

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

**ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA:
THE CASE OF GHANA (1992-2012).**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Barbara Gyamera, hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of the Master of Philosophy (MPHIL) degree in Political Science, and contains no material published by another person previously, nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the study.

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ABSTRACT

Elections have widely been acknowledged as the most democratic means of establishing governments. Whilst the conduct of elections has the potential of ending conflicts, it could also plunge a country into chaos. Although the latter has been witnessed in many African countries, Ghana has only but witnessed few skirmishes which have not degenerated into armed conflicts. The study therefore sought to establish why the story of Ghana has been different and how the absence of such has enhanced Ghana's democratic consolidation

The qualitative research approach was adopted for the study. Both primary and secondary data were gathered and used for the analysis. The primary data which was gathered through an in-depth interview guide whilst the secondary data was sourced from existing literature on democracy and elections.

The study found out that the different experience of Ghana with regards to electoral fortunes has been occasioned by its trajectory of elections in the fourth republic, and the roles played by key institutions and personalities. The study again established that the current political atmosphere in the country indicates possibility of armed electoral violence insurrection. The study therefore concludes that Ghana's democracy could be marred by electoral violence and as such the need to forestall the country's democratic gains.

The findings suggest the need for deliberate steps to deal with issues such as vigilantism that could foment armed violence during elections. The findings also add to the existing knowledge on democracy and electoral violence in Ghana and Africa at large. The findings further establish the need for further studies in this area.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son, Nathan Nii Aryee Ankrah whose constant encouragement and reminder has brought me thus far.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CRRO	Chief Registration Review Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
ECOWAS	Economic Commission for West African States
EC	Electoral Commission
EMB	Electoral Management Body
GNA	Ghana News Agency
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ID	Identity Number
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IPAC	Inter Party Advisory Committee
INEC	Interim National Electoral Commission

IMF	International Monetary Fund
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NMC	National Media Commission
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PNP	Peoples National Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	4
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
1.5.1 INTRODUCTION	6
1.5.2 CONCEPT AND THEORY OF DEMOCRACY	7
1.5.3 THE CONCEPT AND THEORY OF ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE.....	8
1.6 JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY	11
1.7 THE SCOPE OF STUDY	12
1.8 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS.....	12
CHAPTER TWO	13
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.0 INTRODUCTION	13
2.1 DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA.....	14
2.2 REVIEWS ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA.....	17
2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTIONS.....	22
2.4 ELECTORAL VIOLENCE.....	24
2.4.1 Some features of electoral violence	26
2.5 TRIGGERS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA	27
2.6 EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE.....	30
2.7 MANIFESTATIONS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA	33
2.8 FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR GHANA’S ELECTORAL SUCCESS	36

2.8.1 History of Elections.....	37
2.8.2 The Constitution.....	37
2.8.3 Institutions of Governance.....	38
2.8.4 Election Management and Electoral Reforms	39
2.8.5 Inter- Party Consensus Building	40
2.8.6 The Party-System: Two- Party with Active Third Parties	40
2.8.7 Turnovers.....	41
2.8.8 Losers’ Reaction and Resilience	41
2.8.9 The Role of Civil Society and International Support	42
CHAPTER THREE.....	44
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	44
3.0 INTRODUCTION	44
3.1 RESEARCH METHOD.....	44
3.1.1 Qualitative Research Method.....	44
3. 2 PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM.....	46
3.2.1 Constructivism	47
3.3 SOURCES OF DATA	48
3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT.....	48
3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	48
CHAPTER FOUR.....	51
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	51
4.0 INTRODUCTION	51
4.1 THE NATURE OF POLITICS IN GHANA	52
4.1.1 Two party system	52
4.1.2 Acrimonious and Conflictual.....	52
4.1.3 Neo-patrimonial Politics.....	53
4.2 FACTORS THAT ACCOUNT FOR ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA.....	53
4.2.1 Winner-Takes-All Politics	53
4.2.2 Unemployment and inequality	56
4.2.3 Mutual mistrust in systems	58
4.2.4 Weak state institutions	59
4.2.5 Lack of education.....	60
4.2.6 Monetization of politics.....	60
4.3 MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING ELECTION- RELATED VIOLENCE IN GHANA	61
4.3.1 National Peace Council	61
4.3.2. The law courts.....	62

4.3.4 Elections security Taskforce.....	63
4.4 REASONS WHY ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA HAS NOT DEGENERATED INTO VIOLENT CONFLICTS	63
4.4.1 The Role of the Media.....	63
4.4.2 The Role of Chiefs and Religious Leaders	64
4.4.3 The boarding school system	66
4.4.4 The trajectory of election outcomes	67
4.4.5 Effective Civil Society Organizations	67
4.5 ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROMOTION OF PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN GHANA	69
4.5.1 Financial constraints.....	70
4.5.2 Political interference	70
4.5.3 Weak institutions	71
4.6 THE LIKELIHOOD OF GHANA GETTING PLUNGED INTO ARMED VIOLENT CONFLICT	71
4.7 HOW TO CURB ELECTORAL VIOLENCE	73
4.7.1 Education.....	73
4.8 DELIBERATE POLICIES TO REDUCE THE BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH WINNING ELECTIONS	74
4.8.1 Professionalism within the media.....	74
4.8.2 Strengthen institutions specifically the security agencies, judiciary and the EC	74
4.8.3 The need for dialoguing and consensus building on national issues	75
CHAPTER FIVE.....	78
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	78
5.0 INTRODUCTION	78
5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	78
5.1.1 Factors that account for the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana	78
5.1.2 Why electoral violence in Ghana has not degenerated into armed conflict.....	80
5.1.3 Measures to forestall the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana’s future elections	81
5.1.4 The nature of political system in Ghana.....	83
5.1.5 The Impact of Violence on Democratic Consolidation in Ghana and Africa	84
5.2 CONCLUSION	84
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	85

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The end of the Cold War gave a major boost to the democratic movement in Africa. Multi-party democracy with its dominant feature of conducting periodic elections thus became prominent on the continent. This was the period when international financial support especially from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), became conditional in order to deny autocratic governments easy access to financial support unless they adopted and adapted to democracy. This wave of democratisation in the late 1980s and early 1990s accelerated the pace of autocratic regimes that were pro-communist in various parts of Africa to embrace political reforms and Ghana was not an exception. The motivation for most African autocratic leaders was to succumb to this international pressure for continued Western funding.

Multi-party elections became more pronounced in Africa during the 1990s than ever before. According to Hyde and Marinove (2012), a total of 151 multi-party elections were organised in Africa between 1945 and 1990. By the end of 2000, the number of countries holding regular multi-party elections had quadrupled compared to the Cold War era (Van de Walle, 2002). Almost eighty percent (80%) of the elections conducted were won by incumbent parties and nearly two-thirds of these were considered not to have been free and fair. It brought to light that majority of the multi-party elections conducted flouted democratic standards.

The conduct of elections is an inextricable component of democratic system of governance. Elections represent the most feasible institutionalized approach for ensuring the rule of the people by the people and for the people (Lindberg, 2006). Through elections citizens can exercise their political rights of alternating or endorsing a particular political administration. Article 21 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of governments as expressed in periodic and genuine elections”. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also provides that “every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections” (Heyns, Killander; 2007).

In the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Article 42 states that “every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda”. This underscores voting in an election as both a political and civic right for every citizen of a country when elections are organised. Globally, the outcome of elections varies. Some are desirable, others are not. For example, the outcome of elections in some Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Philippines and Malaysia were characterised with violence leading to loss of human lives, property, injuries and chaos. In the Philippines 75 people were killed prior to the May 2007 elections, while 80 others were wounded in election violence (Atuobi, 2008).

Some countries on the African continent are not exempted; Zimbabwe, Kenya (2007/ 2008), Uganda, Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire (2011) have experienced election violence. In the case of the 2003 Nigerian Federal Elections, at least one hundred people were killed and several were injured. About six hundred people were reported killed

in the December 2007 presidential election violence in Kenya following disputes over the results (Cyllah, 2010: 5).

Ghana has undergone six (6) major successive elections since 1992 to 2012. These have been internationally acclaimed by countries, institutions and personalities as being free and fair. Although these successive elections have been recognised as free and fair by both local and international election observers, election related violence is not entirely absent. There have been eyewitness accounts and several reports of election violence in Ghana in each of these elections (Ghana Election Reports, 1992 – 2012). Instances of these were reported by the immediate past chairman of the Electoral Commission, Dr Kwadwo Afari-Gyan. He noted: “as a result of vandalism which occurred in certain constituencies after the December 7, 2004, balloting, the results in those constituencies were slow in arriving at the head office for collation” (Elections Report, 2004: 50).

There have also been incidences of violence and mob actions reported in "Pru District in the Brong Ahafo Region, Tamale Central, Tamale North, Saboba, Zabzugu/Tatale constituencies in the Northern region". (Election Report, 2004). Similar cases of violence were recorded in some areas of the Upper West Region. At Busa, a community in the Wa Municipality for example, violence erupted leading to burning of a motor bike and injury of people. (Elections report, 2004). Also in the 2008 elections, "the district electoral officer for Krachi West in the Volta Region was held at gun point by a group of men known to be party foot soldiers to hand over the elections results and the materials to them". (Dr Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, Intermediate Workshop for Election Administrators, 2010, Ho).

The phenomenon of election related violence is becoming a serious challenge in our electoral process. Some politicians use it as a method of campaign, causing fears and intimidation among their opponents' strongholds. Electoral outcomes in some African countries such as Zanzibar, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire have reported high electoral violence episodes whilst others like Cameroon, Liberia, DR Congo and Gambia have witnessed low intensity violation and intimidation of both candidates and voters (The Nordic Africa Institute, 2012/2013). Considering the manifestations of election violence in Ghana even though of low intensity, in comparison with the massive destruction of valuable human, natural and capital resources as experienced by some African countries, it is necessary not to ignore these cases. Ghana's democratic consolidation will be marred if the underlying issues are not addressed with a sense of urgency.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The electoral process in many African states has been characterised by violence, which have assumed an unprecedented magnitude with multiple negative implications for democratic stability and consolidation on the continent. Societies where electoral violence has occurred has claimed human lives and affected neighbouring states by displacing large border populations, introducing humanitarian crisis and increasing the circulation of small arms as well as armed violence which may contribute to political instability in already volatile regions.

Ghana has equally experienced election violence in its electoral processes. There have been threats and intimidation; physical assault of voters, electoral officials and supporters of rival parties; burning and looting of property; seizure of ballot boxes by "macho men" and unemployed youth; and direct clashes between opposing party supporters (Jockers et al.,

2009; IRIN, 2008). Nonetheless these manifestations of violence in Ghana are localized in nature and have not degenerated into armed conflict as reported in some African countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe just to mention a few. But electoral violence has been a recurring issue that continues to push Ghana towards the brink of all- out violence each election year. Hence all will not be well, if the drivers of election related violence are not urgently arrested.

