, <https://csa.gov.gh/ghana-launches-ncsam-2024-with-a-call-to-tackle-disinformation.php>.

⁵⁷ "GHANAIS URGED TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST ONLINE MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION," n.d., Cyber Security Authority, <https://csa.gov.gh/ghanaians-urged-to-join-the-fight-against-online-misinformation-and-disinformation.php>

⁵⁸ Ismaila, Isah, 2024, "GhanaDecides2024: CJID Deploys Team to Counter Election Misinformation," HumAngle, December 7, 2024, <https://humanglemedia.com/ghanadecides2024-cjid-deploys-team-to-counter-election-misinformation/>

⁵⁹ ———, "n.d., Cyber Security Authority, <https://csa.gov.gh/ghanaians-urged-to-join-the-fight-against-online-misinformation-and-disinformation.php>

⁶⁰ Masiku, Eugene, 2024, "Empowering Informed Citizenship: Highlights from Ghana Polls 2024 Initiative," Diff, December 17, 2024, <https://diff.wikimedia.org/2024/12/17/empowering-informed-citizenship-highlights-from-ghana-polls-2024-initiative/>.

⁶¹ ———, 2024b, "2024 Election: MFWA to Deploy Media Monitors and Fact-checkers to Combat Misinformation,

GhanaWeb, December 4, 2024, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/2024-Election-MFWA-to-deploy-media-monitors-and-fact-checkers-to-combat-misinformation-1962717>.



These efforts were particularly significant in rural areas, where traditional media remains the primary information source. The Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition demonstrated the power of collaborative action, bringing together key organizations to create a unified verification framework.⁶² Their work included:

Community Engagement:

- a. Content publication in 45 local languages⁶³
- b. Regional Media Situation Rooms in Accra and Tamale⁶⁴
- c. Grassroots verification networks that connect local communities with national fact-checking resources⁶⁵

These initiatives demonstrate the complementary roles of civil society and media organizations in creating a well-informed electorate, working alongside institutional mechanisms to combat misinformation effectively.

5.3.3 Global Context and Innovation

Ghana's approach to combating electoral misinformation reflects global best practices

and locally adapted solutions. This dual approach has effectively addressed the country's unique challenges while maintaining international standards.⁶⁶

Alignment with Global Strategies

Ghana's approach mirrors several successful international practices:

- a. Multi-stakeholder collaboration between fact-checkers, civil society, and election bodies.
- b. Integration of AI and machine learning for false information detection.
- c. Establishment of fact-checking coalitions.
- d. Implementation of media literacy programs.
- e. Strategic partnerships with major social media platforms.⁶⁷

Distinctive Features

However, Ghana has developed several innovative approaches tailored to its specific context:⁶⁸

- a. Extensive local language coverage, with fact-checking in 45 Ghanaian languages.

⁶² Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), 2024, "Fact-checking Coalition Set up Ahead of Ghana Elections - IFEX," IFEX, November 12, 2024, <https://ifex.org/fact-checking-coalition-set-up-ahead-of-ghana-elections/>.

⁶³ Africa, 2024, "MFWA, Dubawa and Ghana Fact Establish Ghana Fact-checking Coalition Ahead of December Elections," Africa Check, November 19, 2024, <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/blog/mfwa-dubawa-and-ghana-fact-establish-ghana-fact-checking-coalition-ahead-december>.

⁶⁴ —, 2024b, "MFWA, Dubawa and Ghana Fact Establish Ghana Fact-checking Coalition Ahead of December Elections," Africa Check, November 19, 2024, <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/blog/mfwa-dubawa-and-ghana-fact-establish-ghana-fact-checking-coalition-ahead-december>.

⁶⁵ "Stakeholder Dialogue: Enabling a Coalition of Stakeholders to Combat Disinformation in Ghana's 2024 Elections," 2024, IMS, November 5, 2024, <https://www.mediasupport.org/news/stakeholder-dialogue-enabling-a-coalition-of-stakeholders-to-combat-disinformation-in-ghanas-2024-elections/>.

⁶⁶ "Penplusbytes Hosts Strategic Meetings to Counter Disinformation in Ghana's 2024 Elections," 2024, Penplusbytes, December 4, 2024, <https://penplusbytes.org/penplusbytes-hosts-strategic-meeting-to-counter-disinformation-in-ghanas-2024-elections/>.

⁶⁷ Zage, Zita, 2024, "Combating Disinformation Ahead of Ghana's December Elections," Global Voices Advoc, November 12, 2024, <https://advoc.globalvoices.org/2024/11/12/combating-disinformation-ahead-of-ghanas-december-elections/>.

