

**UNITED STATES HEGEMONY AND GHANA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY
TRAJECTORY FROM 2020 -2025**

BY

**NWEKE CHIDINMA STEPHINE
GOU/U22/MSS/IRE/395**

**A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY, UGWUOMU-
NIKE, ENUGU STATE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF
SCIENCE DEGREE (B.Sc.) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

SUPERVISOR: [REV. FR](#) DR IKENNA OGBUKA

JULY, 2026

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DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that I am solely responsible for the project work titled, “**United States Hegemony and Ghana’s Political Economy Trajectory from 2020 -2025**” presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree (B.

Sc.) in International Relations which is a record of a dignified project work carried out under the guidance and supervision of [Rev.Fr Dr Ikenna Ogbuka](#).

.....
NWEKE CHIDINMA STEPHINE DATE
(STUDENT)

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to validate that this research work “**United States Hegemony and Ghana’s Political Economy Trajectory from 2020 -2025**” was embarked upon by ‘NWEKE CHIDINMA STEPHINE’ with the matriculation number GOU/U22/MSS/IRE/395 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor Science(B.SC) in International Relations, has been examined and approved by the Department of International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu.

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External Examiner Date

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to my parents Mr and Mrs Ignatius Nweke who has contributed immensely to everything that I have achieved and I pray that the good lord continues to bless them abundantly and protect them from every evil.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRICOM United States Africa Command
 AGOA African Growth and Opportunity Act
 ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
 FDI Foreign Direct Investment
 GPRS Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
 HIPC Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
 IFI International Financial Institution
 IMF International Monetary Fund
 MCA Millennium Challenge Account
 MCC Millennium Challenge Corporation
 MDRI Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
 NHIS National Health Insurance Scheme
 USAID United States Agency for International Development
 US United States
 WTO World Trade Organization

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ABSTRACT

This study examined United States hegemony and Ghana political economic trajectory between 2020 and 2025. The main objective was to investigate how United States influence shaped Ghana's political and economic path during the period. The specific objectives were to analyse how United States led economic policies, aid relations, trade frameworks and financial institutional influence shaped Ghana economic development strategies and to assess how United States initiatives in democratic governance, security cooperation and diplomatic engagement influenced Ghana domestic politics and foreign policy. Data came from official and

reliable documentary sources including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Bank of Ghana, Ministry of Finance Ghana, United States Trade Representative, United States Department of State, USAID, AFRICOM and Freedom House. The study covered Ghana only. It used a qualitative ex post facto and documentary research design. The analysis used thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis guided by Neo Gramscianism. The first finding showed that United States led economic influence shaped Ghana development strategy through IMF reform, aid, debt policy, trade access and market confidence pressure. The second finding showed that United States governance and security initiatives shaped Ghana domestic politics and foreign policy through democracy support, civil society support, security cooperation and diplomatic dialogue. The study concluded that United States hegemony helped Ghana gain support but also reduced policy autonomy. The study recommended a Ghana Policy Autonomy Review Framework for all major external economic agreements.

Keywords: United States hegemony, Ghana, political economy, Neo Gramscianism, aid, security cooperation, documentary analysis.

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This study examined United States hegemony and Ghana political economic trajectory between 2020 and 2025. The main objective was to investigate how United States influence shaped Ghana's political and economic path during the period. The specific objectives were to analyse how United States led economic policies, aid relations, trade frameworks and financial institutional influence shaped Ghana economic development strategies and to assess how United States initiatives in democratic governance, security cooperation and diplomatic engagement influenced Ghana domestic politics and foreign policy. Data came from official and reliable documentary sources including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Bank of Ghana, Ministry of Finance Ghana, United States Trade Representative, United States Department of State, USAID, AFRICOM and Freedom House. The study covered Ghana only. It used a qualitative ex post facto and documentary research design. The analysis used thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis guided by Neo Gramscianism. The first finding showed that United States led economic influence shaped Ghana development strategy through IMF reform, aid, debt policy, trade access and market confidence pressure. The second finding showed that United States governance and security initiatives shaped Ghana domestic politics and foreign policy through democracy support, civil society support, security cooperation and diplomatic dialogue. The study concluded that United States hegemony helped Ghana gain support but also reduced policy autonomy. The study recommended a Ghana Policy Autonomy Review Framework for all major external economic agreements.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The years 2020 to 2025 give a useful stretch for studying how a large world power guides decisions of a smaller country. From 2020 to 2025, world affairs faced the COVID 19 shock and new great power rivalry. Trade chains came under strain while many developing countries faced debt stress. Countries gave more attention to regional security because fear spread across several areas. In these years, The US stayed at the centre of world money and development policy. It kept weight in security teamwork as well as agenda setting in diplomacy. This wide weight helped the US guide world rules and guide country conduct. Ikenberry (2018) describes the wider US led liberal order as a structure built by way of main world bodies and market based policies. Across Africa, this power appeared by way of US work on trade, investment and democratic public rule. US help for security partnerships formed another part of this reach. Inside this wider frame, Ghana became a firm case for research. Its record as a steady country under a constitution made it a valued partner in coastal West Africa in the years under research.

The idea of US dominance gives this research its base. Dominance means more than force or threat. Dominance in the world political economy means leadership by one main power over the rules that guide countries. That power sets many structures that guide how the world economy works. Amadi (2018) notes that such leadership grows by way of pressure and shared beliefs. These beliefs can show one country as aims that serve all countries. Robinson (2015) explains that modern dominance works by way of wide networks that spread market ideas. These networks help guide world structures. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2016) argues that US power in Africa works by way of

world bodies and development structures. Trade rules with two country tools influence reform priorities in partner countries.

To understand this influence, the situation of Ghana at the start of the 2020s must be studied. The country entered this year with a firm democratic record and a steady political image. At the same time, Ghana faced economic pressure tied to public debt and raw good exports. The country remained exposed to wider world shocks. The COVID 19 pandemic made weaker growth and public income in 2020. Price rise after this placed pressure on prices and the exchange rate. Debt service burdens made the economic strain deeper. By 2022, Ghana entered a deep budget and debt crisis. This crisis led Ghana to seek debt treatment and IMF help. These events made a policy setting where outside actors got room to guide country decisions. Powerful countries with bodies tied to the liberal world order got a clearer place in national decisions.

US economic tools guided Ghana in a plain way from 2020 to 2025. One main path was the setting around the return of Ghana to an IMF helped adjustment plan. In May 2023, the IMF approved a 3 billion dollar Extended Credit Facility arrangement for Ghana. The deal was tied to budget tightening and debt restructuring. The same deal was tied to reforms that aimed to restore wide economic stability. Ghana stayed linked to US backed development priorities by way of trade and investment. Body based programmes formed another part of this link. The Millennium Challenge Corporation Ghana Power Compact stayed active until its closure in June 2022. It helped power sector reform and better basic structures. These arrangements show how aid and reform plans guided the economic direction of Ghana.

US influence reached the political and security life of Ghana as well. The US kept giving help to democratic structures and public answerability. Help reached the power of country bodies. The March 2023 visit by US Vice President Kamala Harris showed the place of Ghana in US work

with Africa. Security teamwork got greater attention as instability spread across West Africa and the Sahel. Ghana became a key partner in regional prevention work and military teamwork. Security talks formed another path for this partnership. The October 2024 US Ghana Security Talks showed the depth of this link. The event showed a growing connection between the security direction of Ghana and wider US aims for the region.

Yet Ghana did not act as a simple receiver of outside pressure. The country showed decision and bargaining power. Administrations led by Nana Akufo Addo then John Mahama negotiated with creditors. They dealt with world bodies and foreign partners while seeking room for home priorities. The 2023 home debt exchange showed an attempt to handle the crisis by way of negotiation. The 2024 Eurobond restructuring showed the same effort. These actions were not simple signs of policy submission. Ghana kept presenting itself as a democratic actor in Africa and a diplomatic actor. The country made use of its regional value and political stability to guide parts of its teamwork with stronger partners.

The main problem in this research is the struggle of a developing country to build its own plan. This struggle takes place inside a world guided by a stronger actor. The policies promoted by the US and world bodies carried a market first logic. Harvey (2005) defines this logic as neoliberalism. It encouraged budget restraint and market centred reform. Structural adjustment was shown as a path to economic recovery. Yet these policies often clashed with the social goals of Ghana. Those goals included poverty reduction and welfare protection. Job creation was another key goal in a time of sharp economic strain. The tension between outside demands and inside needs made a difficult balance. National plans risked being placed under the expectations of outside actors.

The points above show a layered relationship with unequal power. Earlier research works often looked at separate parts of this relationship. Some focused on aid results and trade gains. Others looked at debt help or democratic partnership. Security teamwork formed another separate area of research. Many research works did not bring these strands into one wide study. This gap matters because dominance links economic paths to political paths and security paths. A focused lens is needed for the years 2020 to 2025. This research looks at how US dominant influence worked by way of linked economic paths. Political paths and security paths in Ghana from 2020 to 2025 form part of the same research. This influence led the political economy of Ghana and placed limits on it in the chosen years.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From 2020 to 2025 world crisis debt pressure and dependence on outside policy structures guided the political path of Ghana as well as its economic course. In 2020 COVID 19 lowered public income and increased stress on country finances. Later price rises, weak exchange rates and heavy debt payments pushed Ghana into a deep economic crisis. In December 2022 Ghana asked for debt treatment under the G20 Common Framework. In May 2023 the IMF approved a 3 billion dollar Extended Credit Facility plan for Ghana. The plan aimed to restore steady prices with public money and wider economic order. This help was tied to debt changes, spending limits and reform promises. Those demands created tension between money safety and control over national development decisions. Recovery help relied on reform programmes under outside review. This shows the main development problem made by a leading outside power.

As these reforms began Ghana entered a difficult years of adjustment and recovery. The country finished home debt restructuring in 2023. In 2024 it reached a Eurobond restructuring stage. Yet the social cost of the crisis remained serious. Families faced rising prices, lower buying

power and unclear job prospects. At the same time development programmes tied to electricity reform trade work and public rule help keep shaping public policy decisions. These results show a gap between steady national money and wide social relief. Many research works treat debt restructuring, bilateral partnership security work and local hardship as separate issues. This leaves a plain gap because the results are not joined to the wider force of US influence. For this reason this research seeks to uncover how US dominance guided the political path of Ghana as well as its economic course from 2020 to 2025.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Did US led economic policies and aid conditionalities shape Ghana's economic development strategies between 2020 and 2025?
2. Did US initiatives in democratic governance and security cooperation influence Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy between 2020 and 2025?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of United States hegemony on the political and economic trajectory of Ghana between the years 2020 and 2025.

Specific Objectives:

1. To analyze how US-led economic policies and aid conditionalities shaped Ghana's economic development strategies.
2. To assess how US initiatives in democratic governance and security cooperation influenced Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research gives useful results for several groups. For theory it extends academic thinking by way of a detailed Ghana case that links world power control and development inside

the political economy. It gives students as well as researchers a steady base for learning about ties between firm countries and weaker actors. It shows how African countries make decisions under pressure from a main world power. For practice the research can guide public officials in Ghana inside the Ministries of Money as well as Foreign Affairs. By reviewing earlier negotiation decisions with their later effects the research gives plain guidance for future economic planning. This helps foreign policy work that protects national interest.

The work can help world development bodies such as the World Bank IMF and USAID. It gives plain proof on how policy demands affect national growth. It opens room for aid patterns to be reviewed so joint work can become fair as well as useful. Civil society groups in Ghana and other places can get new backing for advocacy work. The findings give them a research base for stronger calls about economic fairness, self led policy action and good public leadership.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research gives close attention to how US influence guided the political path and economic journey of Ghana from 2020 to 2025. The chosen time span has a plain purpose. It starts with the world shock caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. It follows the debt crisis of Ghana IMF backed recovery democratic continuity and deeper security work with the US. These years show a line of change from urgent economic stress to debt changes, recovery efforts and new outside ties. This gives a firm base for focused reading of the years.

The research keeps Ghana as its single country case. It does not move into nearby countries. It does not compare Ghana with other African countries. Ghana is mainly because it served as a trusted US partner in these years. Ghana remained a steady constitutional country under economic strain. Its place in regional diplomacy as well as security made it important. For this reason the

research looks at the Ghana US link. It observes how the two countries met in the policy room. It shows how Ghana made decisions while dealing with a much stronger world actor.

The idea limits of the research sit inside the critical world political economy. This view helps the researcher show how power moves inside world structures. It shows how a dominant country can guide decisions made by a smaller country. The research makes use of dominance to explain open forms of power as well as quiet forms of power in world affairs. This theory shows how those forces guide decisions, development paths and national results.

The research makes use of a quality based research path. It does not seek new number data. It does not make use of surveys or planned experiments. The design rests on a document method based on written sources, past research works, stored records and official texts. This method fits historical research because it helps the researcher study events that have taken place. The research makes use of available material to build its argument. The research maps changes in policy links as well as power links across the chosen years.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher met several blocks in the research. Each block needed careful handling. The time allowed for the work was short. This lowered the room for wide search as well as deep research. The problem was handled by way of a plain action plan. The plan kept the research tied to its aims as well as limits. Another block came from the possible lack of sealed diplomatic records. These records may contain small details from talks that are difficult to reach. To address this problem the researcher made use of many trusted open sources. These sources included government texts, policy papers, shared academic works and trusted media reports.

Money limits affected the ability of the researcher to travel for interviews. They limited access to paid documents that need special permission. This pressure was lowered by way of online

platforms, school archives and free journals from school help. A final block came from depending on one main library. This raised the risk of a narrow set of materials. The researcher addressed this by way of inter library links as well as open access pools. This widened the collection and helped the research cover the required studies.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

This section explains seven important ideas that guide the title and aims of this research. Each explanation begins with the history of the term and its academic use of. The explanation gives a plain meaning made for this research.