This research therefore, seeks to investigate into why Ghana has not experienced the degeneration of electoral violence into armed conflict as manifested in some African countries.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to assess electoral violence in Ghana.

The key objectives to look at will include the following

- To examine the factors that account for the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana.
- To investigate into why electoral violence in Ghana has not degenerated into armed conflict.
- To address measures to forestall the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana's future elections.
- To review the impact of electoral violence on the consolidation of democracy in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide the study to find answers to the research question.

- What factors account for the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
- Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflict?
- What measures can be put in place to forestall electoral violence in Ghana's future elections?
- What impact does electoral violence have on the consolidation of democracy in Ghana and Africa as a whole?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The most salient feature distinguishing a democratic order from other political forms is that, under democratic rules, political leaders are thought of as representatives of the sovereign people as they are elected by, and derive their authority from the people (Manin et al. 1999). In this regard the relationship between democracy and citizens' participation is demonstrated by using election as a tool which ensures participation. Thus, the ultimate principle underlying a liberal democracy is that political leaders ought to be elected by the majority of the people through free, fair and transparent elections. This is critical because elections represent the most feasible institutionalized approach for ensuring the rule of the people by the people and for the people (Lindberg, 2006). Therefore, elections are closely linked with the principle of political equality which is widely considered as the "core principle of democracy" (Heywood, 2002:69). However, while they are central to the process of democratic stability and longevity, elections can also serve as catalysts for armed conflicts and democratic reversals (African Union, 2010).

This chapter will focus on the concept and theory of democracy and definitions within available literature. Secondly, a critical discussion on the theory of elections and also standards and requirements of electoral systems as well as the understanding of the environment in which elections must be conducted for purposes of election sustainability and consolidation of democracy.

Finally, there would be a discussion on the concept and theory of elections and electoral violence.

1.5.2 CONCEPT AND THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

There are multiple ways of defining “democracy” depending on the ideals envisaged when defining democracy. Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg Address defined democracy as “the government of the people, by the people and for the people” (cited in Oquaye 2004: 60). From Lincoln’s definition, democracy means ruling in the interest and with the power of citizens. “A political system is defined as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote.” (Huntington 1984:195).

The competition for votes should be done in a civilised way with the exchange of ideas, policies and programmes as to how one is capable of managing the affairs of a country. As a people driven enterprise, democratization retains its meaning, essence, substance and relevance provided it accords the people, irrespective of ideological and /or identity affiliations, adequate recognition in shaping issues of governance of their own affairs. Thus, through the electoral process, electorates are able to participate in governance. This requires that the electoral process must be of high integrity, measured in terms of its degree of

adherence to the electoral laws, openness, transparency, accountability, competition and participation. Any attempt to prevent the electoral process against these virtues may serve to engender electoral violence (Laakso 2007).

1.5.3 THE CONCEPT AND THEORY OF ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

The origins of election(s) can be historically traced to ancient Greece and Rome. In Rome, the selection of Popes and Holy Roman emperors was achieved by means of elections. The same process was employed in the selection of caliphate in the ancient Arabian states after death of the Holy Prophet Mohammed. However, the emergence of indirect or representative democracy from direct or classical democracy could not be without elections. The history of contemporary elections dates back to the 17th century where Europe and North America practiced representational democracy (Nasiru. A 2009:17).

Elections are a process through which citizens choose who will represent them in government or what will be done about a particular issue (Nasiru A; 2009:20). Thus, elections are combination of acts and procedures aimed at choosing or selecting among various candidates, members of parliament and the head of state by the electorate. Elections do not only allow for political competition, participation and legitimacy but also permit peaceful change of power, thereby making it possible to expect accountability from those who govern. This is why it is often argued that “elections facilitate communication between the government and the governed and also have symbolic purposes by giving voice to the public” (Hoglund 2006:4).

When political rights are exercised through electoral choices that citizens make, they confer authority on government and the institution of democracy while ensuring at the same time

their resilience, credibility, and stability (Ninsin, 2006: 187). Therefore, elections serve as a critical instrument for conflict prevention and peace building through the facilitation of peaceful transfers of power from one political party to another. This helps to minimize the violence and general state of instability that often characterize undemocratic means of assuring political power, such as military coup d'état, while elections are central to the process of democratic stability and longevity. It can also serve as catalysts for armed conflicts and democratic reversals (African Union, 2010). In Africa, due to the high stakes attached to political power, elections are characterised by fierce competition, exhibited by supporters of political parties or candidates who have the tendency to resort to violence in order to promote the interest of their political parties. They undertake this action considering the rewards at stake for them should the other emerge winners from the elections.

As a concept, electoral violence basically, has to do with “all forms of organized acts or threats – physical, psychological and structural – aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying or otherwise influencing an electoral process” (Albert, 2007:133). This definition brings to bear the multidimensional nature of electoral violence. The physical elements include assassination of political opponents, arson, looting, shooting, kidnapping and hostage taking, forceful disruption of campaign rallies, armed raids on voting and collating centres, including snatching of ballot papers and boxes at gun point. The psychological dimension relates to official and unofficial actions that create fear in the people, which may be a product of physical violence. These include threats to opposition forces by security agents or through phone calls and text messages.

- I. Structurally, electoral violence seems much more pronounced being a product of structural imbalance, including coercion of citizens by government to register or vote,

unequal opportunities for political parties and candidates, abuse of power of incumbency, falsification of election results, as well as the politicisation of security and electoral officials (Nwolise, 2007). Electoral violence can also be explained with a cultural perspective, where the existence of a political culture of thuggery generally may cause actors to engage in violence and intimidation during political contests. These acts of violence emanate from ethnic rivalries and mobilization in politics.

- II. The structural elements additionally emphasise on issues of socio-economic prosperity where poverty is kept to the barest minimum and institutional parameters such as periodic, competitive, free and fair elections, a multiparty system and the rule of law. Poverty is largely a structural problem in Africa. Thus, people easily succumb to negative manipulation, especially during elections. This is where sympathizers who have been offered or promised a reward by their political leaders in their quest for power will engage in all fair or foul tactics to make their patrons emerge as winners in elections even if it means excluding political opponents.

Electoral violence is not restricted to election day(s) alone, but can happen before, during and after the elections. Pre-election violence includes acts or threats against electoral stakeholders during voters' registration or electioneering campaigns. Election day violence may be characterized by snatching of ballot boxes, assaults on opposition agents or parties and harassment or intimidation of security agents. Post electoral violence may take the form of violent protests against electoral rigging, whether real or imagined, and of the state's deploying its apparatus of force in response to the protest, thereby further adding to the intensity of violence.

The foregoing conceptual perspective provides a framework for analysing the localized recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana's 4th republic (1992 – 2012).

1.6 JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY

The incidence of Electoral violence has some dire consequences on Africa's fledgling democracies. First, there are security implications for the continent in general and affected countries in particular. Some notable security implications include the collapse of public order, the large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the flow of refugees, and further militarisation of the state and society. For example, in the aftermath of electoral violence in the 2007 Nigerian elections, there was a collapse of public order in some volatile states of the South-West. The attempt to restore sanity led to the massive deployment of the military and mobile policemen, who subjected the people to various threats, harassment, intimidation, extortion, torture and rape (Omotola, 2008). The situation in Kenya was worse where a total of more than 300,000 people were internally displaced as a result of post-electoral violence (Kenya Red Cross Society 2008).

Electoral violence in Africa also has important foreign policy ramifications. Ideally, every civilised nation aspires to the values and virtues of the post-Cold War order, where the issue of being a good international citizen features prominently. Good international citizenship requires conducting free and fair elections to be internationally recognised. The inability to do these in most African states has been a sore point in their external relations, most notably leading to an external image crisis. This has ramifications for economic diplomacy, as Africa is being seen as incapable of conducting credible elections. The resultant violence scares potential investors away, as much as it retards other forms of assistance.

A critical observation of elections organized in Ghana's fourth republic will inform an objective viewer that General Elections from 1992-2012 have not been free of violence. Hence the significance of this study is in many folds. It will be my contribution towards the

entrenchment of democracy in Ghana. Again answers to the research questions will serve as a guide to policy makers, politicians and the citizenry on ways to prevent and manage electoral violence in Ghana's future elections and Africa at large.

1.7 THE SCOPE OF STUDY

This study will review elections conducted in Ghana's fourth republic, specifically from 1992-2012. It will delve into cases of electoral violence related to the period under review with emphasis on why these cases of violence did not degenerate into civil wars as witnessed in some African countries.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

The study in terms of structure is divided into five chapters. The first chapter (Chapter One) constitutes the introduction, which provides a detailed background to the study, statement of the problem, research objective, research questions and scope of the study. The justification for the theoretical framework of the study is explained in this chapter. Chapter Two will comprise of the literature review aspect of the study; focusing on reviewing literature on election violence in general and emphasis on Ghana's fourth republic in spite of numerous manifestations identified in the country. Chapter Three will cover the proposed research methodology for the study. Chapter Four will deal with the analysis of elections conducted in Ghana's fourth republic (1992-2012) and why cases of electoral violence have not degenerated into civil wars. Finally, Chapter Five will summarise the principal findings from the analysis, as well as provide conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Generally, the electoral process and conduct of elections on the continent of Africa has been stained by electoral fraud and violence. This has the tendency of deconsolidating democracy. Electoral violence is a threat to the democratic principles of political participation and legitimacy. Since this often results in the marginalisation of people in politics. Ghana comparatively has experienced less severe manifestations of violence related to elections unlike the massive destruction of human and capital resources that countries like Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Zimbabwe have witnessed in recent times.

The objective of this chapter is to critically assess reasons why the manifestation of electoral violence in Ghana has not degenerated into civil wars as witnessed in some African countries. The chapter will therefore review general literature on democracy in Africa, elections and electoral violence in Africa, and the manifestation of electoral violence in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Literature review is important for every study because it gives a broader view of the areas the researcher seeks to cover. In brief, the literature review captures a cross section of positions on the subject matter and contextualizes the study. The literature review also makes the researcher and the audience understand the study based on the existing knowledge and studies on the subject area. It is against this backdrop that some thematic areas are considered under the literature (Oquaye, 2004).

The purpose of these themes is to promote better understanding of the study.

2.1 DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

Since most African countries gained independence from their colonial masters in the mid-twentieth century, democracy has become a topical issue on the continent. Africa is a continent with different political systems which makes the practice of liberal democracy very difficult for the continent. Several elements of democracy existed among the various polities in pre-colonial Africa; however, colonialism which introduced Western political systems into the continent brought a major political change which Africans have to struggle with (Sarsar and Adekunle, 2012).