⁶⁸ —, 2024b, IMS, November 5, 2024, <https://www.mediasupport.org/news/stakeholder-dialogue-enabling-a-coalition-of-stakeholders-to-combat-disinformation-in-ghanas-2024-elections/>.



Our finding that misinformation evolved from basic digital manipulation to sophisticated AI-generated content requires enhanced detection capabilities

- b. Targeted rural area initiatives addressing unique information challenges.
- c. Strong regional coordination with other African nations like Tanzania and Mozambique.

The effectiveness of this hybrid approach - combining international standards with

localized solutions -demonstrates both the progress made and challenges remaining in Ghana's fight against electoral misinformation. The evolution from basic verification methods to sophisticated multi-stakeholder approaches while maintaining a strong local context provides a clear direction for future interventions.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of Ghana's electoral information ecosystem 2020-2024, our data results, and drawing from both local innovations and global best practices, we propose the following evidence-based recommendations:

Addressing Sources and Types of Misinformation

Our finding that misinformation evolved from basic digital manipulation to sophisticated AI-generated content requires enhanced detection capabilities:

- a. Technical Infrastructure Development
- b. Implement specialized AI detection systems, mainly targeting synthetic videos and voice clips.
- c. Develop automated monitoring for clone websites, following identification of five major website cloning cases.
- d. Create dedicated teams for digital forensics, responding to the 69.7% encounter rate with false information.

Tackling Spread Patterns

Given our platform analysis showing

WhatsApp (63.6%) and Facebook (57.6%) as key misinformation channels:

- a. Platform-Specific Interventions
- b. Establish dedicated monitoring teams for each major platform
- c. Create rapid alert systems for viral content
- d. Develop cross-platform verification protocols
- e. Enhance coordination with platform providers

Strengthening Trust and Impact Mitigation

With 74.2% of respondents reporting decreased confidence in democratic processes, emphasis should be placed on the following:

- a. Institutional Communication
- b. Improve Electoral Commission communication strategies
- c. Expand successful local language initiatives (building on programs reaching 45 languages)
- d. Strengthen collaboration with traditional authorities, following successful regional models



- e. Enhance transparency in verification processes

Improving Countermeasures

Building on successful interventions documented in our research:

- a. Infrastructure Enhancement
- b. Scale up regional verification desks beyond Accra and Tamale
- c. Expand fact-checking networks (building

on the success of 30 monitors and 20 regional fact-checkers)

- d. Strengthen collaboration between the 100+ media partners
- e. Enhance training programs for media practitioners and fact-checkers
- f. Community Engagement
- g. Implement regular regional town halls
- h. Strengthen local leadership involvement
- i. Develop youth participation programs
- j. Create clear decision-making protocols
- k. Ensure transparent result transmission

7.0 Conclusion

Our examination of Ghana's electoral landscape (2020-2024) reveals critical insights about the evolving nature of electoral misinformation and its impact on democratic processes. The transformation from basic digital manipulation to sophisticated AI-generated content demonstrates the dynamic nature of these challenges, with 69.7% of survey respondents encountering electoral misinformation.

The sources and spread patterns identified - from clone websites to coordinated false narratives - highlight the complexity of modern misinformation challenges. Platform analysis revealed that traditional media maintained dominance while digital platforms (WhatsApp 63.6%, Facebook 57.6%) emerged as significant channels for spreading misinformation.



The impact of misinformation on electoral trust was significant. National polls showed that the Electoral Commission's trust levels fell to 33%, while our survey found that 74.2% of respondents reported decreased confidence in democratic processes.

The impact of misinformation on electoral trust was significant. National polls showed that the Electoral Commission's trust levels fell to 33%,⁶⁹ while our survey found that 74.2% of respondents reported decreased confidence in democratic processes. This trust deficit was exacerbated by economic challenges, including inflation averaging 22.85% in 2024.⁷⁰ However, Ghana's response through multi-stakeholder approaches, particularly integrating traditional authorities with modern verification methods, demonstrated promising results in combating misinformation.

The effectiveness of countermeasures varied:

- a. Successful implementation of regional verification networks
- b. Improved response times to viral misinformation
- c. Enhanced language-inclusive fact checking resources
- d. Strengthened collaboration between institutions

These findings underscore the persistent challenges and emerging opportunities in protecting electoral integrity while maintaining public trust in democratic institutions.



⁶⁹ Osae-Kwapong, John, 2024, "Ghana's Election 2024: Technology and the Changing Nature of Political Competition," Centre for International Governance Innovation, December 5, 2024.

⁷⁰ ———, 2024b, "Ghana's Election 2024: Technology and the Changing Nature of Political Competition," Centre for International Governance Innovation, December 5, 2024.

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