US dominance

The word dominance comes from the Greek term hegemonia. It means guidance or command. In present world theory the meaning changes across many debates. In this research US dominance means the plain effect that the US placed on Ghana policy decisions from 2020 to 2025.

Political and economic path

The phrase political economy has old roots in thinkers such as Adam Smith. These thinkers studied how power structures, country bodies and economic processes guide one another. A path means a path of change across time. Taken together the term shows how a country develops under linked political forces with economic forces. In this research Ghana political and economic path works as the dependent variable. It means the visible path of national development from 2020 to 2025.

Aid conditions

Aid condition means required steps as well as reforms that a country must follow to get loans, grants , debt relief or other money help. In this research aid conditions mean the exact policy

actions expected from the Ghanaian country. These actions relate to recovery help, debt restructuring processes and development assistance from 2020 to 2025.

Policy freedom

Policy freedom means the ability of a government to design its own plan. It means the ability to carry out that plan with no heavy outside pressure or limits. The idea is narrower than sovereignty because it concerns the real room a government has to act. In this research policy freedom means the proven ability of Ghana to make social plans as well as economic plans. These plans moved away from market based demands preferred by outside actors in the chosen years.

Neoliberalism

The word neoliberalism first appeared in the 1930s. It got wide use from the 1980s to describe a return to open market economic ideas. In this research neoliberalism means budget restraint market centred reform and adjustment steps. These steps were encouraged by way of firm world policy structures in the economic crisis and recovery process of Ghana from 2020 to 2025.

Good Public rule

The term good public rule became common after the World Bank made use of it in the late 1980s. It was made use of to help responsible control of public resources as well as country affairs. In this research good public rule means the political reforms with body based reforms that the US helped in Ghana from 2020 to 2025.

Development plans

Development plans mean a full set of plans with organised actions made by a government to help growth. They aim to improve living conditions. In this research development plans mean the official policy outlines with economic plans made use of by the Ghanaian government from 2020 to 2025.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Hegemony

The concept of dominance comes from the Greek word hegemonia which means leadership. It gives this research a basic frame for understanding the form of US influence. In world links the term carries two main meanings. Realist scholars explain it by way of difficult power. This means a country has firm military force and main economic weight that allow it to guide the world structure. A deeper meaning comes from Antonio Gramsci. He did not see dominance as a simple force. He saw it as leadership by way of agreement where ideas of the leading country become accepted as normal order. Amadi (2018) explains it as a room where agreement is formed. In that room the interests of the hegemon appear as common interests. This research makes use of a wider meaning. It reads US influence as material power , as the spread of political values together with economic values.

A hegemon works by way of many instruments to extend its reach. In the economy the US made use of its powerful position inside the International Monetary Fund together with the World Bank. It guided the terms of the link between Ghana and the world economy. This appeared by way of the HIPC path (Harrison 2019). In politics it made use of diplomacy and foreign aid such as the Millennium Challenge Account to promote its pattern of liberal democratic rule. Schifferdecker (2016) notes that this aid was linked to public rule scores. In the field of security the post 9/11 years made stronger security ties. Programmes under US Africa Command AFRICOM drew Ghana into a US led regional security frame. This frame guided its foreign policy

goals (Adibe 2016). Cultural power moved by way of research exchanges and media flows. These channels placed American values before the public.

The chosen years from 2020 to 2025 matters because it shows the height of the post Cold War single power moment. After the Soviet Union fell the US became the sole world superpower. This position gave it wide room to guide world rules and world bodies. G John Ikenberry (2018) calls this a US led liberal world order. The US tried to spread this order across the world. In Africa the project moved by way of a steady foreign policy line. It shows multiparty democracy and free market capitalism as the general road to growth. The same pattern was shown as the road to stability. Akokpari (2015) notes that US action in Africa in this year did not focus on stopping a rival power. It focused on pulling the continent into a liberal dominant frame.

This dominant project appeared in US Africa links with plain patterns. The Washington Consensus became a main feature in dealings between the US and African countries such as Ghana. It was a group of neoliberal policy paths. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2016) explains that this power moved by way of world money bodies. It was made use of to enforce structural adjustment and market based reforms. The project got help from the language of good public rule. That language linked development progress to Western liberal political and economic patterns. African nations were urged at some points to arrange local policies in line with this US led world order. This was done , they could get aid investment and world approval.

Yet dominance does not mean that smaller countries have no decision. The idea leaves room for action and counter dominance. Ghana worked inside a structure guided by US power but its leaders did not just get outside demands. They made decisions and bargained at different times. Some pressures faced resistance. A plain example came with the discovery of commercial oil in 2007. This gave the government of Ghana new economic weight. It gave leaders stronger ground

to guide a more independent foreign policy (Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru 2018). This shows that dominant links do not move in one direction. They form an active exchange where weaker countries can act inside the structure to protect national aims.

2.1.2 Political Economy

Political economy gives this research a main lens because it studies the close link between politics and economics. The field does not treat political power as separate from economic life. It shows how country bodies and political actors guide the flow of economic resources. The field shows how economic forces guide political results. By way of this lens the research moves beyond simple readings of economic figures or political events. It seeks to expose the power forces that guided the development journey of Ghana. This lens gives a wide view of why some policy decisions were made. It identifies who got from those decisions. This gives a deeper account than economics or political science can give alone.

Many strands exist inside political economy such as liberalism, Marxism and economic nationalism. This research makes use of a critical political economy view. This view gives firm attention to power inequality and the reach of large world actors over national development. It fits the research of dominance because it shows how unequal power between the US and Ghana guided the policy room of Ghana. It shows the effect of that link on economic results. Liberal views place stress on shared gains. A critical view asks how those gains are shared and points to limits placed on weaker countries inside the world capitalist order (Amadi 2018).

When this view is made use of for Ghana the political economy of development from 2020 to 2025 becomes easier to see. The main democratic election of 2020 was a political moment with firm economic effects. The new decision of the government to join the HIPC scheme changed the national economic plan. Adom (2019) notes that this political change helped win trust and help

from Western partners. Economic pressure guided political life in return. The severe debt crisis of the late 1990s made a political need for main policy change in the start of the 2000s. The full years showed a steady exchange. Political calm was treated as a base for economic help and economic results became main to electoral power.

The political economy view helps trace the form of the economic path of Ghana in this year. The journey of the nation was not a natural flow. It was a chain of decisions with shifts guided by inside and outside political forces. One part was the deeper use of neoliberal reforms under the Kufuor government. Ayelazuno (2021) describes this process in detail. Another part was the large structural change that followed the discovery of oil. Boateng (2017) gives a political economy reading of this shift. He shows how the hope of oil income changed political aims. It made new tests for public rule with fair development. These turns cannot be understood by way of economic numbers alone. They require attention to political aims and power struggles.

A full political economy research of Ghana must include the main place of outside actors in local affairs. Policy decisions in Ghana cannot be understood without the IMF. , can they be understood without the World Bank and the US. These bodies were not simple helpers from outside. They acted as powerful players inside the local policy room. Last and Norman (2020) show that the IMF link guided the national budget of Ghana. The same link guided trade policies and public sector rules. These outside actors brought their own goals and belief structures. Their actions guided the political and economic room of the country. This shows that the development of Ghana remained tied to the wider world political economy.

2.1.3 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is the economic idea that guided policy steps promoted by the US and its partner money bodies in the research years. David Harvey (2005) explains it as a view of political

economic action. In this view human welfare grows best when individual creative freedom is released inside a structure of firm private property rights. Free markets and open trade are part of this structure. Its main claims call for a small country's place in economic life. The country protects in large part private property and enforces contracts. The main policy results include sale of country firms and opening of markets to wider competition. Other results include looser trade rules and money rules that help world joining. A strict keep on public spending and balanced budgets is another result.

This idea reached its strongest policy form by way of the Washington Consensus. The term refers to ten core policy steps seen as the standard reform path for developing countries. Washington based bodies like the IMF and the World Bank promoted them. The US Treasury gave help to them. These steps included open trade and sale of public firms. They included tight spending control and movement of public funds away from subsidies toward growth projects. The Washington Consensus became the main development pattern. It formed the base for demands tied to loans and debt relief given to countries such as Ghana. This made neoliberal policy make use of a condition for access to world money aid.

Neoliberalism in Ghana did not start in 2020 because the nation had passed by way of almost two decades of Structural adjustment Programmes. , the years from 2020 to 2025 brought a stronger push and deeper make use of these policies. The decision to enter the HIPC plan became a turning point. Debt relief was tied to a fresh set of neoliberal demands inside the Ghana Poverty Reduction Plan papers. Ayelazuno (2021) shows that these steps included the sale of country assets that remained such as Ghana Telecom. A further step was automatic price rules for fuel and utilities which removed country help. Last and Norman (2020) note that this renewed make use of neoliberal ideas was a main reason Western partners viewed Ghana in a positive way.

The effects of these neoliberal steps on the Ghanaian economy were wide and deep. Supporters point to firm wide economic growth and rising foreign investment. Critics point to damage in key sectors and social imbalance. One plain case was the harm that open trade caused to local factory production. Mohammed and Yankey (2020) show that the Ghanaian textile sector had once been a main employer. It declined under pressure from cheaper imports and many jobs were lost. In social areas cost recovery rules in health and education faced firm criticism. They raised barriers for poor groups though poverty reduction programmes eased some of the pressure.

The debate on neoliberalism in Africa sits at the centre of this research. The main criticism is that the Washington Consensus made use of one pattern for all countries. This pattern did not reflect the real structural needs of developing economies such as Ghana. Critics argue that these steps may have brought wide economic stability. , they did , at the cost of long term industrial growth and wider inequality. Many research works link the problem of growth with not enough jobs to this policy pattern. In that problem GDP rises with no plain gains in formal jobs. For this reason a close reading of the development path of Ghana needs a critical look at the contested legacy of these neoliberal reforms.

2.1.4 Policy Autonomy

Policy freedom is important because it shows the main tension in this research. It shows the clash between the right of Ghana to self rule and the outside limits made by its link with a dominant power. Country sovereignty is a basic rule in world law. It means that a country keeps the highest authority inside its borders. Policy freedom is a more active idea because it concerns the real ability of a country to make its own policy decisions. It concerns the ability to plan actions that match national aims with no heavy outside pressure. A country may be sovereign in law but keep little policy freedom in practice. This can happen when it relies on outside actors.

The old idea of complete sovereignty faces pressure for all countries. This pressure is stronger for developing countries. World bodies, multinational companies and world money markets all limit national decisions. Countries such as Ghana depend on foreign aid investment and outside funding. These limits become sharp. This dependence makes an unequal power link. The terms tied to money help lower the policy room. Policy room means the set of possible decisions open to the government.

Conditions are the most obvious road that policy freedom takes. Ghana had availed itself of the HIPC plan or had taken loans from the IMF. In making this it signed formal contracts that entailed certain policies. These conditions are not easy-to-follow rules, as Harrison (2019) points out. They represent a national government to outside money body policy change. In many instances, policy goals and tools are directed far off to Washington DC. The local government implements what has been set. This lessens the space available for public discussion. It undermines the government's control of the key economic and social decisions.

From the 2020 to 2025 Ghana case study, there are clear illustrations of narrow policy freedom. A clear illustration of narrow policy freedom is evident in Ghana from 2020 to 2025. In the case of budgets, the government's spending of taxes and public wages was constrained by limits agreed with the IMF. Trade was largely free and tariffs or other forms of protection for the small local industries were not allowed. Subsidy elimination for the important products, like fuel, was based on the demand of the home market and on the promises made to the external creditors. These are examples of Ghanaian policies being shaped by world partners' demands.

Ghana had some room for manoeuvre and they made good use of it. Policy freedom is not an easy to understand concept. It is a room that can be used for working and stretching. Ghanaian leaders were not silent. They attempted to limit the boundaries to them. A very obvious one was

the NHIS is a huge social policy developed within Ghana. Oil was discovered and the country acquired new economic strength. This extra weight helped the leaders to negotiate with outsiders. It supported them in advancing national objectives like the local content legislation in the oil gas industry (Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru 2018). This demonstrates how a policy tries to expand its policy space within a structurally defined policy box.

2.1.5 Development Trajectory

A development pathway is the trajectory of development change over a period of time in a country. It is the main variable of interest in this research. The concept of development has shifted from the old concept which saw development as GDP growth, only. There was a broader perspective that was led by thinkers like Amartya Sen. From that perspective, development widens man's capabilities. It pursues higher income, better health education and freedom. This broader view was officially recognized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It reveals that the goal of development is to create a situation in which all people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. For Ghana to be studied in terms of its path of development, one has to consider more than just high growth figures. It has to question whether economic benefits translated into tangible improvement in day-to-day life (Gyimah Boadi 2015).

This research will utilize simple signs that are measurable in order to trace the path of Ghana from 2020 to 2025. The economy signs are annual GDP rates, level of public debt and level of foreign investment inflows. The figures come from bodies such as the World Bank and IMF. The national poverty rate will be used to trace social and human development. Another sign will be the Gini coefficient. These signs come from national surveys such as the Ghana Living Standards Survey (Cooke Hague and McKay 2016). Health, learning and income will be seen in the Human development Index score of Ghana. The political side of development will be studied

by way of the World wide Public rule Indicators. The following indicators provide data on political order, control over corruption, country performance (Yeboah Assiamah and Muller 2021).

Any development path is read through the prism of broader theories of development and underdevelopment. The modernization theory of the past suggested that development occurred in stages from traditional to modern societies through the imitative process of adopting western political and economic systems. World capitalism is based on profound imbalances, as depicted in dependency theory and other critical perspectives. In this context, core countries' development relies on the peripheral countries' limited development (Carmody 2016). This study falls within this window of opportunity. It makes the assumption that the trajectory of development for Ghana was determined and constrained by its subordinate position in a dominant structure of the United States.