Sarsar and Adekunle (2012) further stated that many African leaders were faced with the challenge of moving from the old political order of monarchy to the parliamentary system. The leaders were also faced with several challenges in implementing the Western form of democracy which was alien to the continent. Since democracy remains a disputed concept in Political Science, and there is no universally accepted definition of the concept, the definition given by Diamond and Plattner, (1999: 11) will be used for the purpose of this study. According to them, democracy, particularly, its liberal version may be defined as “a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realms of citizens, acting indirectly through competition and cooperation of their elected representatives”.

Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1989: 16) also consider democracy as a system of government, that meets three essential conditions. “Firstly, there should be a meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all elective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force. Secondly, there should be a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of

leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no major social group is excluded. Thirdly, it should be characterized by a level of civil and political liberties such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation”.

In a democracy, there must be competing values; and there must be cooperation among the political actors in order to bring about competition. For democracy to be effective and stable there must be a belief in legitimacy of democracy, tolerance for opposition groups, and a will to cooperate with the opposition groups, pragmatism and flexibility. There should also be trust in the political environment, cooperation among political competitors, moderation in political positions and partisan identifications, civility of political discourse and efficacy and participation based on the principles of political equality (Diamond et al 1995: 19).

Linz (1970:255; 1975:264) defines authoritarian regimes as: “political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without neither intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except at some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.” This therefore means that authoritarianism as a political system is undemocratic, simply because political power is concentrated in the hands of just one person or small exclusive people who are not accountable to the people. It differs from totalitarianism in that authoritarian governments usually lack a guiding ideology, tolerate some pluralism in social organizations, lack the power to mobilize the whole population in pursuit of national goals, and exercise their power within relatively predictable limits (Seo, 2008).

The demand for democracy in Africa intensified after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which also meant the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. Many African countries that depended on the Soviet Union for support had to run towards the West and its institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for support. The West and its institutions have always called for democracy in Africa. So as a result, the World Bank and the IMF made democracy as a condition to access aid. These conditions coupled with internal pressure from many African academics, students, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and many religious groups left the leaders with nothing but to return their countries to constitutional rule.

Democracy, just as any other term in the social sciences, does not have a single definition. Many scholars have defined democracy in different ways to suit their studies. Powell (1982) defines democracy, largely on the lines of competitive elections in which most of the citizens are eligible to participate in the process that involves alternatives in the form of political parties. His definition overlooks the importance of rules and regulations in the process of elections; therefore this curtails the electoral rights of citizens. Another definition of democracy provided by Przeworski (1991) encapsulates the importance of rules. He explains democracy as rules based competitive system, with divided interests and alternation of power.

A limitation of his version of democracy is the extent of alternation of power as a prerequisite for democracy. There are countries that have been rated as a democracy, yet have not seen alternation of power between or among political parties. In Botswana, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has ruled since independence till now, without power changing hands with the opposition. A report by the Washington Post noted that , although support for

the BDP declined in the 2014 election, it managed to hold on to significant power after winning thirty (37) of fifty-seven(57) parliamentary constituencies(64.9%).

Many people also understand democracy as an ideology, and others also understand it as a concept or a theory. In the view of Grugel (2012), democracy becomes an ideology only if it represents a set of political ideas; a theory provided it embodies set of political ideas that shows the best form of social organization. Grugel (2002), also believes that democracy can be understood as an ideal. He further argues that, democracy is a way of making decisions concerning the mutual rules and policies that determine which people exercise control, and the most democratic arrangement, in which everyone in the society enjoys equal rights to be able to participate in the decision making process.

Snodderly (2011) postulates a comprehensive definition of democracy as *“a state or community in which all adult members of society partake in a free and fair electoral process that determines government leadership ,have access to power through their representatives, and enjoy universally recognised freedoms and liberties.”*

The above definition encompasses the core elements of democracy, like the protection of civil rights, free and fair elections, political pluralism, representative and participatory governance.

2.2 REVIEWS ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA

Before considering reviewing modern literature on electoral violence, one must first of all determine the pivotal role elections play in the process of democratization. Election is an indispensable component in democratic consolidation Przeworski et al, (1999). In the view of

Gwinn and Nortan (1992), "election is the formal process of selecting a person for public office or accepting or registering a political proposition by voting".

They further noted that an election is one of the vehicles by which societies may organize themselves and make some stated formal decisions. They added that in societies where voting is free, it acts concurrently as a system for making certain decisions regarding the power relations in a society, and as a method for seeking political obedience with a minimum of sacrifice of the individual's freedom. The core of a democratic election is freedom of choice. Eya (2003) also defined election as the selection of a person or persons for office as by ballot and making choice as between alternatives. He went further to define an electoral process as the method adopted in the selection of persons for political offices. He further sees electoral frauds or malpractices as improper, illegal, deceitful or immoral behaviours and conducts which vitiate free and fair electoral processes.

A fair electoral process according to him, must have some basic structures, which include: statutory provisions establishing the electoral bodies, delineation of wards or constituencies, registration of political parties, registration of voters, recruitment and training of ad-hoc staff, procurement of electoral materials, logistics, screening of candidates, provision of polling agents, monitoring agents, actual voting, accreditation of voters, counting votes and providing avenues for settlement of disputed results.

Elections ensure that the political elites are accountable to the citizens who put them into office. In addition it also allows for peaceful transfer of power within political systems.

As an important vehicle of democracy, elections allow for non-violence and give legitimacy to the political order (Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). Many international organizations and donor countries have always supported countries to be able to hold successful elections in

their countries because of the importance of elections to the people. Elections are glorified, to refining the legality of governments that are coming out of violent conflict. It also allows the citizens to be able to successfully engage with their political elites and the political system as a whole (Weidmann and Callen 2013).

Rapoport and Weinberg (2000: 18), opine that “elections are an important mechanism by which democracy manages conflict through nonviolent processes; ballots as substitute for bullets in post conflict societies”. This impression of elections is clear. The United Nations (UN) and other international organizations have added elections to their common response to conflict management and peace building. This is because when a country is torn during electoral violence, the only means to put the country back on its track is to assist them organize a peaceful and successful election. According to Reilly, elections follow cease-fires and the institution of basic infrastructure, empowering new domestic governments which can take the ruins from the international community (Reilly 2008).

It has been established that elections are necessary tools that promote peace and stability in post conflict situations. Peace and conflict scholars also noted that there is also a possibility where democracy can promote violence. Democratization processes offer “new opportunities and new motives for violence makers” (Hoglund2008:83). The relationship that exists between elections and various types of violence has been discovered across several cases. Across studies, elections have been linked to violent outcomes.

Wilkinson (2004), in his quest to explain the differences in the Hindu-Muslim violence in India, which is a fairly peaceful and consolidated democracy, cited electoral motivations as the factors that explained this. He stated that ethnic riots “are often planned by politicians for

clear electoral purposes” (Wilkinson 2004: 1). The 2007 electoral violence in Kenya attracted significant academic attention. The state, at the time multiparty democracy was introduced in 1991, employed gangs and militias to help them win elections (Dercon and Gutierrez-Romero 2012). These militias created new forms of groups as the politicians sought to use violence to win elections at all cost.

The “privatization of public violence is argued to have combined with weak institutions and zero sum politics to explode into post-election violence in 2007” (Mueller 2011: 113). The link between states using violence and electoral relationship between violent state repression and electoral contestation were identified. Incumbent presidents in less democratic states like Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Iran and Azerbaijan used violence to prevent electoral defeats (Smith 2012).

In the view of Reno (2011), competition in the electoral systems across Africa led to the situation where patronage regimes sought support from violent actors to protect their regimes. He further noted that possible rebel groups were co-opted into the electoral process. These political elites utilized these groups to strengthen their political positions in their countries (Reno 2011). In some cases, this process has even led insurgencies to become part of violent electoral systems. Elections have also been linked to other forms of violence such as harassment, street brawls, and intimidation (Straus and Taylor 2012). “Forcible land seizures and distribution in Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, and Kenya have been argued to be part of electoral strategies” (Boone and Kriger 2012, Boone 2011).

According to Newman (2012) and Aksoy (2014), “terrorist attacks have also been linked to elections, quantitative studies have shown an increase in terrorist incidents around election

days under certain conditions”. The possibility for elections to promote violence is very common in post-conflict environments. This potential for elections to nurse violence can even be more pronounced in the post-conflict context. In the unsteady atmosphere where countries are now coming out of war, elections and democratization creates opportunities for violence (Jarstad 2008).

Flores and Nooruddin (2012), examine the consequences of elections on the credible commitment problem in post-conflict states. They postulate that stronger democratic institutions allow elections to enhance the credible commitment problem. When democratic institutions are well established, politicians find it hard to cheat during elections, renew violence when they lose, and subvert democratic norms when they win (Flores and Nooruddin 2012:561). If this institutional infrastructure is not in place, early elections and the threat of losing them increase commitment problems, encouraging returns to violence. Time must be invested to improve electoral infrastructure before elections are held; otherwise parties are likely to resort to violence either before or after they are held (Flores and Nooruddin 2012).

Another way violence and elections are linked in the post-conflict environment is through analyses of political actors. Groups wielding power in the wartime environment may be threatened with potential loss of power in a new electoral political system, encouraging spoiler behaviour including violence (Hoglund, Jarstad, and Kovacs 2009:540). If demobilization of armed groups is incomplete they can be used to influence the electoral process, the challenge of transforming armies into political parties who renounce violence as a means of political change remains vexed (Hoglund, Jarstad, and Kovacs 2009).

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTIONS

The importance of elections cannot be underestimated under any circumstances. Although, many people still hold the view that elections can also breed conflicts, its importance cannot be ignored. Some of the functions of elections in any country include:

First, competitive elections promote legitimacy. Elections allow citizens to accept to be under the rule of those that have been elected. When this happens, it means that the government of the day has the legitimate authority and the good will of the people to rule them. Governments, whose legitimacy of authority to rule is always challenged, find it very difficult to govern successfully. It is only competitive elections that define the democratic legitimization of the exercise of public authority (Wojtasik, 2013).

Secondly, elections also perform the function of delegating political representation. Through elections, the citizens are given the opportunity to select those people who in their view best represent their opinions and will be able to fight their cause (Zukowski 2004). Because of the democratic order to exercise power, these elected representatives hold enough legitimacy to enact laws on behalf of the citizens, and their decisions also carry the same value of legitimacy. In the view of (Wojtasik, 2013), the logic behind giving power to elected representatives to make laws on behalf of the entire citizenry may be due to three reasons. First, the will to increase the efficiency of decision-making, second, the assumption that those elected have higher competencies than the average, and this will positively affect the accuracy of their decisions, and finally, the desire to give a higher degree of importance to the decisions made, and thus increase their social impact. This may not be entirely true.

Wojtasik (2013), failed to note that there are many circumstances where people are elected on ethnic lines, political parties they belong, their philanthropic behaviour and popularity. In these circumstances, the electorates do not consider the competence of those they elected, but

because the person may be popular, philanthropic or belong to his or her tribe or political party. When this happens, the average citizen may well be better than the elected representatives.