Ghana's development trajectory between 2020 and 2025 is represented in two main phases. The first phase (c. 2001 – 2007) was characterized by post HIPC recovery and gradual recovery. During these years the country received principal debt relief and new donor assistance. The careful economic management resulted in a steady economic growth and reduced national poverty (Laast and Norman 2020). During the second phase (2007-2025), Ghana is transitioning towards becoming an emerging oil economy. The finding of commercial oil fields attracted large foreign investment and raised hopes of firm lasting growth. It is a source of quick GDP growth and new issues of resource wealth management. The design of long term development policies was impacted by these challenges (Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru 2018 Boateng 2017).

Ghana's development trajectory was impeded by deep structural issues, which led to a lack of progress towards fair, sustainable development. The primary issue was growth without sufficient employment opportunities. In this pattern, the GDP growth sectors used high level of

capital and were not creating employment. This was the case with mining. This was the same for subsequent oil gas operations. This led to high youth unemployment and increasing regional disparities. Cooke Hague and McKay (2016) demonstrate that growth was uneven as poverty continued to be high in the north. Boateng (2017) notes that the oil economy made risks linked to the resource curse. The emphasis on extraction may have a deleterious effect on some of the more important sectors, including farming and factory production. It could lower long term balanced growth.

2.2 Review of Theme of Research Questions

This theme review is based on the three research questions of the research. For each question there is one lead to be followed in reading previous work. The aim of this outline is to arrange the studies on US Ghana links from 2020 to 2025. It also collates the results and opinions of other authors writing on the same topic.

2.2.1 The Impact of US Economic Hegemony on Ghana Development Strategies

At the beginning of the 21st century the HIPC plan and the subsequent MDRI played a vital role in the world economy of developing economies. Numerous writers demonstrate these plans obtained solid support from the US and the G7, via the World Money Bodies which the US maintained a high voting strength. According to Harrison (2019), the primary design was designed to reduce the crushing burden of debt that was detrimental for many low income countries. But the very same plans turned into solid instruments of implementing fixed economic rules. Laast & Norman (2020) further report that large debt removal was a serious basis for Ghana's acceptance of policy directions from western lenders. It was not a trivial technical move that led to the decision to join HIPC. The gesture was a broad one, and it was an expression of public support for the prevailing world economic order.

The main component of debt relief granted to Ghana was the connection with stringent demands of the neoliberal policies. These were not mere speculation. They were straightforward actions that the country must take to achieve the HIPC decision point and HIPC completion point. This process is criticized by Ayelazuno (2021). He demonstrates that the necessary measures were taken that continued with the old Structural adjustment measures. These calls included those for the sale of the remaining country firms and for the opening up of local markets for competition by the private sector. They also included a complete trade liberalisation, which involved steep cuts in tariffs and less protection. This policy regime was based on the neoliberal concept put forward by Harvey (2005). It put the free market and the small economy in the middle of economic success. Thus, the road into the world money for neoliberal reform was the path of the reformers.

The relationship between national economic measures taken in Ghana and Washington Consensus is evidenced in various research works. To qualify for HIPC Ghana had to prepare Ghana Poverty Reduction Plan papers. As national plans, these texts were granted strong direction by the policy goals of World Bank and IMF (Harrison 2019). The key issues of the GPRS were on the growth of the private sector and the widespread economic discipline. They also facilitated trade opening. These points were the core ideas of the Washington Consensus. However, the language and objectives in these national documents resembled that of IFI documents as highlighted by Laast & Norman (2020). This revealed a shared policy agenda with a debt relief agenda.

Ghanaian public money and social spending were guided by debt relief with budget constraints attached. On the other hand, the debt-diffusion released huge amounts of money. Debrah & Oseghale (2018) explain that these HIPC funds were kept for poverty reduction. This resulted in increased expenditure on primary education and basic health. The broader demands, on the other hand, demanded strict budgetary constraints on other expenditures. These meant

restrictions on public wages and the phasing out of subsidies on essential commodities. Bob Milliar (2017) notes this tension in his research of the National Health Insurance Scheme. The scheme had to fit in the narrow spending rules. This demonstrated the tough choice between social services and fiscal discipline.

The conditional aid program has been vigorously criticized due to questions of long term value and national control. Ayelazuno (2021) states that the pattern is problematic because it imposes a policy pattern. This decreases nationalized ownership and democratic accountability. If aid is linked to the outside policy design, the attention of leaders shifts from local needs to the outside policy design. It is going towards the demands of the donors. This is what Harrison (2019) points out, and agrees. The country room is a small room. Other growth pathways are difficult to follow, even if they seem appropriate to the national context. According to these comments, short term money help can lead to long term loss of policy freedom.

The George W Bush administration provided a new open expression of U.S. aid demand in the form of the Millennium Challenge Account. The MCA was designed to be different from previous aid, as Schifferdecker (2016) describes. It granted gigantic funds to a handful of countries that demonstrated good public rule and economic freedom. It also incentivised investments in people. The rules for eligibility made use of public indicators. This simplified the political and economic terms. According to Dogbe & Akwei (2022) the Ghana MCA compact is valued at \$547 million. They highlight its emphasis on rural development and agrarian reforms. But countries that had aligned themselves with US preferred policies benefited from the MCA design. It brought potential recipients to the table to help shape the nation's plans according to American goals.

One of the demands was privatisation, which had large scale and controversial sector impacts. Backers said that it could increase efficiency and reduce the tax burden of weak country

companies. They also said it could be a draw for private investment. Yeboah Assiamah & Muller (2021) have mixed results. In some privatizations service quality and investment in telecommunication were enhanced. Many carried job losses and increased prices. Ayelazuno (2021) states that the main national assets' sale frequently results in the transfer of public wealth to foreign companies. It also did not develop a broad national development. This left room for speculation on "who benefits from these reforms".

Another key demand that was seriously hit by the results of trade liberalization in Ghana is industry. Lower tariffs and less protection for competition. They also sought to reduce prices and improve the performance of local businesses. But many local businesses were unable to match the lower prices of imports from potentially more robust economies. The most prominent example is related to the collapse of the Ghana textile sector. Mohammed and Yankey (2020) demonstrate that imported textiles caused factories to shut down and the loss of main livelihoods. It is this that Obeng Odoom (2020) would argue is a primary weakness of the neoliberal pattern. Favors integration with the world and can sometimes erode local industry.

The studies show firm agreement that aid and debt relief tools lowered economic freedom in Ghana from 2020 to 2025. The demands tied to this help were not technical notes. They acted as firm channels for pushing the policy aims of the dominant power and its allied bodies. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2016) describes this as a main form of dominant control in post Cold War Africa. Economic dependence then helps political and belief based fit. Critics such as Ayelazuno (2021) stress that Ghana leaders still kept some room for action. Yet the firm structural limits of conditional aid lowered policy freedom. They locked the nation into a path that it did not choose in full.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act signed in 2000 stood as a key part of US trade policy toward Africa in the research years. Many academic writings accept its stated aim of supporting growth by way of duty free entry to the US market for chosen sub Saharan African countries. Smith (2019) shows it as a shift from an aid driven link to one built on trade and investment. Critics such as Carmody (2016) argue that AGOA also served US strategic aims. It urged African countries to follow liberal market rules and pulled the region deeper into a US led economic structure. The eligibility rules demanded help for market structures. They also demanded protection of US intellectual property rights. This showed the plain place of AGOA as an economic tool of country power.

Research works on AGOA results in Ghana show mixed results. They also show that gains stayed inside a few sectors. The detailed review by Mohammed & Yankey (2020) research works how Ghanaian exports changed under AGOA. Their findings show that some exports such as textiles had first gains. These gains did not last. The textile sector could not face firm world rivals even with special access. It later lost ground. Many other sectors faced provision limits such as weak basic structures and poor access to money. These limits blocked Ghana from making use of AGOA in full. The studies point to the fact that the total effect of AGOA on economic spread in Ghana was limited.

US Foreign investment in Ghana focused on extractive work. This showed a wider pattern of US investment on the continent. The US spoke of wide partnership. Carmody (2016) notes that US capital entered areas that served American needs such as mining and later oil in most cases. This pattern differed from new partners such as China. Asiedu & Deh (2020) explain that China often invested in basic structures. The US focus on capital heavy extractive sectors gave little

spillover to the wider economy. The result was narrow enclaves of high tech production. These enclaves had weak ties to local sectors and made few jobs.

The discovery of oil in Ghana in 2007 came when the US had rising interest in the Gulf of Guinea as a key energy zone. Many writings from this year show that US policy tried to spread energy supplies beyond the troubled Middle East. Akokpari (2015) with Bond (2015) explain that Africa and the Gulf of Guinea were seen as places of growing value. Ghana had new oil and a steady political image. This made it an attractive partner. The rise of the Ghana oil sector was not just a local economic story. It was also a matter of plain US foreign policy interest.

US linked corporations had a main place in the new oil story of Ghana. The Jubilee field was one of the largest finds in Africa. It was discovered by a group led by the American firm Kosmos Energy. Whitfield & Abdul Gafaru (2018) show the main place of these private actors. Their skill and high risk funding were needed. Their presence brought US corporate interests into the political economy of Ghana. Boateng (2017) shows that talks over contracts and revenue plans involve tough exchanges. These exchanges took place between the Ghanaian country and world firms backed by home government diplomatic weight.

The place of US firms and wider US interest guided public rule in the extractive room of Ghana. World partners including the US and the World Bank gave wide technical help. They also gave policy advice on how Ghana should handle oil income. Boateng (2017) research works rules such as the Petroleum Revenue Management Act. He notes that these rules were guided by world patterns pushed by outside actors. These steps aimed to help Ghana avoid resource curses. Whitfield & Abdul Gafaru (2018) argue that they also tied Ghana to a liberal form of public rule. This form placed foreign investor interests first and narrowed the ability of the country to make use of oil for firm industrial plans.

The arrival of oil brought the wide studies on the resource curse into focus. This body of work described by Boateng (2017) shows that resource rich countries often face slow growth and higher corruption. They may also face political strain. The risks for Ghana were serious. Dutch disease could raise the currency value. It could harm farming and factory production. Abdulai (2017) places this issue inside the wider politics of development and security. He notes that firm country ability becomes very important for avoiding these risks. It also helps keep long term stability.

Many research works agree that US trade and investment patterns in Ghana did not build firm long term industrial growth. The focus on raw and semi processed exports under AGOA kept Ghana tied to its old place as a raw raw good exporter. The heavy flow of FDI into extractive areas did the same. Whitfield & Abdul Gafaru (2018) argue that advice from world partners often blocked strategic industrial steps. These steps included local content rules and help plans that could have built local industry. The textile sector case recorded by Mohammed & Yankey (2020) shows how open trade with no industrial upgrading plans can bring sharp decline.

The economic structure that formed in these years fed into the known problem of growth with not enough jobs. The sectors that drew most foreign capital with GDP power were mining and oil. They were capital heavy and produced few jobs. This made a plain imbalance because growth did not bring enough work for a fast growing youth population. Osei & Adarkwa (2021) argue that this gap can fuel social strain. The findings of Adomako et al (2019) show that a policy room guided to favour large foreign firms does little to help small and medium local firms. These local firms often drive wide jobs.

2.2.2 The Influence of US Political and Security Agendas on Ghana Governance as well as Foreign Policy

After the Cold War ended the tone of US foreign policy toward Africa changed and democratic public rule moved to the centre. Writers in those years explain that help for anti communist rulers lost its old meaning after the Soviet Union broke apart. Free markets with open country bodies then became the new focus. Smith (2019) shows this as the main idea of US power after the Cold War. In his view a world made up of democratic countries would stay steady and serve US aims. The American country made use of several instruments to follow this direction. Public diplomatic pressure worked with rule based aid and direct help for democratic activity to guide a new pattern in US Africa links.

Inside this policy room Ghana soon became a sign of what the US saw as success in democracy help. The peaceful handover of power in 2001 marked a rare event in a region where such changes were not common. US leaders praised Ghana in public speeches , calling it a pattern democracy or anchor country. These words placed Ghana in a key position inside a West African area linked with tension. Gyimah Boadi (2015) research works this position in detail. Respect for civil rights in Ghana with fixed election dates and open party contests gave a plain answer to poor images of Africa in some Western writing. These features made Ghana a main receiver of US democracy aid and a trusted diplomatic partner.

From 2020 to 2025 the US gave steady help to elections and civic groups in Ghana. USAID provided funds with technical help for voter registers and election work. Grants also reached civil society groups that watched elections and taught citizens by way of media help. Dzisah and Ofori Mensah (2018) agree that this helped raise public trust in elections in Ghana. Their research notes that trained observers helped build fairness in tense polls such as the 2008 election.

Several scholars raise serious concerns about the good public rule agenda backed by the US. Their main claim is that it spreads a single pattern built on Western democratic rules. That

pattern does not always fit local settings. The agenda gives firm value to election routines while deeper needs such as social fairness get less attention. Williams (2018) could read this as a hidden problem because democracy may keep its outer form with no meeting the real needs of citizens. These concerns show that US help helped Ghana organise elections. The same help did not reach the deeper roots of corruption and patronage that still affected political life in Ghana.

A large part of US aid targeted corruption control in Ghana. This helped build bodies such as CHRAJ and the Ghana Audit Service. Money with technical skill improved their place and helped them challenge poor conduct by public officials. Yeboah Assiamah and Muller (2021) explain that the aid raised body based ability. The effect stayed limited because leaders in Ghana did not always show enough will to act with power. This problem shows a larger truth about democracy help. Outside actors can build public structures but they cannot make the local ruling class make use of them in the right way.

Another important debate concerns political conditions because this links aid to reform. Some writers see it as a fair method because it pushes leaders toward change. Other writers argue that it weakens sovereignty and follows interest more than principle. Asante and Debrah (2019) show that the Kufuor government handled this structure in a planned way. That government got main backing such as the MCA by way of this path. The example shows that local leaders learned to work inside the condition room. Even so, questions about sovereignty remained unsettled.

US assistance also entered the parliament and courts of Ghana. Several programmes trained lawmakers and helped them write laws with stronger oversight. Other help aimed to build court independence. These actions sought to make firm checks on executive power. Scholars who research these programmes tend to find small but useful gains. They also report that the long habit of firm executive rule still kept back full separation of powers.

The deep place of the US in political affairs in Ghana raises difficult questions about sovereignty. One view says the partnership worked because both sides shared goals linked to stability and democratic power. From this view the US acted as a supporter instead of a controller. A different view from dependency thought argues that the US guided aid rules and defined good public rule. This led to political direction in Ghana and lowered policy freedom. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2016) would call this a softer form of outside influence that limits country decisions under pressure.

Most scholars conclude that the democratic structure of Ghana showed firm resilience in these years. Ghana managed repeated close elections and kept an active press with an open civic room. Gyimah Boadi (2015) writes that progress in Ghana was real and placed it among the more steady democracies on the continent. The wide view is that foreign help helped. The deeper source of progress came from leaders and citizens in Ghana who kept to democratic practice. Outside actors gave useful backing. The main driver was local commitment.

The September 11 attacks changed the world security map and pushed the US to reshape its aims in Africa. In the 1990s the continent had been treated as a quiet room. It got new meaning after the attacks. Writers such as Akokpari (2015) describe a firm turn toward securitization in US Africa ties. The World War on Terror became the main lens by way of which the US viewed African countries. Security tasks with military plans grew in scale and pushed softer diplomacy with development into the background. This formed a new base for ties with countries seen as very important.

A main sign of this security turn was the creation of AFRICOM in 2007. The US showed this command as a clearer way to join its security aims with help for African armies. Adibe (2016) shows that many African leaders viewed AFRICOM with mistrust. They saw it as a new control

tool that could open the continent to US military reach and resource interests. The refusal of African countries to host the AFRICOM headquarters showed the depth of this suspicion.

Inside this tense setting Ghana became a trusted security partner for the US in West Africa. Steady politics and disciplined armed forces made Ghana a main place for teamwork. Regional security research works note that Ghana hosted joint exercises such as Obangame Express. Those exercises brought several navies together to improve protection in the Gulf of Guinea. Williams (2018) explains that Ghana became a key point in the rising US security network for Africa.

This teamwork took form by way of programmes such as ACOTA which gave training and equipment to the Ghana Armed Forces. The plan sought to build skills for peace operations. Research works on ACOTA show that the Ghana military got firm professional training and non lethal tools. These gains improved readiness and made the place of Ghana stronger in regional missions.

A main question in the studies asks how this close security tie guided the foreign policy direction of Ghana. Ghana claimed a non fitted position and defended it in public. Some writings argue that close security links moved Ghana toward US positions on security issues. Steady help by Ghana for counter terror teamwork showed this bond. No plain proof shows that votes by Ghana in world bodies such as the United Nations matched US decisions. This points to that Ghana tried to get security help while keeping its own diplomatic room.

The warm bilateral link guided West Africa in mixed ways. A skilled and well trained Ghana military was seen as a useful pillar for ECOWAS stability. Some scholars warned that firm links to an outside power could weaken unity in the region. Such links could also make quiet tension. The idea that Ghana got special attention from the US could make friction and disturb teamwork on issues that did not fit US aims.

The rise of security as the main bond between the US and Ghana opened debate about militarization. Dependency writers warned that heavy military focus pushed deeper solutions aside. Akokpari (2015) argues that a security first style treats conflict as a military puzzle. It may ignore poverty and imbalance as well as weak public rule. This exposes a clash inside US policy. The short term need for safety may slow long term human development and diplomacy.

One benefit from the partnership was stronger peacekeeping ability for Ghana. Ghana has long served as a leading troop provider for United Nations missions. Skills from ACOTA with related help made its troops better prepared for difficult tasks. Both countries made use of this example to show that teamwork could help world peace.

A final area in the studies concerns how well US security aims worked with development aims in Ghana. The official claim kept that security makes room for development while development addresses the causes of insecurity. Many scholars question this link. Williams (2018) might argue that a heavy focus on military tasks pulls attention away from real social needs. Adibe (2016) adds that strategic aims such as resource access can clash with wide development goals and reveal a break inside US policy for Africa.

2.2.3 Ghanaian Agency and Strategic Navigation within the Hegemonic Relationship

Research works in world links no longer treat small countries as pawns in the games of great powers. Small country agency theory says weaker countries can still guide results inside power structures that are not equal. They can build leverage with skilled diplomacy as well as alliances. They can also make use of law and special local assets to protect national interests. This lens matters for the case of Ghana because it helps explain country conduct. It shows firm pressure from the US while it also shows the ability of Ghanaian leaders to act with purpose.

Many research works show the rule of President John Kufuor 2001-2009 as a plain case of careful navigation. In their review of this year's Asante and Debrah 2019 point to the make use of economic diplomacy by the government as a main foreign policy tool. Ghana was shown as a pattern of democratic reform with economic reform in Africa to draw help from Western partners. By presenting Ghana as a trusted actor the Kufuor government worked with the US the G8 as well as the IFIs. This helped it get debt relief and new aid packages such as the Millennium Challenge Account. The plan was planned because the government made use of political assets of the country to achieve economic goals.

The decision to enter the HIPC programme was made under difficult pressure yet it is read as a careful calculation by Ghanaian elites. Critics such as Ayelazuno 2021 point to the neoliberal conditions that followed the programme. Other research works argue that the government saw HIPC as the best path out of a crisis that would not end. Policy reviews from that year show that the local debate was serious. Leaders weighed the cost of lower policy freedom against the quick gain of release from heavy debt service. From this view the HIPC decision was tactical because it accepted outside limits for a short time to protect long term economic stability.

Another sign of Ghanaian agency appears in the talks over the Millennium Challenge Account compact. The US set the MCA entry rules while Ghanaian officials helped guide the terms of the 547 million dollar compact. Schifferdecker 2016 explains that the MCA pattern worked as a partnership that required firm input from the receiving country. Dogbe and Akwei 2022 research the results of the compact which focused on farming change. They show that Ghanaian expert officials kept the projects close to the priorities in the national development plan of the country known as the GPRS.

Research works this year return many times to the place of trained Ghanaian expert officials. Key officials in the Ministry of Money, the Bank of Ghana as well as other country bodies were economists and policy experts trained in the West. Yeboah Assiamah and Muller 2021 refer to the skill of public sector professionals in their research of reforms. These expert officials worked with staff at the World Bank and IMF from a firm knowledge base. This helped them bargain over policy conditions while they defended Ghana interests. Such technical skill became a firm form of agency that helped Ghana manage ties with outside partners.

Local election pressure shows that Ghanaian policy was not dictated by outside forces. The need to win elections as well as keep public trust pushed the government toward policies that did not fit a strict neoliberal agenda. The National Health Insurance Scheme NHIS under the Kufuor government gives a firm example. Bob Milliar 2017 records the NHIS as a main social policy built from local promises and public demand. It makes use of required large public spending and it showed help for social welfare beyond market led ideas. This means local needs pushed the government to claim policy freedom inside a room guided by outside limits.

The link between Ghana and outside partners changed after commercial oil reserves were found in 2007. Research works show that this event raised the bargaining power of the Ghanaian country. Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru 2018 study this shift. They explain that expected oil income lowered the dependence of the country on foreign aid. That change gave the country more leverage in talks with foreign powers as well as world firms. Boateng 2017 notes that the government drew a wider range of partners which made more room for policy decisions. Oil moved Ghana from an aid recipient into a strategic emerging market.

Local content laws for oil and gas give another firm example of this agency. These laws sought to make petroleum development help the local economy by way of jobs for Ghanaian

citizens as well as local goods and services. Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru 2018 describe the political process. They note that the laws passed despite resistance from foreign oil companies. The make use of these rules showed country power in help of national development goals. It also helped stop the sector from acting as a separate extractive enclave.

These examples show agency but a main part of critical studies questions the full effect of elite plans. Ayelazuno 2021 with Harrison 2019 argue that Ghanaian elites moved by way of the structure with skill while staying inside the neoliberal world order. From this view their agency did not challenge the unequal structure. It secured a better position for Ghana inside that structure. The critique of neoliberal complicity points to the fact that political and technocratic elites did not seek another development path. Many of these elites were trained in bodies guided by the Washington Consensus. They managed the existing pattern instead of building a different path for Ghana. In that way they made Ghana fit deeper into the world order that they had bargained with.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Hegemonic Stability Theory

Dominant Stability Theory is a main idea in world political economy linked to Charles Kindleberger and Robert Gilpin. It gives a basic way to explain how one powerful country guides the world structure by way of power and influence. The theory says an open world economy needs one leading power. This power must have the will as well as the ability to provide key public goods that small countries cannot provide from their weak ability. These goods include safe sea paths for trade. They also include a steady world currency as well as firm help in crises. Smaller countries then depend on the wider order for trade as well as safety. The theory rests on realist ideas about a world with no higher ruler. It treats countries as the main actors. It sees the hegemon as a country

that acts from careful self interest. Its action can help a world economy that appears steady but also gives the largest get to the leading country.

The link between Dominant Stability Theory and this research is plain because it explains the US as the main power in the 2020–2025 years. The US acted as the centre of a world order that Ikenberry (2018) calls the liberal world order. US action in Ghana can be read as part of a wider effort to bring countries into a structure shown as shared gain. The theory still faces critics who challenge its claims as well as its moral base. Amadi (2018) argues that the theory joins the interest of the hegemon with the interest of the world. This move hides force as well as exploitation. It also makes real power easier to miss. Critics ask whether the stability offered is a real public good. They also ask whether it is just a private get for the hegemon as well as close partners. They question whether the rules are fair or built to help the leading power.

This research makes use of Dominant Stability Theory to judge how the US guided the political direction of Ghana as well as its economic direction. The theory helps the first research goal. It also helps the second research goal. It shows how US help for market rules as well as liberal political values can protect its preferred world structure. Aid programmes like the Millennium Challenge Account rewarded countries that accepted market rules as well as good public rules. Schifferdecker (2016) notes this programme as part of the hegemon's effort to protect its order. The theory pushes this research to question the main claims behind the dominant project. It also opens deeper assumptions to review. It asks whether political patterns brought by the US gave Ghana the promised stability. It also asks whether economic patterns brought by the US lowered policy room. These hidden costs may have led Ghana toward a harder development path.

2.3.2 Dependency Theory

Dependency theory stands against the working view of Dominant Stability Theory because it offers a firm critical tool for studying links between powerful countries and weaker ones. Writers such as Andre Gunder Frank and Samir Amin helped build the theory in the mid twentieth century. It says the world capitalist structure does not lift all countries. Instead it forms an unequal world split between a rich industrial core and a poorer developing edge. The theory claims that this link is exploitative. It also claims that core growth rests on the active underdevelopment of the edge. Weaker areas remain trapped in narrow economic places. The theory assumes that countries like Ghana join the world structure on weak terms. They stay as providers of raw goods as well as labour. They also buy finished products from the core. This pattern repeats unequal exchange across time.

The main value of Dependency theory in this research is that it offers a different account of the US Ghana link as unequal and open to exploitation by way of its structure. The theory has critics. Some argue that it is too fixed in its claims. Others argue that it overlooks the action of weaker countries or local causes of underdevelopment. This can make the study narrow. Its main ideas still carry weight. Carmody (2016) shows by way of the research of the new scramble for Africa that world powers take primary resources from the continent by way of unfair trade terms. The theory helps explain the main obstacles faced by Ghana. These include the struggle to build a firm industrial base or move the economy away from cocoa gold as well as later oil. The economy stayed tied to primary raw good dependence.

Dependency theory connects with all research aims of this research because it asks whether dominant influence caused harm or limited national progress. It helps the first research aim. It points out that the US helped economic rules as well as aid demands did not build true national development. Instead they tied Ghana with more force to the world market in a dependent place

(Ayelazuno 2021). The fall of the Ghana textile sector after trade liberalisation shown by Mohammed and Yankey (2020) is a firm case of dependency inside the world structure. The theory also explains why Ghana showed firm GDP growth with no deep structural change. This point matters for judging the development path of Ghana as well as its national future.

2.3.3 Neo-Gramscianism (Critical Theory)

Neo Gramscianism is a branch of critical theory linked with Robert W Cox. It gives a deeper view of dominance. It makes use of ideas from Antonio Gramsci to argue that dominance is not just one country controlling others by way of material power. It is also the rise of a wider world social order that guides belief as well as action. This order stands by way of force. It also stands by way of agreement that grows by way of world bodies. These bodies spread as well as defend the values of the dominant power. A main belief in this view comes from the claim by Cox that theory is always for someone. It is also for some purpose. The aim is to expose hidden power structures that many people show as natural or fixed such as the claimed universal truth of neoliberalism.

The neo Gramscian view matters for this research because it explains softer as well as idea based forms of US influence in Ghana. It shows how ideas affect political decisions. It shifts the discussion away from simple country action. It moves attention to transnational elites as well as accepted policy ideas. US dominance worked by way of pressure on Ghana to accept aid conditions. It also worked by way of a climate where Ghana leaders and experts accepted Washington Consensus ideas as the sensible path to growth. Civic actors were drawn into that climate as well. Harrison (2019) notes that the power of bodies like the World Bank does not rest just on money. It also rests on their ability to guide what the world sees as correct economic policy. This is a plain form of Gramscian intellectual control.

This theory relates to all three research aims and gives a shared critical frame for the study. It helps explain why US led economic rules took firm root in Ghana under Aim 1. It shows how agreement as well as shared belief helped pressure by way of the spread of dominant ideas. It also shows how the US push for good public rule made a political room that fit the neoliberal order. That room did not challenge the wider structure under Aim 2. The theory offers a way to question Ghanaian agency under Aim 3. It asks whether Ghana leaders resisted dominant influence in a true sense. It also asks whether their actions managed the entry of Ghana into the structure as well as made the structure stronger (Ayelazuno 2021).