Another very important function that elections play is that of the promotion of political accountability and responsibility. Elections allow those who are elected into public offices to be more accountable and responsible to the citizens. This is because when they fail the accountability test, it will serve as an expression of disapproval of their rule by the citizens and this has a lot of political consequences. In the view of Mainwaring and Scully (1995), “election is the primary mechanism of enforcement of political accountability, focusing on the possibility of changing those in power as a result of the election”. They further stated that, in elections political parties are given the opportunity to create communication links between them and the government. The elections also give the citizens the opportunity to replace the existing leaders if they fail to account to them.

In addition, elections also serve as a peaceful means of changing governments. Elections allow a peaceful transfer of political power from one political party to the other without violence. However, in countries where only one political party has institutionalized itself and only use elections as an avenue to stay in power, it can also lead to violence. For instance, when Yahya Jammeh of Gambia had always "rigged" elections and intimidated his political opponents to keep hold of power, it nearly resulted in political violence when he lost the 2016 elections and was refusing to step down. A clear example of how elections ensure peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another is what happened in Ghana. Ghana has been able to transfer political power from the NDC to the NPP for three times since the return to constitutional rule in 1992.

Finally, elections also allow for the recreation of public opinion. Turska-Kawa (2010) posits that elections serve as a tool for explaining the public preferences into legitimisation of power. He further stated the elections also give the citizens the opportunity to actively engage citizens in the processes of electing authorities and systemic channelling of their activity in this field. During elections, a lot of important topics come up in public discussions. Elections build a map of significance of individual topics in the public consciousness, and they convert them into the realm of current policy. Periodic elections allow people to observe the dynamics and the nature of those dynamics with regards to public opinion.

2.4 ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

The problems that countries face in their democratization process have been indicated by several scholars. Some of the scholars argue that "democracy increases the risk of armed conflict in newly democratizing nations" (Mansfield & Snyder 2007: 163). Jarstad (2008:29) also adds that democracy "heightens the probability of violent conflict in post-conflict societies" and increases the risk of political violence in low income countries (Collier 2009: 11).

Studies have shown that electoral violence has become a widespread occurrence. Fischer (2002) supported this assertion by stating that out of the 57 countries that held elections in 2001, 24.5% of them, representing 14 countries, ended up in violence. Bekoe (2010) also stated that in Africa about 19-25% of countries are affected by violence during elections. Amongst the countries that suffered incidences of electoral violence in recent times are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Columbia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe (Sisk 2008).

Unfortunately, only a few of the researchers who researched on electoral violence tried to actually explain what electoral violence is.

Albert (2007) defines the concept of electoral violence as “*all forms of organized acts of threats- physical ,psychological, and structural- aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process*”. This definition throws light on the multi-dimensional nature of electoral violence, which are the physical, psychological and structural dimensions. Assassinations of political opponents, arson, looting, shooting, kidnapping, hostage taking, and forceful disruption of campaign rallies, armed raids on voting and collating centres, including snatching of ballot papers and boxes at gun point collectively make up the physical dimension. Psychologically electoral violence, takes the form of official and unofficial actions that create fear and panic in people, which may result in physical violence. These include threats on the opposition by security agents or through phone calls and text messages.

According to Nwolise (2007), the structural dimension of electoral violence seems more pronounced, being a product of coercion of citizens by government to register or vote, unequal opportunities for political parties and candidates, abuse of power of incumbency, falsification of election results, as well as the politicisation of security and electoral officials, structural imbalance. In the view of Laakso (2007: 227-228), electoral violence is “an activity motivated by an attempt to affect the results of the elections either by manipulating the electoral procedure and participation or by contesting the legitimacy of the results”. It might involve voters' and candidates' *intimidation*, killings, attacks against their property, forceful displacement, unlawful detentions and rioting.

The United Nations Development Program (2009: 4) also defined electoral violence "acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arise in the context of electoral competition. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections-such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll-and to influence the outcomes: the determining of winners in competitive races for political office or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions."

In both the definition given by Laakso (2007) and UNDP (2009), any act that results in intimidation, coercion, killings and attacks on properties during elections is termed as electoral violence. They also agreed that these acts of violence and intimidations are geared towards manipulation of the electoral system to their own advantage.

2.4.1 Some features of electoral violence

First, electoral violence occurs in order to achieve certain political goals. This violence often occurs to affect the electoral process to favour certain people (Hoglund, 2009). Secondly, electoral violence may occur at all stages of the electoral process. It can occur during the pre-election period, election day and after the elections (Sisk, 2008).

According to the UNDP (2009), another feature of electoral violence is that it may include different acts such as threats, coercion, obstruction, abduction, detention, assault, torture and murder as well as rioting, plundering and destroying properties, distracting campaign activities and materials, disturbing public gathering and educational activities, shutting down offices, and declaration of 'no-go' areas.

Finally, electoral violence has specific targets. These targets may include the “*electorates, candidates, election officers, observers and media groups, electoral materials such as ballot boxes, campaign stuffs, registration data, polling results, electoral facilities such as voting and tallying stations and electoral events such as campaign meetings and demonstrations, journeys to voting stations*”(USAID 2010: 5-6).

2.5 TRIGGERS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

The causes of electoral violence are very complex. The causes of electoral violence may differ from one jurisdiction to another. Some of the causes of electoral violence in Africa include:

First, politics of exclusion is one of the major causes of electoral violence in Africa. The African continent is well noted for its history of one party politics and dominance (Adolfo, 2012). As a result of this, there is often exclusion of some of the people, mostly the minority in the society.

Some of the people in most countries that have suffered violence during elections do not have access to economic and social facilities in the country. They are excluded from the politics of the land either through default or intentional. For instance, the electoral violence that occurred in Cote D’Ivoire was as a result of the political exclusion between the north and the south which divided the country.

Secondly, the socio-economic uncertainty of losing political power in states where almost all power is concentrated at the centre is another cause of political violence in Africa. When leaders fear losing all the benefit they enjoy in power, they will always refuse to concede defeat if they lose elections. There is a high possibility of violence if the winner takes all and all the others have is to prepare for the next elections. As a result of the economic uncertainties, many politicians resort to all illegal means to acquire political power (Gillies,

2011). These politicians may even go to the extent of employing militias or the state security agencies to either win the elections at all cost or clinch on to power at the expense of others. When this happens, it results in violence which is an affront to democracy.

Also, election fraud is another very important cause of electoral violence. When there is a suspected or real fraud in an election, the parties that are affected by that electoral fraud may resort to violence. This often happens when the people do not have any confidence in the institutions of state. Many parties in Africa, which lose elections often, ascribe their loss to fraud. The most recent allegations of fraud in Africa, is the 2017 elections in Kenya where the opposition party that lost the elections cited several incidences of fraud. There were some pockets of electoral violence in the opposition strongholds which led to the death of some people. However, the violence did not spread as happened in the 2007 elections because the opposition leader decided to resort to the Supreme Court.

Moreover, ethnicity is another cause of electoral violence in Africa. Erdmann (2007) and Widner (1997), argued that ethnic politicization promotes electoral violence. Ethnicity in itself is not evil because ethnicity is just the relationship that exists amongst people. In the opinion of Chazan et al (1998: 102) ethnicity is "a subjective perception of common origins, historical memories, ties, and aspirations; ethnic group pertains to organized activities by persons, linked by a consciousness of special identity, who jointly seek to maximize their corporate political, economic and social interest". There can be the creation of ethnic consciousness that emphasizes the knowing of oneself as different and unique from others based on their source of origin (Young, 1976; Lentz and Nugent, 2000).

The politicization of ethnicity is encouraged through the means of patronage and patron client

relationship and other forms. Some people do their political mobilization by hiding behind ethnicity. Erdmann (2007) argues that, the main causes of Africa's conflicts are associated with ethnicity and identity. Most political parties in the new democracies are not formed along ethnic lines. However, most of the parties mobilize through ethnic lines and identity which is making their societies risk ethnic violence.

Hoglund (2009) added that politicians often use words like “Stronghold”, “Cadres” and “citadel” which they use to garner support and sympathy from people who come from their place or share in their ideologies. These words are mostly used to increase loyalty to those using them and hatred to other political opponents. When this happens, it increases tension among ethnic groups and regions especially during elections. Bekoe (2010) agrees with Hoglund. Bekoe (2010) argues that ethnic marginalization is the “epitome of violent clashes in the newly democratized African states”. This is the cause of the division, sectionalism and protracted conflicts witnessed in Africa. Politicians use ethnicity in politics to gain favour and loyalty from their people. It is important to note that the consequences of ethnic divisions encourage tension during elections in the newly democratized states in Africa. The states have people from different ethnic groups who may see each other as enemies, particularly when they belong to different political parties. This division and hatred for each other's ethnic group leads to political tension and in some cases electoral violence.

In addition, electoral governance is another factor that can lead to electoral violence. Electoral governance can play a role by inducing violence especially in conflict prone areas. In post conflict societies, election administration may create some circumstances that may be favourable for violence to occur (Sisk 2008). In the view of Sisk (2008), the structures, the level of competence of the people and the level of fairness of any electoral institution can

determine their ability to organize credible elections. Lyons (2004: 282), also stated that the “efficiency, professionalism, transparency, impartiality and independence are important preconditions to come up with legitimate election outcomes.” However, in circumstances where these conditions are not met, there is a higher risk of political instability and electoral violence (Pastor 1999). This means that those in charge of electoral governance must also strive to be impartial in discharging of their duty.

Finally, electoral systems that countries adopt are another cause of electoral violence in Africa. The choice of an electoral system has an impact on conflict dynamics in post conflict and fragile societies. In Hoglund’s words, “In these societies, the choice of such systems may facilitate conditions favourable for election related violence” (Hoglund 2009: 422). Adolfo (2012) also stated that “in societies where the structural conditions of elections create high incentives for violence, the institutional and administrative arrangements in place for regulating the electoral contest can play a key role in either mitigating or instigating election-related violence.” Electoral systems that are more open and allow an inclusive means of mobilizing voters may not motivate electoral violence. However, in situations where the electoral systems are made to favour only some political parties at the expense of others, it is an avenue for violence. Also electoral systems that are more exclusive like the winner-takes-all system or first-past-the-post-systems are more prone to violence, especially in societies that are already divided.

2.6 EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

Electoral violence has impacted negatively on many African countries that have suffered it. Some of the negative effects of electoral violence, according to the literature include:

First, is a security implication for the affected countries and the continent as a whole. When electoral violence occurs, the security of the countries involved becomes very volatile and that extends to other neighbouring countries. In the view of Omotola (2008), some of the prominent security challenges during electoral violence include, total breakdown of law and order, increase in number of internally displaced persons (IDP), increase in the number of refugees and militarization of the society. Omotola (2008) supported her assertion with the fact that after the 2007 electoral violence in Nigeria, there was total breakdown of law and order in states that were already volatile.