2.3.4 Structural Realism (Neorealism)

Structural Realism also called Neorealism was guided by Kenneth Waltz. It gives a power centred way to understand the world structure. Classical realism looks at human nature. Neorealism claims that country behaviour comes from the structure of a world with no higher ruler. It also comes from how power is spread across countries. Its core idea is that every country seeks survival in a structure without a higher authority. Safety depends on the power of each country. Countries stay aware of their place in the power chain. Their actions come from pressure that creates fear as well as competition. In this view weaker countries face few paths. They may balance against stronger actors by building power or forming alliances. They may also bandwagon with a stronger actor to get safety as well as rewards.

Structural Realism matters for this research because it shows the power logic behind the US Ghana connection in security matters. It explains why a main power like the US works to keep its lead in a world with no main control. It also explains why the US seeks to secure key regions like West Africa. This helps it protect world interests. The US push for security work by way of AFRICOM did not rest on moral ideals. It came from the aim to protect strategic goals such as

energy access as well as threat control (Akokpari 2015). The close teamwork of Ghana with the US can be read as bandwagoning. As a small country in a tense region Ghana saw fit with the world hegemon as a sensible way to raise safety as well as stability.

This theory links most with the second research aim because it deals with how US security ties guided Ghana politics and foreign policy. Structural Realism gives an interest based way to read the US Ghana security partnership. It helps explain why both actors behaved as they did. It points to the fact that this link rested less on shared democratic ideals. It rested more on practical security needs guided by world power patterns. National goals then fitted with structural pressure. Adibe (2016) follows this realist thinking in his discussion of AFRICOM. He researches the command aims by way of US national interests. This theory helps the research break down how US security goals guided Ghana decisions. These goals were backed by the place of the US as world hegemon. They also guided the position of Ghana as an important security actor in West Africa.

2.3.5 Neoliberal Institutionalism

Neoliberal Institutionalism was guided by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. It gives a more hopeful view of world links than realism because it offers a frame based on teamwork. It agrees with realism that the world structure has no higher ruler. It also agrees that countries act as self focused actors with reason. Its main claim is that countries can get shared gains by way of world bodies as well as rules that guide conduct. The theory says bodies are not just mirrors of power. They are actors with real influence over results. They help teamwork by lowering the cost of agreements. They give needed information that reduces doubt about other countries. They also make ways to check conduct as well as fix disputes. Teamwork can then become steady and long lasting.

The main link between Neoliberal Institutionalism and this research sits in its focus on bodies that guided US Ghana ties from 2020 to 2025. These include the World Bank IMF and WTO. Each guided many national decisions. Realists as well as dependency writers may see these bodies as tools of US dominance. A neoliberal institutionalist view adds depth by showing how rules guide behaviour. It points to the US guiding these bodies. Yet the bodies still follow their own rules as well as rules. These procedures guide action. This rule based character can limit even firm countries. It can also offer smaller countries like Ghana room to push their interests inside a structure that gives stability as well as clarity (Ikenberry 2018).

This theory fits the third research aim because it works in Ghanaian agency as well as strategic decisions inside the dominant relationship. Neoliberal Institutionalism gives a base for seeing how a smaller country acts inside unequal power settings without losing all influence. It shows that Ghanaian leaders were not simple followers. They were active players in body based processes that guided development as well as public rule. For instance the theory explains how Ghanaian experts could make use of IMF procedures to negotiate the guide of a loan plan. It also explains how they could make use of the rules of the Millennium Challenge Account to match funded projects with national goals (Schifferdecker 2016). By working inside the structure a smaller country can make use of body based structure to its gain. This shows a form of agency that differs from open resistance but remains useful in a world guided by power as well as rules.

2.4 Empirical Review

Acheampong and Ayine (2021) studied the political economy behind the Free Senior High School policy that oil income helped in Ghana. Their aim was to understand the forces that guided the birth of the policy with its survival. They made use of case research based on policy texts and elite interviews. The research looked at the way the policy took form. It also asked why the policy

continued even with its wide cost. The results showed that elite agreement came from election goals with steady petroleum income. That agreement helped the policy start and continue. Oil income gave the country room to fund the large social plan. Yet the future of the policy still depends on help across governments with careful control of unstable resource income. The research showed that resource public rule and social policy remain joined in the development path of Ghana. The same bond guided national priorities.

Asiedu and Deh (2020) studied how Chinese investment guided total FDI inflows into Ghana by way of a sector based research of capital flows. They made use of panel data from 2003 to 2017. The research measured whether Chinese capital pushed other investors away or helped draw more actors into Ghana. Their results showed that Chinese investment did not replace other foreign capital. In the services sector it helped attract extra investment from other sources. The authors found that Chinese investment helped the economy of Ghana and wider foreign partnership gave Ghana more development decisions. The results challenged fears of Chinese control because Chinese capital expanded FDI inflows rather than lowered them. This made the place of Chinese capital appear more supportive than harmful in the wider development search.

Bob Milliar (2017) explored how party competition guided the creation of the National Health Insurance Scheme in Ghana. The scheme was one of the main social policies in the country. By way of a case research the author traced how the policy began as a campaign promise in the 2020 elections and became law after the New Patriotic Party entered office. The findings showed that party competition pushed the policy into being. Democratic pressure moved the country toward social development needs. The research found that the NHIS showed home policy agency because local political needs drove a main social policy beyond the neoliberal ideas of world

donors. It shows democratic politics as a firm source of pro poor policy action that guided national direction.

Debrah and Oseghale (2018) studied the link among foreign aid home bodies with economic growth in Ghana. They made use of time series data from 1980 to 2014 to test key links. By way of an ARDL pattern they checked whether stronger bodies guided the effect of aid by way of public rule and delivery. Their results showed that aid alone had a positive effect on growth but the effect was weak in statistical terms. Bodies guided results with greater force. When aid was joined with firm body based quality the effect became firm for national development. The authors found that rule of law, anti corruption structures and good regulation were needed for Ghana to get more from foreign aid. They argued that aid works best when countries receiving it have body based ability with a setting that helps policy success.

Dogbe and Akwei (2022) checked how the US funded Millennium Challenge Account affected poverty reduction in Northern Ghana. Their focus was farming basic structures with local development. They made use of a mixed method design that joined statistical research of household data with interviews from community members. This helped them capture numbers beside lived experience. Their findings showed that irrigation , road projects under the MCA produced modest but plain gains. These gains lowered poverty and improved livelihoods among chosen communities. They found that the MCA showed partial success because monitoring structures with judgement structures were firm. , deep poverty remained difficult to remove with no wider reform and stronger bodies. Their research showed that planned aid programmes still face main limits where structural poverty remains with no wide national action.

Harrison (2019) studied the kinds of power made use of by the World Bank to guide the development direction of Ghana. The focus was the spread of market centred policies that guided

national decisions. Making use of a critical political economy view the author studied policy texts historical paths with the long link between Ghana and the Bank. The findings showed that Bank influence did not work by way of loans and conditions alone. It also worked by way of control over policy thinking because neoliberal ideas came to appear normal among Ghana policy actors. The research found that Bank influence was deep and long lasting. It pushed Ghana toward a market driven pattern. It also lowered room for other views that challenged donor preferences. This showed the idea based power of world money bodies in shaping national development paths.

Mohammed and Yankey (2020) measured the effect of AGOA on the textile apparel sector in Ghana. They studied export volumes with jobs by way of time series data. The research looked at the sector before and after AGOA while other economic factors were kept in view. Their findings showed that AGOA raised exports in the short term but they faded because structural problems remained. Jobs did not grow because cheaper Asian imports with old problems in factory production limited progress. They found that trade preference by itself cannot build lasting industry. Firm local policies with investment in basic structures skills alongside productive ability are needed to build competitiveness.

Whitfield and Abdul Gafaru (2018) studied the political forces behind industrial policy in the petroleum sector of Ghana. They focused on local content rules with debates among those involved. Their method made use of a political settlement frame with interviews from oil company officials alongside local businesses. The research explored the difficult talks behind policy formation with results. Their findings showed that home actors including ministry expert officials with local firms pushed for firm local content rules. This happened despite resistance from foreign oil companies that feared higher costs and loss of control. The research found that this case showed firm country agency because home groups guided policy results in a sector controlled by powerful

outside actors. It stressed that organised local groups can guide resource public rule when they act with plan in political settings.

Acheampong (2019) studied the political economic influence of the IMF with the World Bank on the development of Ghana across several decades. Making use of a historical political economy method the author reviewed the long contact of Ghana with these bodies from independence by way of structural adjustment to modern programmes. The findings showed that the bodies guided key economic policies in Ghana from the Economic recovery Programme to HIPC and later programmes. The research found that this long link brought some wide economic stability and helped Ghana stay connected to world capital markets. , it also restricted policy room and deepened dependence on outside approval. This raised questions about sovereignty and long term freedom in national decision making.

Osei and Adarkwa (2021) studied how neoliberal ideas guided urban planning in Accra with attention to street vendor evictions linked to city improvement projects. By way of case research they made use of interviews from planners, city officials and informal traders. They also reviewed planning texts to understand policy conflicts that guided results. Their findings showed that plans to build a world class city clashed with the livelihood needs of informal traders. This created social tension. They found that urban planning in Accra was a contested political field. Elite visions with donor backed policies pushed the informal economy to the side. This deepened social tension linked to uneven urban change and affected vulnerable groups.

2.5 Gap in Literature

The reviewed work shows two main ways to understand US Ghana links in 2020 to 2025 by way of different theory frames. One view makes use of Dominant Stability Theory with research works on aid impact to show the relationship as a supportive partnership. In that view Ghana got

debt relief money backing with a base for democratic progress. That helped guide national stability (Debrah and Oseghale 2018). Another view makes use of Dependency theory with Neo Gramscian ideas to show the relationship as unequal and driven by US dominance. This view says neoliberal demands lowered policy freedom in Ghana while contributing to industrial decline with uneven development (Harrison 2019 Mohammed and Yankey 2020). Research works also show that Ghana made use of some agency when responding to these pressures. This was plain in local content policies and political settlement plans. Three gaps still remain for further research. First, no single research brings the economic, political and security effects of US influence into one complete study. Such a research would show how these sectors worked together. Second, the link between world dominant forces and strategic decisions in Ghana has not gotten enough attention. This leaves questions about how trade offs were handled and why certain decisions were made. Third deeper work is needed to connect US dominant tools to the long term development pattern of Ghana. This includes job creation problems that remain main to national welfare and policy debate.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This research rests on Neo Gramscianism as the chosen theory of world links. It gives a firm base for studying power ideas with bodies that guide world influence. The theory helps this research move beyond country centred views. It also exposes quiet structures that make dominance work by way of ideas as well as world bodies. It helps the researcher research how quiet rules and public bodies help influence.

3.1.1 Neo Gramscianism

Neo Gramscianism was guided by Robert W Cox in the 1980s. It gives the main theory base for this research because it works with power. The theory takes ideas from Antonio Gramsci. It explains that dominance is not produced by material power alone. It is a wider social order where power makes use of force and agreement to guide belief. This means belief becomes part of power

rather than a separate issue. Agreement grows when a leading power spreads its rules. These rules then appear natural to many actors. The structure becomes dominant when its ideas become common sense. World bodies then protect these ideas and spread them by way of policy. The theory also treats bodies as carriers of this belief. Neoliberal thinking is one example because it guides policy decisions across countries.

The neo Gramscian view changes classical Marxism. It also challenges the narrow country centred lens of neorealism. It adds social history to the research of world politics. Critics argue that the theory can be too abstract because agreement and belief systems are difficult to track with plain proof. Later writers still make use of its ideas to research world money as well as environmental public rule. These research works show its value for critical research. They also show that dominant orders face constant challenge from counter dominant actors. This means the structure shifts across time instead of staying fixed. This point keeps the theory open to change in history.

This research makes use of a neo Gramscian frame because it gives the best lens for the many sided link between the US and Ghana. Harrison (2019) and Ayelazuno (2021) show its value in Ghana by way of their research works of power with agreement. The theory explains how US economic rules entered the Ghana structure by way of agreement building work by world money bodies Aim 1. It also explains how good public rule plans helped a political setting that matched the neoliberal dominant order Aim 2. The theory then helps judge Ghanaian agency Aim 3. It separates actions that managed dominant influence from actions that challenged it. This gives the research clearer insight.

3.1.3 Applicability of the Theory

This research will make use of the neo Gramscian approach to break down the ways US influence guided the political and economic path of Ghana. It will research HIPC conditions and Millennium Challenge Account rules as tools that did more than pressure leaders. They also helped build agreement for a neoliberal structure among leaders and expert officials in Ghana. The theory will guide the research of US democracy help as well as security teamwork. These actions helped help a political order that fit US dominant aims in West Africa. It will connect each tool to the wider order behind it. It will also help judge Ghanaian agency by reading country action as a blend of adjustment inside some cases and resistance in other cases. This reading makes national decisions clearer.

3.2. Hypothesis

The hypotheses from Step 6 are restated here in their alternative form:

H_{a1}: US-led economic policies and aid conditions had an important influence on the shaping of Ghana economic development plans.

H_{a2}: US programmes in democratic public rule as well as security teamwork had an important influence on Ghana home politics and foreign policy.

3.3 Research Design

This research makes use of a quality based path that joins an after the event design with a document based design to research past events. This path fits the research because US dominance guided the Ghana path from 2020 to 2025 in a year that the researcher cannot change. The document based path is not based on field testing. It helps a deep reading of available records , past events and their effects can be rebuilt with care (Weber 2017). This design gives a firm plan for tracing links between dominant action and development decisions made by a weaker country. The design also keeps attention on cause and effect without trying to test people in the field.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

The data for this research will come from document research by way of a planned review of primary documents and secondary documents. The sources cover official reports from Ghana as well as the US , IMF reports, World Bank papers, journal articles , books together with trusted news archives. These sources were chosen because they match the research questions and cover the required years from 2020 to 2025 by way of public records. Access came by way of university library structures, online research platforms and official websites of the named bodies. Bryman (2016) notes that this method suits political and historical research because documents can help plain study. This decision keeps the research tied to records that other readers can check.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

This research makes use of quality based document research to interpret meaning in the collected texts. In preparation the researcher coded the material from all documents and arranged it into a plain base for research. The coding followed the main themes and smaller themes drawn from the research questions. It also followed the earlier theme review because that review guided the path of study. The main method is theme based research. This method finds patterns, links and repeated ideas in the records to build a plain account of the topic. The process keeps each theme linked to the research aims. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain this method helps the researcher write a detailed story that places the findings inside the chosen theory frame. It shows how US dominant influence guided the political path and economic path of Ghana by way of body based pressure with idea based influence.

3.6 Logical Data Framework

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables (X and Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables (X and Y)	Method and Sources of Data Collection	Research Design	Method of Data Analysis
How have US-led economic policies and aid conditionalities shaped Ghana's economic development strategies?	US-led economic policies and aid conditionalities had a significant influence on the shaping of Ghana's economic development strategies.	X: US-led economic policies and aid conditionalities. Y: Ghana's economic development strategies.	Indicators of X: a. HIPC/MDRI conditionalities. b. Terms of the Millennium Challenge Account/Compact. c. US trade policy instruments such as AGOA. d. US foreign direct investment and aid flows. Indicators of	Documentary method of data collection from secondary sources such as IMF/World Bank reports, US Government documents, USAID reports, State Department documents, Ghana Ministry of Finance publications, academic journals, books, and Ghana's national development plans.	Ex post facto research design and documentary research design.	Thematic analysis of policy documents to identify how Ghana's development strategies aligned with US-led economic and neoliberal policy norms.

			Y: a. Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I and II. b. National development plans and economic reform programmes. c. Alignment of Ghana's economic policies with neoliberal policy prescriptions. d. Changes in trade, aid, investment, and development policy priorities.			
How have US initiatives in democratic governance and security cooperation influenced Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy?	US initiatives in democratic governance and security cooperation had a significant influence on Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy.	X: US initiatives in democratic governance and security cooperation. Y: Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy.	Indicators of X: a. US funding for elections and civil society. b. Democracy promotion programmes. c. US-Ghana security cooperation agreements such as ACOTA. d. US defence, AFRICOM, and governance-related support. Indicators of Y: a. Ghana's	Documentary method of data collection from secondary sources such as USAID reports, US Department of Defense/AFRICOM publications, academic studies on Ghanaian democracy and foreign policy, Wikileaks diplomatic cables, reputable news archives, Ghana government publications, and official	Ex post facto research design and documentary research design.	Qualitative content analysis to trace the influence of US governance and security initiatives on Ghana's domestic politics and foreign policy orientation.

			governance structures and democratic institutions. b. Ghana's foreign policy statements. c. Ghana's UN voting records. d. Ghana's security and diplomatic alignment with US strategic interests.	foreign policy documents.		
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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter shows proof with discussion on US dominance with the political and economic path of Ghana from 2020 to 2025. It answers the two research questions approved for this research. It also tests the two hypotheses by way of quality based document study. Proof comes from official sources with trusted world bodies. The sources include the International Monetary Fund; World Bank; Bank of Ghana; Ministry of Finance Ghana; United States Trade Representative; ForeignAssistance.gov; United States Department of State; USAID; AFRICOM; Freedom House; Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

This chapter makes use of table line graphs, bar charts, a trade chart, timelines , a histogram and a concept diagram. These visual tools help the reader see the pattern of control instead of reading claims alone. The first main part of research works is economic control by way of aid trade debt rules, IMF reform and market trust. The second main part of research works is political security control by way of democracy to help civil society help security talks and defence teamwork with foreign policy agreement. Neo Gramscianism helps the study. The theory shows how power works by way of agreement bodies ideas and rules rather than direct force alone.

4.2 US Led Economic Influence and Ghana Economic Development Strategies 2020 to 2025

4.2.1 Data Presentation on United States Economic Influence

Table 4.1 shows the main economic signs that guided policy in Ghana from 2020 to 2025. It places growth, price rise and public debt in one view because these signs show why Ghana moved toward outside money help in the research years. Ghana faced a growth shock in 2020 before recovery returned in 2021. That recovery did not end budget pressure. Prices rose at a fast

pace in 2022 and 2023 while public debt reached crisis level. For this reason the IMF programme got a main place in national policy. The table shows the economic base on which the US led body based power became stronger.

Table 4.1 Ghana key economic indicators 2020 to 2025

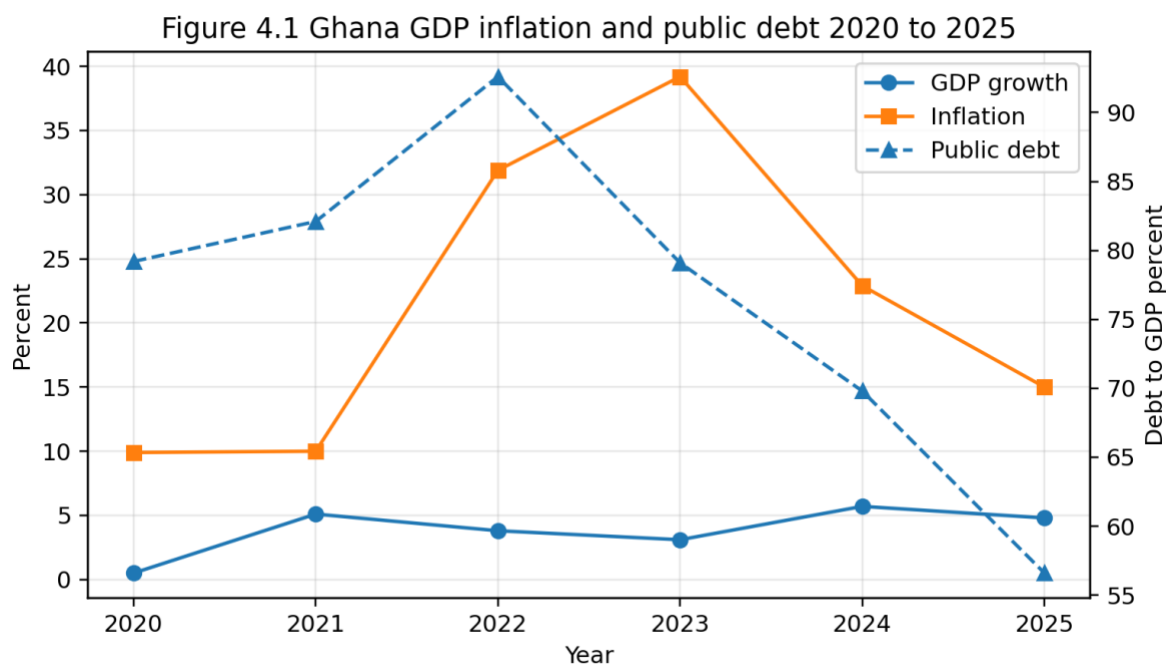
Year	Real GDP growth percent	Average inflation percent	Gross public debt percent of GDP
2020	0.5	9.9	79.2
2021	5.1	10.0	82.1
2022	3.8	31.9	92.6
2023	3.1	39.2	79.1
2024	5.7	22.9	69.8
2025	4.8	15.0	56.6

Source: International Monetary Fund (2025), World Bank (2025), Ministry of Finance Ghana (2024).

Table 4.1 shows that economic pressure in Ghana did not last for one year only. The pressure moved from the COVID 19 shock to debt strain and later to reform under IMF guidance. Growth returned after 2020 yet price rise with debt strain narrowed budget decision. The main shift was the fall in public debt from above 90 percent of GDP in 2022 to an expected 56.6 percent in 2025. That fall looks positive. It came by way of debt treatment with spending control and a reform plan linked to the IMF with partner funding. This pattern matters to the first research question.

Figure 4.1 turns the same wide economic proof into a trend image. The line graph places real GDP growth with average price rise on the left and public debt on the right. This design makes the main pressure plain. Ghana showed recovery after the COVID 19 shock. At the same time price rise with public debt rose in a way that pushed policy makers to seek outside help. The chart is more than a picture of economic change. It is also a picture of policy pressure. The chart shows why policy decisions in Ghana became tied to IMF rules and lender trust in the research years.

Figure 4.1 Ghana GDP inflation and public debt 2020 to 2025



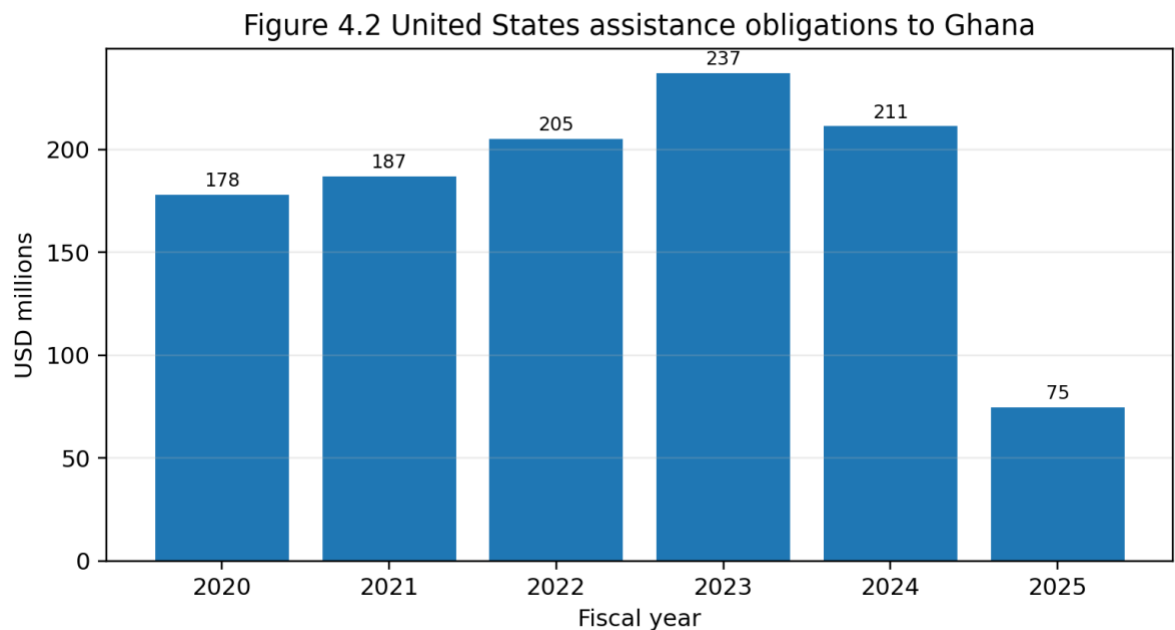
Source: International Monetary Fund (2025), World Bank (2025), Ministry of Finance Ghana (2024).

Figure 4.1 shows three linked changes. Growth fell fast in 2020 before improvement returned. Prices rose from a middle level to the highest point in 2023 before they fell in 2024 and 2025. Public debt increased before debt restructuring lowered the recorded level. The proof shows that Ghana did not face a growth problem alone. Ghana faced a crisis in the policy room. A government that must cut debt and lower prices cannot spend with freedom for local social needs. US led money rules become part of the study at this point.

Figure 4.2 shows US aid promises to Ghana in the research years. The figures are stated in US dollars and come from public foreign aid data. The figure does not treat aid as a neutral gift. It treats aid as a channel by way of which policy ideas and programme goals can move. In Neo Gramscian terms aid can make agreement for a wider structure. Aid can help health, farming

education and public rule. Aid can also help policy agreement. For this reason the figure helps explain how economic help and political control can work by way of the same channel.

Figure 4.2 United States assistance obligations to Ghana



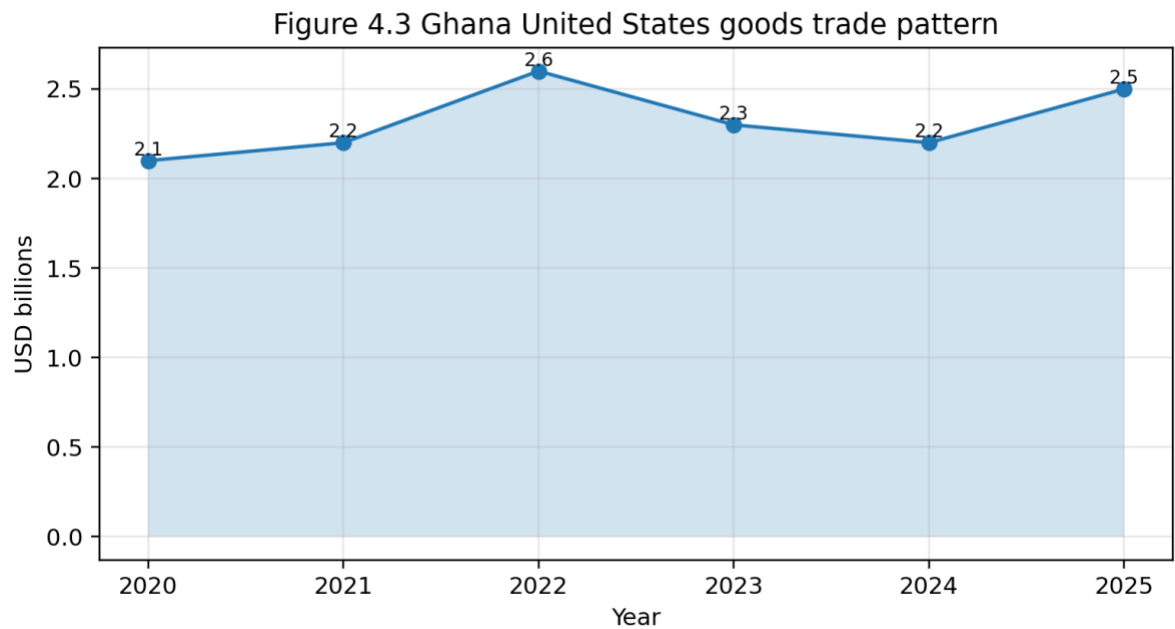
Source: ForeignAssistance.gov (2026) and USAFacts (2025).