In addition, electoral violence in Africa leads to increase in the numbers of IDPs. Many people are internally displaced during violence. Some therefore run to embassies and other international organizations present in their countries to seek shelter because they cannot return to their homes of comfort. According to the Kenya Red Cross Society (2008), the number of people who were internally displaced in Kenya were more than 300,000 as a result of the post-electoral violence that occurred in 2007. These large numbers of IDPs also come with their problems. Apart from the security challenges in managing these large numbers at the camps, the IDPs are also exposed to several contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Omotola, 2008).

Another negative implication of electoral violence in Africa is that, it leads to human rights abuses. The attempt to restore sanity during violence means that the government has to deploy military men and the police to maintain law and order. In the case of the 2007 electoral violence in Nigeria, these security men subjected the people to harassment, abuse and even killed some (Omotola, 2008). Electoral violence in Africa is often associated with intimidations, extortion, torture and rape.

In addition, electoral violence is the cause of most of the legitimacy crisis that the African continent is facing. After the 2007 violence in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, the legitimacy of the governments were often challenged by both the opposition and the people who were apolitical (Omotola, 2008). Some of the famous ways of protest include peaceful and violent ones-peaceful protests involve demonstrations and litigation in electoral courts, while violent outbreaks result in killings, arson, looting, destruction of properties and the resultant imposition of curfew, and the militarization of the state and society.

Moreover, electoral violence hinders operative political competition and participation. This is because it made only those who were strong right ,as in the Hobbesian view of nature, people who have enough powers became main players. In the view of Omotola (2008), the democratization process in most of these countries slowly weakens and the people are just reduced to nothing but onlookers instead of key stakeholders of democracy. The attendant culture of political apathy represents a major threat to democratic consolidation.

Finally, electoral violence in Africa has important foreign policy implications. Preferably, every cultured country aims at the ethics and virtues of the post- Cold War order, where the issue of being a good international citizen features prominently. Good international citizenship requires conducting free and fair elections to be internationally recognized. The inability to do these in most African states has been a sore point in their external relations, most notably leading to an external image crisis. In the aftermaths of recent Kenyan, Nigerian and Zimbabwean elections, the international community has raised critical eyebrows about these countries. This has consequences for economic diplomacy, as Africa is being seen as incapable of conducting credible elections. The resultant violence scares potential investors away, as much as it retards other forms of assistance and development.

2.7 MANIFESTATIONS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA

The inception of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2012) in recent times, has always witnessed some pockets of violence during elections. However, this violence witnessed in Ghana during elections is very different from those witnessed in other African countries like Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ivory Coast. The differences between them are that, the violence in Ghana did not degenerate into full blown conflict as witnessed in other African countries. Ghana's political process has been progressively characterized by verbal abuse and intemperate language. These verbal abuse and intemperate language can trigger a lot of controversies and disputes which can threaten the peace Ghanaians are enjoying now (Okaebea-Danso and AduEfful, 2012).

The 1992 constitution made provisions for power alternations every four years in competitive elections, free and fair elections conducted by an independent electoral commission. Interestingly, Ghana has been able to conduct seven uninterrupted elections including the 2016 elections.

These elections all contributed to the tensions among the political parties with an attendant unstable atmosphere in which some persons or groups become liable to engaging in acts of political and electoral violence on the slightest pretext or provocation. Political or electoral violence in Ghana has not been as extensive or devastating as witnessed in Cote d'Ivoire (2000, 2010), Nigeria (2003, 2007, 2011), Zimbabwe (2008) and Kenya (2007). However, the grassroots violence or isolated incidents of electoral violence that occur as a result of harsh speeches or intemperate political language have become a repeated characteristic in Ghana's presidential and parliamentary elections since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992 (Okaebea-Danso and Adu-Efful, 2012).

In the view of Aning and Danso (2012), notwithstanding the importance of elections in the consolidation of Ghana's democracy, elections in Ghana are regularly beset by limited violence which intimidates the peace, security and stability of the country. He further stated that these acts of violence have been witnessed in almost all the elections in the Fourth Republic. They mostly happen before, during and after elections, and are in the form of threats, intimidation, physical assault, destruction of electoral materials, as well as the use of hate speeches and inflammable language. Politicians regularly employ these acts of violence as working tactics to win elections.

According to Gyimah Boadi and Brobbey (2012), "Ghanaian elections have been fraught with extreme tension, including intimidation, organized thuggery, and sporadic flare ups of interparty violence". Politicians always use vigilante groups to frighten and threaten voters during elections and also destroy campaign posters of their opponents. Amankwaah (2013), also stated that "macho men exist in the imagined national history of Ghanaian election-related violence as thugs, who political leaders commonly hire during elections to snatch ballot boxes and intimidate voters at polling stations in various places around the country". Political parties often frame elections in military terms. The NDC in 2012 even went as far as establishing what they called the 'Heroes Fund' for party activists who sustain injuries during the 2012 election campaigns. Such an action by a major political party like the NDC is very dangerous for the future of Ghanaian democracy. This is because the supporters of the NDC can be encouraged by this fund to foment troubles during the elections since they know there is money set aside for them in the event that they sustain injuries.

Despite the fact that Ghana has been successful in the conduct of national elections, and has been considered the bastion of democracy in West Africa, the future of Ghana's democracy is still in doubt. This is because the country continues to witness disturbing infractions which render uncertain the future of Ghana's democracy. Various challenges that threaten to

destabilize the peace and security Ghanaians enjoy are thus continually witnessed in the country (Danso and Lartey, 2012).

During the 2008 elections in Ghana, violence began during the voter registration exercise which serves as the first phase of the election period. Voter registration, which is a very simple exercise of the electoral process in any normal circumstance, should not be characterized by many challenges. Unfortunately, Ghana's registration exercise in 2008 was characterized with acts of destruction and attacks on party agents, EC officials, journalist and potential voters coupled with clashes between supporters of the NDC and NPP mostly in the Northern, Volta and Ashanti regions (Alhassan, 2008; Asmah, 2008). In the view of Gyampo (2008), "there were reported cases of minors being sent by political party officials in buses to register, acts of intimidation, gunshots, people taking the laws into their own hands and preventing people suspected to be political opponents from registering, and so on". Alhassna (2008) also noted that there were sporadic gunshots In the Northern Region as supporters of the NPP and NDC supporters took the law into their own hands and destroyed registration centres, claiming the process was compromised.

Reprisal attacks and escalated attacks mostly by the NPP and the NDC occur when the Election Day draws closer. These attacks often involve unemployed youth who claim to be staunch members of the NPP and NDC (Danso and Lartey, 2012). Elections in some weird circumstances especially in the Northern Region serve as a fertile ground for feuding groups to express their grievances ,especially those relating to chieftaincy and land.

A study undertaken by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, 2008) revealed that "the most serious threat of violence occurred in the Tolon constituency. A chieftaincy

conflict, with political undertones, is brewing in the area' [and that] 'a known sympathizer of an opposition party, was suspected to be trying to install two sub-chiefs in two villages noted to be strongholds of the ruling party (Kpalsogu and Golinga) in the Tolon-Kumbungu District". In both 2008 and 2012, there were reported incidences of violence in the Odododiodio constituency in the Greater Accra region. The Ghana News Agency (14-04-2012), reported that Ursula Owusu of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) parliamentary candidate for Ablekuma South and Abu Jinapor an aid to the NPP's presidential candidate were attacked during a tour of some registration centres in the Odododiodio constituency on Wednesday, 12th April, 2012. Ursula Owusu and Abu Jinapor stated that they were attacked by abled bodied men (Macho men) who were wielding clubs, machetes and canes. The attack prompted several condemnations from civil society groups and some sections of the media who stated that these kinds of violence are very dangerous for Ghana's democracy.

2.8 FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR GHANA'S ELECTORAL SUCCESS

In his book "Electoral Politics in Ghana's Fourth Republic", Frempong (2012) puts across some factors that have contributed to Ghana's electoral achievements in the Fourth Republic (p. 265-270).

In my opinion, these factors have contributed to ensuring that the manifestations of electoral violence have not degenerated into civil wars. These are: The History of Elections; The Constitution; Institutions of Governance; Election Management & Electoral Reforms; Inter-Party Consensus Building; The Party System; Two-Party System; Two- Party System with Active third Parties; The Ethno-Regional Structure; Turnovers; Winners Attitude; Loser's Reaction and Resilience; The Ghanaian Spirit; Civil Society and, finally International Support.

2.8.1 History of Elections

Elections in Ghana date back to the pre-independence era, where elections were characterized by both negative and positive outcomes. The 1951 election, in which the Convention People's Party (CPP) won, was evidence of the party's organisational and strategic abilities, even though the elections and referenda of the mid- 1950's and 1969 were tainted with ethnic regionalist motives. There was also the abuse of incumbency in the 1960's by the Nkrumah-led CPP government.

Paradoxically, the 1979 election was held under worse conditions, yet produced one of the fairest outcomes. The presidential candidate Hilla Limann of the People's National Party (PNP), a diplomat and a scholar who had not been involved in the politics of the country before, won the run-off winning seven of the then nine regions.

The above experiences of yester years have contributed to the prevention of degeneration of electoral violence (p.270).

2.8.2 The Constitution

The featuring of multi-party democracy in the 1992 constitution was an integral aspect of the transitional process from military dictatorship to democracy.

After more than a decade of PNDC rule in Ghana, the country returned to constitutional rule in January 1993 after the April 1992 referendum. The constitution made provisions for facilitating democratic elections, some of which are:

1. The guarantee of the basic freedoms of speech and expression, assembly, association among others which apart from being useful in themselves, have created an enabling environment for civil society groups and political parties to operate.

2. The innovative provisions on intra-party democracy, mass participation in election and politics in general, equal access of contestants (candidates and parties) to public media and the removal of all impediments to the establishment of private media.
3. The term limits with the potential for alternation in power and the more than 50% threshold for electing the president which forces candidates and parties to forge national coalitions (p. 265).

2.8.3 Institutions of Governance

The three arms of government – legislature, executive and judiciary have all their roles contributed to the avoidance of degeneration of election related violence. The Ghanaian parliament promptly passed the various Acts for establishing the constitutionally mandated commissions of the Electoral Commission (EC), National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the National Media Commission (NMC) in July 1993. The executive under the auspices of the presidency of various administrations have stayed off the work of the EC, sometimes by yielding to the pressure of public opinion and the self-assertion of the EC. The impact of the judicial arm of government in managing election related petitions with urgency cannot go unnoticed. The fixing of a common day for both parliamentary and presidential elections in 1996, the controversy of the use of thumb-printed ID cards of 2000, and the inclusion of the thirty (30) new constituencies in the 2004 elections are significant.

The Supreme Court in 2012 received a petition from the NPP flagbearer Nana Akufo- Addo, his running mate, Bawumia and the late party chairman Obetsebi Lamptey. This was in disagreement with the EC declaration of the 2012 presidential elections, which declared the NDC presidential candidate winner. The judiciary worked in collaboration with the media to

both educate and ensure that violence was averted by the use of the constitution. Akufo-Addo quickly accepted the ruling, in spite of disagreeing with the verdict upholding the victory of the NDC candidate, then President Mahama to govern the country.