Figure 4.2 shows that US aid stayed important from 2020 to 2024 before the stated 2025 level fell because the year had not ended in the source record. The highest value appears in 2023. This timing matters because Ghana joined a new IMF programme in the same year. The figure does not prove that aid caused IMF reforms. It shows that US help belonged to the wider field of outside money around Ghana. The help gave resources. It also helped keep Ghana inside development ideas guided by donors and lenders.

Figure 4.3 shows Ghana trade with the US in the research years. Trade is added because the approved research does not research aid alone. The research also studies how US trade structures guide development plans. AGOA remains important because it gives qualified African countries tax free access to the US market for chosen goods. The figure places total goods trade in

one trend line. This helps the research ask whether market access made deep economic change or kept Ghana dependent on limited export patterns. This point matters for judging the true development value of market access.

Figure 4.3 Ghana United States goods trade pattern



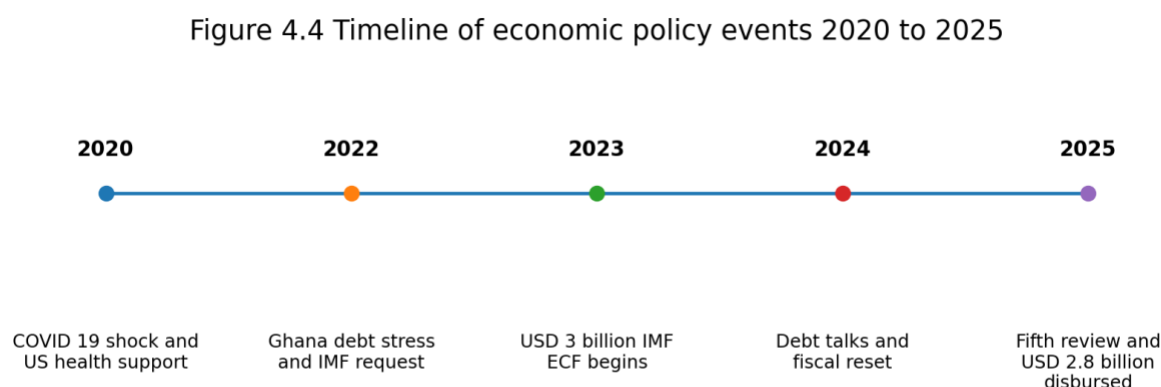
Source: United States Trade Representative (2025) and United States Census trade data (2025).

Figure 4.3 shows that trade stayed useful but did not change the economy in a deep way. The United States Trade Representative stated that total goods trade between Ghana and the US reached about 2.5 billion dollars in 2025. This value shows that the trade link exists. Yet the line does not show a main structural change. The figure helps a careful argument. US market access gives Ghana a path into a large market. Yet market access alone does not build industrial power. Ghana still needs production ability, transport structures, money and business growth before AGOA can become a firm development tool.

Figure 4.4 places the economic events in time order. A timeline is useful because dominance can work by way of event order rather than single acts. The chart starts with the 2020

COVID 19 shock and moves to IMF review progress in 2025. The chart shows how the crisis opened new room for outside policy influence. The debt crisis pushed Ghana toward lenders and the IMF. The IMF programme then demanded budget control, revenue action, money policy discipline and public rule reform. These steps are not technical actions alone. They also show a policy pattern that values stability, market trust and rule based public money.

Figure 4.4 Timeline of economic policy events 2020 to 2025



Source: International Monetary Fund (2025) World Bank (2025) and United States Department of State (2024).

Figure 4.4 shows that the economic plan of Ghana from 2020 to 2025 was formed by crisis response and reform order. COVID 19 lowered growth. Debt pressure grew after the shock. The 2023 IMF programme became the main help for restoring policy trust. By 2025 the fifth review reported firm programme control and a better debt outlook. The supporting view is that this process moved Ghana back toward stability. The opposing view is that Ghana accepted a limited reform path. Neo Gramscianism keeps both views together because agreement can exist when decision is limited.

4.2.2 Discussion of Findings for Research Question One

Research Question One studied whether US led economic rules aid links trade structures and money body power led Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025. The proof gives a plain result. The influence was firm. The influence did not follow the earlier HIPC pattern. In this year the influence worked by way of crisis funding IMF reform rules lender trust US aid and market access. In 2023 the International Monetary Fund granted Ghana a 3 billion dollar Extended Credit Facility. By the fifth review the Fund stated that payments would reach about 2.8 billion dollars and that reform work was sound in most areas (International Monetary Fund 2025). This shows that the IMF programme became the main economic policy base.

The supporting view is direct. Ghana needed an outside help base after the debt crisis and high price rise. The IMF report shows that growth by way of September 2025 passed expected levels. The report also states that the price rise returned inside the Bank of Ghana target range and that the cedi got value (International Monetary Fund 2025). These results rebuilt trust. They also gave a base for new development spending. In this sense US led money bodies gave Ghana a path out of a deep economic crisis. The World Bank also reported new growth power and firm gold exports. For this reason the economic gain cannot be ignored.

The opposing view is also firm. Stability work is not the same as free development. The IMF programme demanded budget control revenue raising spending control debt restructuring exchange rate control and public money reform. These policies may be useful. These policies also limit the decisions open to Ghana leaders. The IMF report says Ghana must keep budget discipline and improve public money while protecting weak groups (International Monetary Fund 2025). The need to protect weak groups shows that adjustment can bring public costs. The main question is plain. If stability needs austerity then who carries the cost of recovery.

The aid proof also helps a mixed reading. US assistance gave resources for health farming education and public rule. The assistance helped Ghana manage public needs in and after COVID 19. Yet aid also carries programme ideas. Aid selects priorities. Aid builds office habits. Aid can guide what counts as reform and what counts as good policy. Neo Gramscianism helps explain this quiet effect. A dominant power does not need to order Ghana in a direct way. Power can work by way of reports, targets , grants policy advice and shared expert rules. Ghana officials may accept these ideas because the ideas seem useful and modern.

Trade proof points in the same direction. AGOA gives Ghana access to the US market. The United States Trade Representative countries that AGOA gives tax free access for more than 1800 products and wider tax free product lines under the Generalised Structure of Preferences (United States Trade Representative 2025). This access has value. This access can help firms sell to a large market. But access does not equal deep change. Ghana producers may fail to meet volume rules, money needs and processing power. Under that condition trade gain remains weak. The opposing view is that Ghana may remain an exporter of limited goods while imports and capital flows guide local markets.

The visual proof helps a difference between help and control. US linked help helped Ghana face debt pressure and regain wide economic order. The help did not remove the deep dependence that made outside help necessary. The economic plan of Ghana from 2020 to 2025 became organised around debt safety revenue raising investor trust and IMF performance targets. These goals are not wrong. Yet these goals show that outside rules guided the development plan. The fair position is that US dominance worked by way of an agreement based policy structure. Ghana was not forced in a direct sense. Ghana accepted the reform frame because the crisis made other paths high cost and high risk.

This finding answers the research question in a fair way. The US led economic influence was firm and visible. The influence guided budget planning, debt plan, trade position and reform language. The positive side was recovery help. The negative side was lowered policy freedom. The deepest issue is not whether Ghana got aid or market access. The real issue is whether Ghana made use of that help to build stronger local production. The proof points to limited progress but not deep change in full. This makes the first finding consistent with the Neo Gramscian view of dominance as leadership by way of bodies agreement and accepted policy rules.

4.2.3 Test of Hypothesis One

Research Question One asked whether US led economic policies, aid links trade systems and money body influence guided Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025. To answer this question the research studied the following hypotheses. H01 countries that had US led economic policies, aid links trade systems and money body influence had no important influence on Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025. Ha1 countries that had US led economic policies, aid links trade systems and money body influence had an important influence on Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025.

From theme based study of Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1 to 4.4 plain proof helps rejection of the null hypothesis. The proof shows that Ghana economic policy in the years was led by debt pressure and high prices. IMF reform targets US aid and market access. After 2023 the IMF programme became the main policy base. The programme demanded budget control, debt restructuring, public money reform, exchange rate control and stronger public rule. These rules guided the path of Ghana budget decisions and development planning.

Acceptance of Ha1 does not mean the influence was harmful in full. The proof shows real gains. Growth improved in 2024 and 2025. Price rise fell. Debt levels improved. Foreign reserves

increased. These results gave Ghana a better base for recovery. The same process lowered policy room because Ghana had to follow a limited reform path to keep lender trust and programme funding. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted. US led economic influence had a main effect on Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025. The effect was helpful and limiting at the same time.

4.3 United States Governance Security Cooperation and Ghana Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy 2020 to 2025

4.3.1 Data Presentation on Governance Security and Foreign Policy Influence

Table 4.2 shows the main public rule and security paths by way of which US power entered Ghana from 2020 to 2025. The table covers democracy help, civil society help, anti-corruption reform, military teamwork, sea security and regional stability work. These paths matter because the second research question goes beyond elections. The question also covers home politics and foreign policy. Public rule aid can guide home political practice. Security teamwork can guide how Ghana understands threats and selects partners. Diplomatic talks can guide foreign policy language. For this reason the table shows the main paths of political and security power.

Table 4.2 United States governance and security channels in Ghana 2020 to 2025

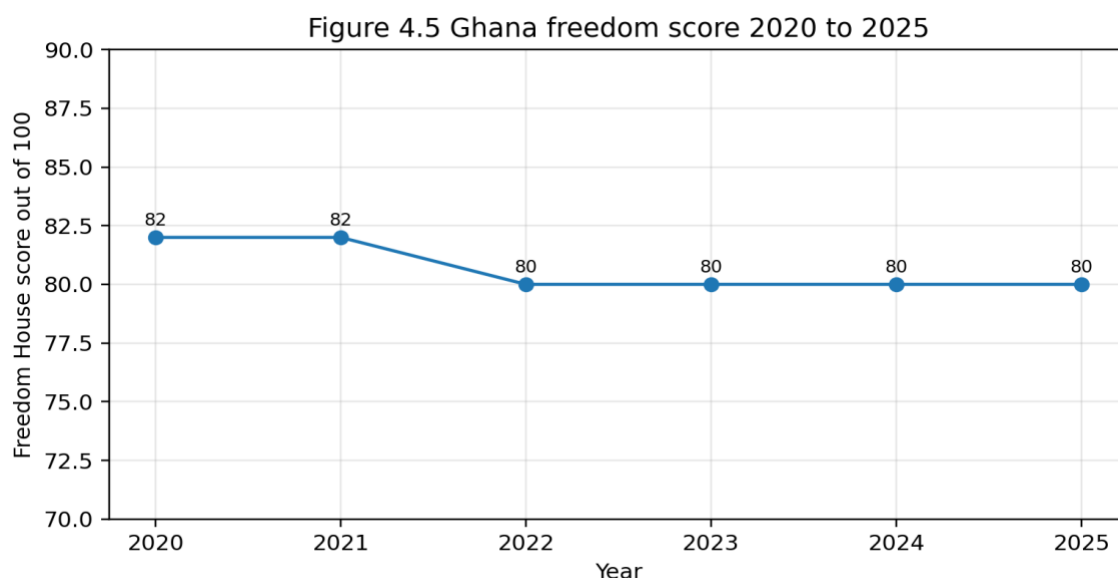
Channel	Main form	Possible policy effect
Governance support	Election support civil society support and accountability work	Domestic politics and public trust
Economic governance	Public finance management and transparency support	Budget reform and policy discipline
Security cooperation	Training maritime security and border threat response	Defence capacity and regional alignment
Diplomatic dialogue	Security Dialogue and strategic communication	Foreign policy language and partner choice
Regional stability	Coastal West Africa conflict prevention and violent extremism work	Threat perception and security planning

Source: United States Department of State (2022) United States Department of State (2024) and United States Africa Command (2024).

Table 4.2 shows that US power entered Ghana by way of many linked paths. Some paths were political. Some paths were security based. Other paths were diplomatic. The shared point is that all paths helped a pattern of liberal rule and security partnership. This point does not mean Ghana lost all decisions. Ghana remained an active country. The table shows that US ideas appeared in election help answering for actions, work security planning and regional stability programmes. The proof strengthens a Neo Gramscian view because influence moved by way of teamwork and shared policy language rather than direct command.

Figure 4.5 shows Ghana Freedom House scores from 2020 to 2025. This figure does not argue that US help made Ghana democratic. Ghana had a democratic record before these years. The figure shows the wider public rule context in which US help worked. Ghana stayed rated Free across the years. The score remained high compared with many countries in the region. This point matters because US policy often sees Ghana as a democratic partner and a regional example. The figure helps study whether public rule helps work in a steady context or a declining context.

Figure 4.5 Ghana freedom score 2020 to 2025

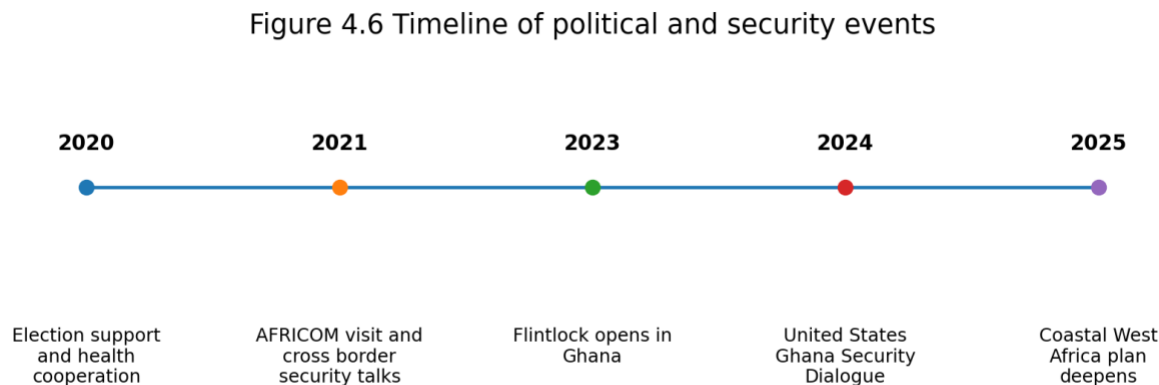


Source: Freedom House (2025).