The success story of Ghana's Fourth Republic electoral politics would be incomplete without acknowledging some constitutional commissions- CHRAJ, NCCE and NMC. These have in their respective spheres been protecting and promoting human rights, creating awareness of citizens' responsibilities and rights (p. 266). Media Independence is also among the conditions that have yielded the high standards of journalism. This has ensured that the Media plays its constitutional roles rather than an agency for perpetuating sensationalism that fuels election-related violence by any state or non-state entity.

2.8.4 Election Management and Electoral Reforms

Election administration is an inextricable component of the conduct of any election. It has been argued that election administration is the thin line that separates the success and failure of transitional elections and that the character, competence and composition of the electoral management body can determine whether an election becomes a source of peaceful change or cause of serious instability (Pastor 1999:1, 5, cited in Frempong 2012, p. 266). Prior to the establishment of the permanent EC in July 1993, the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) organised the transitional election of 1992. It was confronted with serious challenges, the foremost being the limited period to organise the election within a highly politically charged environment. There were technical irregularities which were interpreted as politically inspired against the opposition forces since the incumbent Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) was in the contest.

The operationalization of the following electoral reforms such as: first, the transformation of the commission to the collegiate structure, the constitutionally- mandated independence and security of the tenure of the Electoral Commissioner (EC) have together made possible an enabling environment for the commission to function. Secondly, the shortcomings and challenges of INEC, have facilitated the creation of a positive image and confidence in the work of the EC (Frempong 2007, 2008 cited in 2012 p.267).

Finally, the formation and contributions of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), together with both local and international donor agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the Media have been collectively sensitizing the public. This has provided a platform for ventilating electoral grievances, which if unattended to, may degenerate into violence.

2.8.5 Inter- Party Consensus Building

The IPAC system provides an avenue for resolving differences among parties and the EC. As the Electoral Management Body (EMB), it has incorporated initiatives and decisions of IPAC into electoral regulations which have been decentralized at the regional and district levels. Innovations like the Political Parties Code of Conduct, which regulates electioneering campaigns, would not have been actualized without the input of CSOs (Frempong 2012, p. 267).

2.8.6 The Party-System: Two- Party with Active Third Parties

Ghana's Fourth Republic is currently dominated by two political parties- NPP and NDC; these have been alternating political power. On the other hand, the continued participation of the third parties that have persistently lost, due to the two parties above, have kept the multi-party system functioning and, on two occasions of presidential run-off, held the balance of power (Frempong 2012 p. 268). The two-party tradition has ensured that the defeated dominant party, at each election, retains substantial presidential vote and parliamentary

presence. This prevents the winning party from becoming too dominant. Again there is the possibility of the dominant defeated party to re-capture power, as has recently occurred after the landslide victory of the NPP in the 2016 general elections from the NDC. This pattern of electoral succession gives assurance to the opposition majority party, and encourages it not to resort to electoral violence but work out lawful electoral strategies that will enable them win.

2.8.7 Turnovers

Ghana's Fourth Republic has experienced successful alternation of political power. Though multi-party system of democracy is practised, the two dominant parties-NDC and NPP have had three turnovers. The peaceful handing over to NPP in 2000, after serving two terms and the NPP's own handover after losing by a very close margin less than 0.5% in the 2008 presidential election (Frempong 2012 p. 269) all attest to this.

The proverbial electoral two-turnover test has been attained by Ghana. In the recent 2016 presidential election, the NPP won the election after eight years of NDC rule. On the contrary, some African countries have failed to respect the constitutional procedure for legitimate conduct of elections. They employ electoral fraud, which yields electoral violence. These then degenerate into civil wars and unrest.

2.8.8 Losers' Reaction and Resilience

The players in the electoral game of elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic have contributed to the electoral success of the country. Political parties' reactions- whether as winners or losers, their resilience to return after an "electoral knockout" (Frempong 2012 p. 269) also explains why there has not been the degeneration into electoral violence. In 1992, the NPP reacted to its defeat with a boycott of parliamentary poll and the writing of the "*Stolen Verdict*," but

they conceded defeat in 1996 (Frempong 2012 p.118). In the year 2000, the incumbent NDC ceded power to the opposition NPP, and also after re-election of the NPP in 2004. The NPP handed power back to the NDC in 2008, till 2012. Following the declaration of the results of the 2012 presidential elections by the EC, the NPP disagreed with the results. Therefore, the NPP petitioned the Supreme Court; the verdict of the court upheld the victory of then President Mahama. Then candidate Akufo-Addo issued a statement accepting the verdict though he expressed disappointment, and admonished his NPP followers to do same by respecting the constitution. The resilience of Nana Akufo- Addo was seen when he appeared for the third time, on the presidential ballot paper as the flagbearer of the NPP. He won the 2016 presidential election with an unprecedented margin of 53.80% and 44.40% for John Mahama (NDC).

In most African countries, incumbencies find it difficult to hand over power after losing an election. Recently in the Gambian presidential election (December 1, 2016) incumbent president Yayah Jammeh conceded defeat after opposition candidate Adama Barrow emerged as winner. On December 9, Jammeh appeared on Gambian state television only to revoke his earlier pronouncement. He had decided to reject the outcome of the recent election due to serious and unacceptable abnormalities during the electoral process. This heightened post electoral tension, but for the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) electoral violence would have occurred. The Jammeh government in Gambia was accused of numerous human rights abuses during its 22 years in office.

2.8.9 The Role of Civil Society and International Support

Civil Society groups, together with the Media, have offered voter education, peace mongering and poll watching roles. These have aided the credibility of the electoral process,

enhanced local ownership and confidence among Ghanaian electorates and electoral observers (Frempong 2012 p. 269,270). Electoral violence occurs in political environments where the Media is not independent, and civil society groups are disallowed from creating awareness on issues that affect the citizenry and the nation at large. In as much as Ghana's electoral record in the Fourth Republic is concerned, the success story has both national and international dimensions to it. International donor support in the form of financial, material and technical assistance has been enjoyed by the country. The transition from the use of opaque to non-opaque ballot boxes, the introduction of photo ID cards, revision of the electoral register, and lately, the biometric registration and verification, confidence and consensus building through IPAC, capacity building of electoral officials etc, have all positively impacted the conduct of elections (Frempong 2012 p. 270).

Acknowledgement and recognition should be made of the moral support and visits from eminent world leaders. These include such persons as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, US Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama, late Nelson Mandela of South Africa, not forgetting the input of the diplomatic community.

2.8.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature reviewed explains elections and electoral violence in Africa, with emphasis on the manifestations, causes and implications.

The main objective of this study is to find out why despite the fact that there is always tension and low intensity of violence during Ghanaian elections since 1992, it has not degenerated into high intensity violence as witnessed in other African countries like Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast. This work purports to fill the gap in literature on Ghana's exception to the general rule of elections being marred by major incidents of violence and armed conflict in much of Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology outlines the research procedures and design for data collection and data analysis. This chapter as well explains the philosophical paradigm used by the researcher to address the identified research issues. It finally addresses the limitations encountered in the conduct of the research.

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD

Among the various research methods available to researchers for research conduct are qualitative research method, quantitative research method and mixed method research design which is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2003). For a successful study of this work, the researcher adopted the qualitative research method. Below is a brief discussion on the qualitative research method.

3.1.1 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research approach involves systematic investigation into complex social issues using flexible methods for data collection such as observations, in-depth interviews, review of documents etc (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Kothari (2004) explains this research method as involving a subjective evaluation of a social problem or behaviour. It makes use of non-numerical data techniques such as in-depth interviews, focus group interviews with the intention of “discovering the underlying motives and desires” (p. 3). It is therefore devoid of numerical data collection techniques and it grant

researchers in the behavioural sciences the opportunity to discover factors that inform the manner in which humans behave.

Now in the conduct of qualitative research, because findings are documented, it becomes expedient for the researcher to protect the identity of research participants to avoid issues of insecurity. In view of this, ethical issues play a significant role and as such, must be put into consideration (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Patton and Cochran thus address two ethical issues which are relevant in any qualitative research conduct. These are Consent and Confidentiality. By consent, participants must be willing to fully participate after the details of the research process have been explained for their full understanding. This means that people are not forced to participate in a research process. Consent could be sought using either verbal or written means. Confidentiality has to do with the assurance given to the research participants to keep their information secret from the public (ibid.). Even though qualitative research approach has been criticised as involving tedious and complex processes for data collection and adopting small sample size for studying a wider population and as such may not be helpful (Choy, 2014), it however, has quite a number of advantages that make it different and highly recommended for social research as compared to other research methods.

Among its advantages include its usefulness for obtaining in depth information on complex and difficult issues from a small population, unlike quantitative research which relies on a large population size for generalisation. Qualitative research is thus useful for getting in-depth information on a particular subject under study. Again, the use of flexible data collection tools for an enquiry, like interviews, helps to bring to light relevant issues or information which would not be obtained using quantitative data collection tool like a questionnaire.

The qualitative study is appropriate and significant to studies that aim to undertake an in-depth study of a case. In my quest to examine why Ghana has experienced some mild forms of electoral violence, but these have not escalated into full blown civil wars, the qualitative strategy is highly recommended. This is because its data collection methods, especially the use of interviews, will be useful to provide the researcher with detailed and relevant information as she interacts with people with in-depth knowledge of the nature of the Ghanaian electoral mechanisms and how it helps to address issues that pertain to conflict and violence. The significance of the qualitative method to this study is its ability to engage the participants actively in the research process for a deeper understanding of the research issues.

3. 2 PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM

Identifying the basic assumptions that underpin any research project is significant since they influence the conduct of the research. The philosophical paradigm explains clearly the reasons for adopting a particular research approach, either qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. Creswell identifies four different paradigms that exist for researchers. These are; “postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy or participatory, and pragmatism” (2003). According to him, the philosophical assumptions help researchers to make claims about what knowledge is (ontology), how we know it (epistemology), the values that go into it (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric) and finally the processes for studying it (methodology) (Creswell, 1994, cited in Creswell, 2003).

Based on the nature of the research under study, the constructivism paradigm would be adopted to help understand this research. This view allows for knowledge construction through interactions, thus through open interaction and discussions with respondents with knowledge on this research topic, the study can successfully arrive at reasons why Ghana has

not had any instances of outbreak of civil wars based on violence that characterize our electoral process, unlike other African countries. Below is a detailed explanation of the constructivist philosophical view.

3.2.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is most often combined with the interpretivist view. It is often called the social constructivist paradigm. The basic assumption underpinning the social constructivist view is that humans long for an understanding of the world within which they find themselves (Creswell, 2003). In view of this, this paradigm is more concerned with understanding and interpreting the social world rather than making predictions. This assumption makes the constructivist paradigm suitable for this study. The objectives of this research could be achieved by relying on the views of different relevant respondents through interactions and discussions with them.