Figure 4.5 shows that Ghana stayed a free political structure in the Freedom House record in the research years. This strengthens the argument that US public rule helped make the democratic structure of Ghana stronger rather than made that structure. The supporting view is that outside help for elections civil society and answering for actions can make stronger bodies. The opposing view is that these programmes may help a narrow election pattern while deeper problems continue. Ghana still faced public trust problems, corruption problems and social pressure from economic hardship. Democracy help was worth it. Democracy help also had limits.

Figure 4.6 places political and security events in time order. Timelines are useful because security power grows by way of repeated contact. One training activity does not build agreement. Repeated visits, exercises , talks and plans can build common views about danger. The figure covers election help in 2020 AFRICOM contact in 2021 Flintlock in 2023 the US Ghana Security Talks in 2024 and the Coastal West Africa plan. These events show that Ghana entered a wider US security plan for West Africa. The plan centred on violent extremism, sea threats and border security.

Figure 4.6 Timeline of political and security events

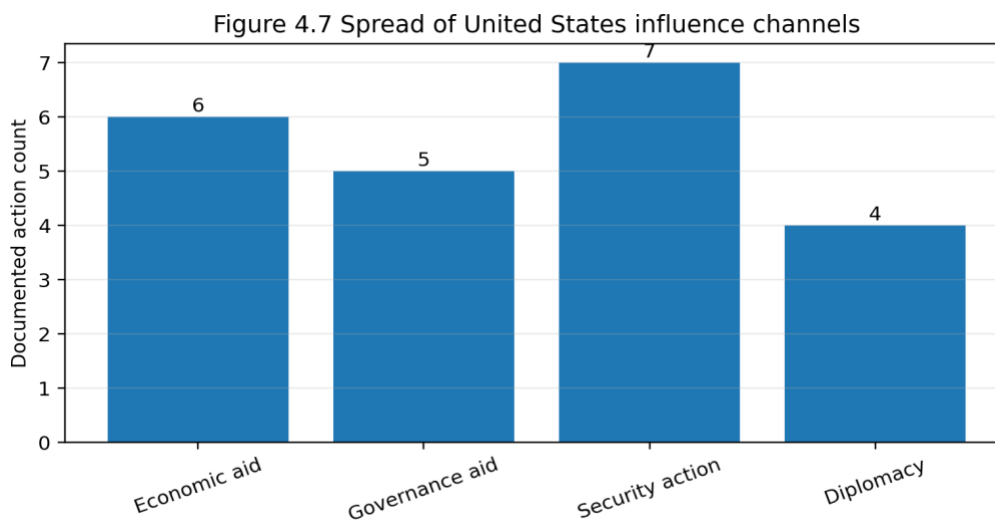


Source: United States Africa Command (2024) and United States Department of State (2024).

Figure 4.6 shows that security teamwork became deeper as regional dangers grew. AFRICOM reported contact with Ghana defence officers on fighting violent extremism and illegal fishing. The US Ghana Security Talks in 2024 also showed direct policy contact. This gives Ghana real help. This help can improve training information sharing and regional readiness. Yet this help can also guide how threats are understood. When Washington names the main threats then Ghana may guide part of its security policy around US priorities. This is a quiet form of power and this matches the Neo Gramscian idea of agreement.

Figure 4.7 shows the spread of US power paths. A bar chart is made use of here to show that power did not depend on one area alone. Economic aid, public rule aid, security work and diplomacy all appear as active paths. This figure helps the chapter move beyond a narrow claim. US dominance did not guide the economy of Ghana alone. US dominance also worked by way of political rules, security practice and diplomatic talks. The figure also helps check the relative power of each path. Security work appears most in the reviewed proof because West African instability became a rising concern after 2020.

Figure 4.7 Spread of United States influence channels



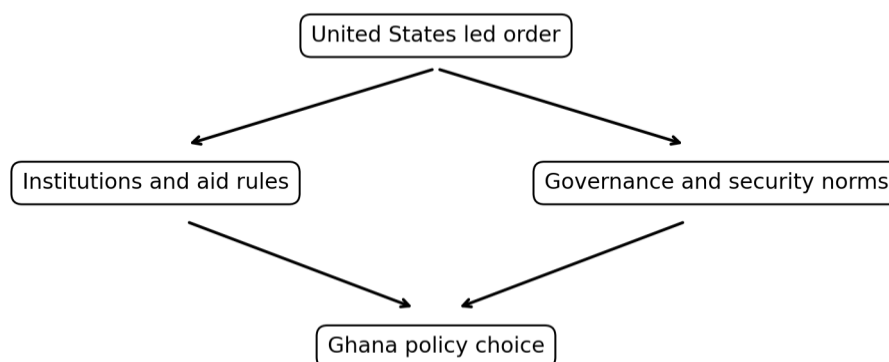
Source: Compiled from official United States and Ghana policy records.

Figure 4.7 shows that the pattern of power was wide. Economic action and public rule aid are shown. Security work is also plain. Diplomacy linked the full field. The supporting view is that Ghana got access to resources and skills in many areas. The opposing view is that wide teamwork can create a wide dependence. When one partner guides money, public rule, language security training and diplomatic expectations then that partner gains power over the policy thinking of the weaker country. The figure strengthens the argument that dominance works best when dominance becomes regular and normal.

Figure 4.8 shows the concept link that connects the proof to Neo Gramscianism. The figure places the US led order at the highest level. The figure then places bodies aid rules, public rule rules and security rules as the middle paths. Ghana policy decision stands at the lower level. The figure does not show Ghana as helpless. The figure shows Ghana decisions as led by a wider room of rules and meanings. This is the main theory claim of the research. Power does not work when one country commands another alone. Power also works when one country makes a chosen pattern seem sensible, safe and needed.

Figure 4.8 Conceptual infographic of hegemonic influence

Figure 4.8 Conceptual infographic of hegemonic influence



Neo Gramscian reading: power works through consent and rules

Source: Researcher conceptualisation based on Neo Gramscianism.

Figure 4.8 helps explain the full chapter. Ghana agreed to many forms of teamwork because those forms gave plain gains. Yet that agreement also helped a wider US led structure. This is dominance by way of agreement. The US did not need to force each policy. US power worked by way of bodies, programmes , shared language and training. Ghana leaders could still bargain. Ghana could still protect some national decisions. But the larger structure led to the range of accepted policy decisions. This is why the research sees influence as layered rather than direct.

4.3.2 Discussion of Findings for Research Question Two

Research Question Two studied whether US programmes in democratic rule, security teamwork as well as diplomatic contact guided Ghana home politics and foreign policy from 2020 to 2025. The proof gives a plain yes. The influence was firm but not complete. The influence guided bodies policy language and security direction. The influence did not remove Ghana's decision. Ghana kept home political contests and foreign policy balance. , US help helped guide the meaning of good rule security readiness and responsible partnership in the years.

The public rule proof helps the first part of the finding. Freedom House rated Ghana Free in 2025 with a score of 80 out of 100 and political rights of 35 out of 40 (Freedom House 2025). This high score gave the US a reason to see Ghana as a democratic partner. US democracy helped then made the same identity stronger. Help for civil society, public money control and open political processes helped make the liberal public rule frame stronger. The US Integrated Country Plan for Ghana stated that assistance should help fair political processes and public money control (United States Department of State 2022).

The supporting view is that this teamwork helped Ghana keep democratic power. Ghana elections as well as the civic room remained important in a region facing army takeovers and political disorder. US help could help election bodies, civic groups and answering for actions

actors. US help could also help Ghana protect the image of a steady West African democracy. In this sense the influence was helpful. The influence helped home bodies instead of taking their place. The proof does not help a simple claim that the US controlled Ghana politics.

The opposing view is that public rule can guide democracy in a narrow way. Such help often centres on elections , anti-corruption bodies, civil society programmes and public money rules. These areas matter. Democracy also needs jobs, fair living conditions, social trust and firm public services. Outside help that centres on body based form can leave deeper economic anger in place. This point mattered in Ghana because the economic crisis placed heavy pressure on homes. The direct question is plain. Can democracy be firm when people can vote , still struggle under high prices and lowered public spending.

Security teamwork gives the second part of the finding. The US and Ghana kept a Security Talks in 2024. The United States Africa Command also described teamwork with Ghana defence actors on fighting violent extremism and illegal fishing along the African coast (United States Africa Command 2024). Ghana also hosted main exercises such as Flintlock in 2023. These activities gave Ghana training and regional standing. These activities also linked Ghana to the US strategic view of coastal West Africa. This point matters because security ties often affect foreign policy even when countries do not admit it in public.

The supporting view is firm here. Ghana faces real security dangers from the Sahel corridor, cross border crime and sea insecurity. IMF reporting also noted higher terrorism threats in northern border areas and wider regional instability (International Monetary Fund 2025). In that context US help can help Ghana prepare. US help can improve border awareness, sea protection and peacekeeping skills. Ghana had good reason to cooperate. This shows agency. Ghana did not

obey in a simple way. Ghana accepted useful help because the help matched real national security needs.

The opposing view is that security help can shift the country 's attention. A security first method may make poverty, youth joblessness and border community neglect appear as army problems. Security help may also place Ghana inside a US led regional security network. When the partner that gives training also names the danger then local needs can pass by way of outside categories. Neo Gramscianism explains this as idea based power. The stronger actor guides what Ghana does and how Ghana understands the problem.

Foreign policy proof is mixed and that point matters. Ghana did not become a quiet follower of US policy. Ghana kept links with China, Europe , many sided bodies and African regional groups. Ghana also pursued debt talks with many creditors. US diplomacy remained influential because it guided the language of reform, rights , security and democracy. The influence was not in full control. The influence was limited. Ghana made use of US help while trying to protect room for decision.

The balanced position is that the second hypothesis should be accepted with balance. US public rule as well as security programmes guided Ghana home politics and foreign policy in a firm way. The influence was real because it guided programmes ability, threat understanding and diplomatic identity. The influence was not total because Ghana kept the home decision. This balanced final point is stronger than a simple praise or blame view. This final point shows the layered form of dominance. US power worked by way of partnership , agreement while Ghana acted inside that field with limited but real freedom.

4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Two

Research Question Two asked whether US programmes in democratic public rule, security teamwork as well as diplomatic contact affected Ghana home politics and foreign policy from 2020 to 2025. To answer this question the research studied the following hypotheses. H02 countries that US programmes in democratic public rule, security teamwork as well as diplomatic contact had no important influence on Ghana home politics and foreign policy from 2020 to 2025. Ha2 countries that US programmes in democratic public rule, security teamwork as well as diplomatic contact had an important influence on Ghana home politics and foreign policy from 2020 to 2025.

From theme based study of Table 4.2 and Figures 4.5 to 4.8 plain proof helps rejection of the null hypothesis. The written record shows that US help entered Ghana by way of democracy aid public money reform aid civil society aid defence teamwork sea security and regional stability talks. Ghana remained rated Free by Freedom House and kept a firm political rights score. This shows that US help worked in a steady democratic context rather than a failed context. The 2024 US Ghana Security Talks and AFRICOM contact also show active security teamwork.

The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted. US programmes had a main influence on Ghana home politics and foreign policy from 2020 to 2025. The influence was helpful because it made stronger bodies and security ability. The influence was also limiting because it linked Ghana to a wider US led language of democracy reform and security. Neo Gramscianism explains this result because the stronger power led Ghana decisions by way of agreement, rules , aid and partnership rather than direct force.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The US led economic rules with aid links and trade structures guided Ghana economic development plans from 2020 to 2025. Money power led them by way of COVID 19 help with debt response and IMF linked reform. AGOA access with investor trust pressure and development aid formed part of this influence. The goal was economic help and policy trust. The loss was weaker policy freedom with deeper dependence on a US led money structure. Ghana recovered. recovery followed budget control with debt restructuring and market trust. This helps the Neo Gramscian claim that dominance can work by way of agreement and bodies.

US programmes in democracy with security teamwork and diplomatic contact guided home politics in Ghana from 2020 to 2025. They guided foreign policy by way of democracy help with civil society help and public rule programmes. Security training with sea teamwork and diplomatic talks carried this influence. The get was body based help and stronger security ability. The loss was closer contact with US political and security rules. Ghana kept a decision. It did not become a weak follower. , reform language with democracy language alongside security language was guided by US expectations.

5.2 Conclusion

This research concludes that US dominance led the political and economic path of Ghana from 2020 to 2025 in a layered way. Economic gains came by way of recovery help with debt reform and market access. Political security gains came by way of public rule help and defence teamwork. These gains came with weaker policy freedom and a closer link to US led rules. Neo

Gramscianism gives the strongest explanation because power worked by way of agreement with bodies and aid. Ghana acted inside a policy room led by a stronger actor.

5.3 Recommendations

The Ministry of Money with the Bank of Ghana and National Development Planning Commission should set up a Policy Freedom Review Plan. The plan should check IMF agreements with World Bank agreements , US aid or trade policy agreements before approval. The review should check whether each agreement protects welfare spending with industrial policy and local production. The review should give Parliament a short policy room report before any main economic agreement is accepted. This will help Ghana get needed help without losing control over main development decisions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Ministry of Defence and Electoral Commission should work with Parliament to set up a US Ghana Teamwork Answering for actions Plan. The plan should place democracy help with civil society help and military training under Parliament review. Security agreements should face the same review. The plan should require an annual public report on goals with funding with local gains and foreign policy effects. This will help Ghana get body based and security help while protecting diplomatic freedom with home democratic control.

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