The different subjective views expressed by respondents as the researcher openly interacts with them are influenced by the interactions they have with others in their social environment as well as their historical and cultural norms. These different views are what the qualitative researcher studies in order to make certain conclusions. Social constructivism therefore focuses on people's perceptions and interpretations as the sources for obtaining primary data and insider information (Mason, 2002). Constructivists adopt mostly open-ended interactions with their respondents because this grants the opportunity for the researcher to gain detailed knowledge or information from participants as he listens carefully (Creswell, 2009).

3.3 SOURCES OF DATA

The research used both primary and secondary data sources. While field interviews served as sources for obtaining the primary data, secondary data were gathered from books, journal articles, and reports, documents from web pages etc. Databases such as SAGE Publications and JSTOR were used to obtain articles on electoral violence. Both sources of data helped enrich the empirical study.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The research used interviews for collection of primary data. The reason for adopting this qualitative tool was for detailed responses from the respondents. The use of in-depth interviews enhances the researcher's opportunity to clarify questions for the respondent in order to obtain the most useful and detailed information.

A semi-structured interview guide was used as guide for primary data collection. The interview guide was scripted to provide an outline of topics to be covered. Though questions were based on the outline on the guide, the researcher followed with subsequent questions based on the answers given by the respondents. Respondents could freely express their knowledge of the topic. This technique was to enhance the quality of responses from respondents who had detailed knowledge and experience on the topic under study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and permission sought for recording with a recorder. It was later transcribed in order to capture every answer given by the respondent.

3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The researcher found it appropriate to use the purposive sampling method to achieve the aims of this study. This is a non-probability sampling technique which allows for convenient and deliberate selection of only people with a fair knowledge of the study (Kothari, 2004). Based

on the researcher's judgement of which participants have a fair idea of the research topic, the researcher carefully selected a total of 10 respondents likely to provide credible information to achieve the study's objectives. These included state institutions such as the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service, The National Commission for Civic Education, the National Peace Council and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Centre, civil society organizations such the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, Institute of Democratic Governance, Coalition of Domestic Election Observers; and the media represented by CitiFm.

3.5 LIMITATION AND PROBLEMS

The study encountered some limitations and difficulties like any research work in the Social Sciences. To begin with, the researcher's quest to use qualitative method of gathering data by means of interviews encountered some difficulty in the inaccessibility of the officials to be interviewed. At the Electoral Commission offices, it was difficult to get access to the commissioners and some staff owing to the fact that the research was organised in a period where the three commissioners were being investigated. The researcher in the face of this problem was faithful with her time so as to meet the busy schedules of the officials at the EC. When the EC officials arranged meetings with the researcher, the researcher was there promptly.

The researcher encountered the challenge of officials withholding some information because they feared to release that information. Some EC officials saw the research as sensitive and dragged their feet in confidently speaking to the researcher on the issues under the study. This could be as a result of the fact that the right to information law has not yet been passed in Ghana.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations were given serious attention in the study. These included confidentiality clauses in the interview; maximum privacy for participants was ensured whilst participation was based on informed consent. In order to achieve this goal, the researcher made sure that all the respondents who participated in the study did so purely on voluntary basis, without any form of coercion. To ensure privacy, interviews were conducted in the various offices of respondents.

Additionally, participants were instructed not to reveal any of their identities. These assurances gave the participants the confidence that the responses given will not be traced back. After the analysis, the data was kept locked in a password protected locker to prevent the data from getting into the wrong hands.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter presents the data gathered from the interviews. It illustrates the data and analyses same with the purpose of addressing the research questions as well as attaining the overall objective of the study.

The Chapter sets the stage for discussion by outlining the various viewpoints of the interviewees. This data as gathered from the in-depth interviews is then discussed within the context of available literature on election and electoral violence in general and Ghana in specific. The discussions are carried out under themes and sub-themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews. The various themes that constitute the headings for these discussions include;

In-depth interviews were preferred as instrument for data gathering for the study. With the adoption of a purposive sampling method, the researcher selected ten (10) key informants who possess adequate knowledge about the study for interview. Three respondents representing Civil Society Groups were selected from the IDEG, CDD-Ghana and the WANEP. Five respondents were selected to represent state institutions that deal with election-related matters; two from the Electoral Commission, two from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre, and one from the National Peace Council. One respondent was selected from the University of Ghana, Political Science Department, whilst one another person was selected from the CitiFm to represent the media.

4.1 THE NATURE OF POLITICS IN GHANA

The nature of politics in Ghana is a microcosm of African politics. The data gathered reveals that the politics in Ghana is not only highly competitive, but also raises tension all year round. Some of the defining features of Ghana's politics according to the respondents include the following;

4.1.1 Two party system

The respondents described the political system in Ghana as one dominated by two political parties. Thus, the respondents unanimously iterated that the political system has been characterized by two dominant ideologies (ie Nkrumahism and Danquah-Buasia traditions) and two political parties (the NDC and NPP). This they have argued supports arguments that the country now practices a two party system. A respondent from the EC, for instance quipped that although there has been alternation of power since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, it has only been between the two dominant parties. He posited further that a careful look at the political parties reveals some close alignments. Thus whiles the NPP stands alone in the Danquah-Busia tradition, the NDC appears to align with the PNC and CPP as the Nkrumahist.

4.1.2 Acrimonious and Conflictual

Politics in Ghana has not been distinct from the generally acrimonious nature of African politics. As has been revealed by the data gathered, Ghanaian politics is characterized by massive acrimony mostly between the government and the main opposition. Majority of the respondents alluded to this fact and argued that the political terrain in Ghana, ceases not to witness banter between the government and its opposition. Respondents from the WANEP, IDEG and the Political Science Department all lamented the insurrection of vigilante groups on the political scene and the potential harm such developments could bring to bear on the

country's democracy. The respondent from the WANEP for instance noted that although militia groups used to exist, their transformation into violent groups does heighten tension and insecurity in the state's political system.

4.1.3 Neo-patrimonial Politics

The Ghanaian political system has also been described as neo-patrimonial in nature. Majority of the respondents held the view that the country's politics runs on the "Patron-Client network" module. Elaborating on this, a respondent from the IDEG iterated that

Neo-Patrimonial Politics is the kind of politics based on the Patron-client network relation. This means there are the "Big men" who are the patrons and the followers who are the clients. The big men promise to offer any thing that the clients' need – jobs, cash, anything that the clients believe can be provided for them including opportunities. The clients are relatively poor and under privileged, the only thing they can give back to the patrons is their Blind Loyalty. (Field Note, 2018)

Thus, the politician often uses the ordinary Ghanaian to achieve his or political ambition after which they are ignored. The people however see the politicians as their source of good fortunes. One would have to establish some good ties with political bigwigs if he or she is to enjoy any benefits from government.

4.2 FACTORS THAT ACCOUNT FOR ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA

The elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic have not been devoid of violence although the scales do differ. These views was assented by the respondents as they attempted to identify some of the factors that contributed to such occurrences. Through the gathered data, the following emerged as the underpinnings of violent elections in Ghana.

4.2.1 Winner-Takes-All Politics

All ten respondents identified the Winner-takes-all politics practiced in Ghana as the root cause of all electoral violence. This situation where the political party that wins elections

virtually controls everything in the country to the neglect of others often creates strivings for power. A respondent from the EC indicated that

The type of political system practiced in Ghana does not allow for “power sharing” mechanisms. If a political party loses an election for a parliamentary seat, what are the options available? Is it possible to get a lower level appointment that winner takes all mentality politics in Ghana, is the key driver for violence, we lack power sharing arrangements in our system – the first past post, somebody can beat you by one vote margin and he/she wins an election. This puts everything in his or her power. And the presidential system, two terms of service, the majoritarian system – 50% plus one (50% +1) and the winner appoints over thousands of officers and basically these appointments will all come from his political party. So, if you mobilize resources as losing party to even contest you do not get anything at the end of the day. These kinds of practices put pressure on others to be violent (field Note, 18).

To buttress this, an official from the NPC intimated the winner takes all politics also creates conflicts, especially where people are excluded from governance. Furthermore, structural challenges like poverty, unemployment also make people become susceptible to violence. Especially, when they think they should get jobs which they are not getting, roads which are not fixed. All these feed into elections. Attention to commentaries around the country before elections are centered on community needs. Some communities clearly tell politicians not to come to them until they solve their peculiar problem i.e. roads, schools, etc. virtually telling politicians that their ability to solve their developmental needs is linked to them becoming the president or MP (Member of Parliament).

Again, an official from the KAIPTC pointed out that people have criticized the system of politics we operate, “the winner takes all”. That once you win an election it means the others who did not win are cut off from the governance of the country, because of that those who are losing may want to find means of preventing that defeat that is coming.

This was further corroborated by an official from the CDD who reiterated that the system of politics we have – winner takes all. It has created an atmosphere that had led people to put their fortunes to that of their political parties. So, if my party is not in power I do not get “daily bread”. Why then should I sit down for my party to lose? So, people do anything so that their political parties or their preferring parliamentary candidates win. This is also explained by the promises given to party followers. For instance, the Invisible Forces who attacked the judicial courts at Kumasi to free their colleagues said they promised to give them jobs and when they came to power they brought somebody as a Regional Security Coordinator who did not fight with them.

Most youth in Ghana now look up to politicians. People think that without “my political party I will not get a contract, without my political party my relative will not become the MP, DCE, A constituency chairman, “this then, becomes a booty for the person who is fortunate to hold the position, together with the family and friends across the country. This is typical example of politics of clientelism. So, people will never like their political party in opposition – as Samuel Ofose Ampofo said, being in opposition is hell.

The views of the respondents above are supported by Hoglund (2009 :422), who sums the causes of electoral violence by concurring with the proposition of Sisk (2008) that higher stakes in winning or losing in an election propels political parties, candidates in the election and supporters to defend their gains. This epitomizes the winner takes all principle in politics in Africa where the losers lose everything completely, hence those in power fear loss. It is important to emphasise that the occurrence of electoral loss is precarious on states where political victory offers the survival and livelihood of a segment of society, either ethnic or clan. In such cases political parties tailor their campaign messages and programs to attract extremist groups to get their support in terms of votes. By so doing the political parties divide the state and create an atmosphere that is volatile. Hoglund (2009:422) points out that “the

uncertainties of democracy will prove intolerable and they will attempt to organize a coup coalition to either pre-empt or overturn the electoral process”. Secondly, the socio-economic uncertainty of losing political power in states where almost all power is concentrated at the centre is another cause of political violence in Africa. When leaders fear losing all the benefits they enjoy in power, they will always refuse to concede defeat if they lose elections. There is a high possibility of violence if the winner takes all and all the others have to prepare for the next elections. As a result of the economic uncertainties, many politicians resort to all illegal means to acquire political power (Gillies, 2011).

4.2.2 Unemployment and inequality

On the issue of unemployment and inequality, an official from IDEG posited that economic factors are also factors of electoral violence in Ghana. There are high levels of inequality in the economy. He intimated that there are so many youth that could not find jobs in the system, leading to mass unemployment, social and economic hardships which are unbearable for many of these people, precipitating violence.

His views were supported by another respondent from the KAIPTC who posited that elections have become a means to livelihood for many people in Ghana. People depend on elections for jobs, and anything that is going to deprive them of their jobs is going to deprive them of their livelihood. These people therefore try to protect their livelihoods by protecting their political parties or guide against erosions made by their political parties. This makes the stakes in elections always high in Ghana; leading to tension and violence during elections in the communities. Moreover, an official from the Political Science Department reiterated that elections have become a means of livelihood to many people. People depend on elections for their livelihoods. This is as a result of high levels of unemployment in Ghana. Because of this people would want to use whatever means to win elections in order to have access to political

power and resources so that they can distribute resources to people who helped them to win political power. An official from the IDEG also pointed out that unemployment is a major cause of electoral violence in Ghana. The unemployment situation is getting worse and worse day in and day out.

It is very important to take note of these young people who are unemployed. A huge proportion of our population under the age of thirty (30), that is, about 51%-52% are unemployed. They are young, strong and energetic, with little or no education, no money – they are poor. They engage in acts of violence without thinking. So long as many of them have very low education, no job, no cash, there is always a supply of young adventurous people who are ready to commit any act of violence at the command of anybody who has the money to feed them. And this is a time bomb (field Note, 2018).

Finally, a respondent from CitiFM iterated that there is a high level of unemployment and inequality in the country. So these people assume they have nothing to lose, which makes it possible for political parties to deploy them for violence. For example in 2008 when people felt that the election results were being tampered with or stolen they massed up at the EC with dangerous implements ready to cause havoc. Thus, if the state fails to collectively educate and improve people's lives economically and the people feel they are cut off from the state they can be incited to do anything.

The above explanations by respondents were corroborated by D'Ivoire (2013) that in Africa, due to the high stakes attached to political power, elections are characterised by fierce competition, exhibited by supporters of political parties or candidates who have the tendency to resort to violence in order to promote the interest of their political parties. They undertake this action considering the rewards at stake for them should the other emerge winners of the elections.

4.2.3 Mutual mistrust in systems

Some respondents were also of the view that mutual mistrust has contributed to electoral violence in Ghana. For instance, an official from the CDD intimated that one of the causes of electoral violence in Ghana is mutual mistrust. Politicians do not trust each other. And this mistrust is somehow extended to the EC. This is because the opposition political parties do not trust the party in power which is perceived to be controlling the electoral commission. For example, there is the perception that the Israeli firm Superlock Technology Limited (STL) which was contracted to transmit electoral results were lured to manipulate votes and transmit electoral results in favour of the NDC. The perceived suspicion also extends to the regions and constituencies especially in the strongholds of the two major political parties. An official from the EC further opined that there is a lack of understanding among the political parties and other stakeholders in the electoral processes in Ghana, this breeds mistrust. Hence people perceive electoral manipulations even among EC officials, leading to party agents questioning every process undertaken by the officials.

The views held by the respondents above are supported by Lipset and Rokka (1967) who explained that societal conflicts play a major role in the occurrence of electoral violence in Africa and newly democratized states. In their view, electoral conflict and controversies arise as a result of the inter-relationship that exists between the social structure and societal construct in Africa. In other words, the cleavages are entrenched due to the internalization and the institutionalization of electioneering conflicts and clashes that are entombed on communal divisions, and which produces mutual mistrusts which are mutually reinforcing (Lipset1967).

4.2.4 Weak state institutions

On the role of state institutions towards electoral violence, a respondent from the CitiFm iterated that institutions in Ghana, especially the security institutions, have not worked adequately to stamp out violence in our body politics. For example, the security institutions fail to jail people who commit violence when their party is in power. This has promoted a lot of impunity in the system. Besides, the politicization of our security institutions and the judiciary have also undermined these institutions from adequately punishing those who break the law.

Equally, an official from the EC intimated that weak institutions have also contributed to electoral violence in the country. Because the police service and other security agencies are not up to the task there is growth in political vigilantism. “Macho men” under the guise of political vigilantism have taken the law into their own hands, which is a key driver to electoral violence in Ghana. More so, political parties in Ghana, especially the NPP and the NDC, have taken advantage of the weak security institutions to set up their own security services having their own weapons. Thus weak institutions have led to proliferation of weapons in the hands of party security services which promote violence during elections. To buttress this, a respondent from the KAIPTC suggested that the security agencies are not up to the task as they have failed to prosecute perpetrators of crime who are found culpable of electoral violence. Since there are no severe deterrents others are motivated to commit crime in the name of politics.

These views are corroborated by Sisk (2008) who intimated that, the structures, the level of competence of the people and the level of fairness of any electoral institution and officials can determine their ability to organize credible elections. Lyons (2004: 282) also stated that the “efficiency, professionalism, transparency, impartiality and independence are important

preconditions to come up with legitimate election outcomes.” However, in circumstances where these conditions are not met, there is a higher risk of political instability and electoral violence (Pastor 1999). This means that those in charge of electoral governance, especially the security agencies and officials from the EC must also strive to be impartial in discharging of their duty.

4.2.5 Inadequate education

On the issue of education, an official from the Political Science Department intimated that part of the reason of electoral violence is lack of education. Low levels of education have created an erroneous impression in the minds of illiterate population that democracy guarantees them the right to do anything. This has engendered electoral violence in many constituencies populated by illiterates. His views were supported by an official from the IDEG who posited that little or no education among the youth is endangering Ghana’s democracy. Their lack of education and understanding of real issues make them prone to electoral violence.

4.2.6 Monetization of politics

Regarding monetization as a cause of electoral violence, an officer from the KAIPTC argued that monetization of the electoral system is another factor promoting electoral violence in Ghana. Political parties are able to mobilize resources from unknown funders in order to execute their campaign. This put a lot of pressure on politicians who assume that they must win the elections in order to pay off their debt and to mobilize enough resources to wage the next campaign. This makes them employ any tactics available to them including violence to win the elections. His views were held by a respondent from CitiFm who reiterated the position that money has assumed a significant role in Ghanaian politics; when people join

political parties in Ghana they assume that they have joined for economic survival, and because they assume they have economic connections with the parties that win the elections, it makes it a do or die affair as the economic fortunes are tied to that of their political parties.

4.3 MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING ELECTION RELATED VIOLENCE IN GHANA

4.3.1 National Peace Council

The NPC was identified as one of the mechanisms to address electoral violence in Ghana. In this regard, a respondent from the CDD pointed out that one of the mechanisms for addressing election related violence is the institution of the national peace council. This is a body that mediates between and among political parties and candidates when any misunderstanding arises before, during and after elections. For instance, the NPC makes the political parties sign peace pacts to ensure peace during campaigns and also engage in shuttle diplomacy to calm down nerves among leaders of the political parties and their candidates before election results are released. The institution has also been decentralized into Regional and District peace boards which contribute to the peace process in the regions and the districts. An officer from the NPC in buttressing the above point indicated that the NPC engages in both public and non-public activities. For instance, the NPC engages both the political parties and the electoral commission as to the steps they undertake to ensure not only peaceful elections but also credible elections. They also share notes with the security agencies on how they prepare to prevent any violence before, during and after elections.

4.3.2. The law courts

An official from the EC suggested that the court plays a significant role in addressing electoral disputes and violence in Ghana. He intimated that whenever a dispute arises regarding the delimitation of electoral boundaries the final point of arbitration is the high court after the Chief Registration Review Officer (CRRO) has failed to address it. He further suggested that any dispute regarding electoral outcomes is supposed to be arbitrated by the court. Thus disputes involving parliamentary election petitions are supposed to be addressed by the high court with the court of appeal as the final arbiter, while presidential election petitions are supposed to be adjudicated by the Supreme Court. These mechanisms are employed by the courts to mitigate electoral conflicts and violence.

4.3.3. Inter Party Advisory Committee

More so, a respondent from the KAIPTC pointed out that the IPAC has been one of the main pillars when it comes to elections, as it serves as a medium through which the political parties, together with the Electoral Commission, meet to address any misunderstandings and differences among them. This has helped to promote cordial relationships among members of different political parties, and thus reduce animosity for possible conflict. His views were supported by an officer from the CDD - Ghana, who also reiterated the fact that the EC in its quest to eliminate animosity and antagonism among political parties instituted the IPAC. This provides the platform for the members of the political parties to meet regularly to discuss pertinent issues to agree on certain principles upon which the EC conducts elections. With this, political parties are able to seek clarifications of otherwise complicated issues which might have sparked conflicts and to clear ambiguities. For example, it was under IPAC

meetings that all the political parties agreed that at the end of every registration, copies of the registration album should be given to all the political parties so that they would have the number of people in the register at any point in time.

4.3.4 Elections security Taskforce

An official from the CDD iterated that security agencies have done very good work under very difficult circumstances that they find themselves in Ghana. For instance, they have identified violent- prone places as “hot spots”. Thus, during elections they teamed up with the EC to deploy security personnel to these hot spots. The police have identified over 1000 hot spots while the EC has identified over 1300 hot spots. By identifying and deploying security personnel to these hot spots the police are able to maintain peace before, during and after the elections. Besides, the security agencies together with the EC established the Election Security Task Force (ESTC) made up of all the security agencies, the EC, the National Security and chaired by the IGP at the national level. This special arrangement has worked out perfectly to control violence as it does not discriminate against political parties’ supporters who misbehave during elections.

4.4 REASONS WHY ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN GHANA HAS NOT DEGENERATED INTO VIOLENT CONFLICTS

4.4.1 The Role of the Media

Regarding the ways in which the media has helped to prevent degeneration of violence into armed conflict, a respondent from the CitiFm remarked that the media plays a critical role to ensure that violence in Ghana does not degenerate into serious conflict. He intimated that media coverage plays an intervening role as media personnel are able to impose their influence on political leaders. Thus the media plays an auxiliary role by acting in ways that

moderate the behaviour of political leaders. To buttress this, an official from the EC asserted that the media provides an avenue for people to air their views. This provides some satisfaction for those whose views are heard on radio, therefore providing a kind of therapy to prevent vengeance. Moreover, an official from the CDD was of the view that the media has helped to moderate political violence in Ghana. The rich contribution from radio discussions, especially those related to the flaws in the EC operations, have helped to forestall peace and moderated otherwise violent electoral processes. In spite of this, there are a few media houses which are politically aligned and which throw out garbage insults and incite their audience. Finally, an official from the KAIPTC also pointed to the fact that the media plays a critical role in moderating election violence in Ghana. Many media houses reports issues of violence for quick responses from the security agencies in order to forestall peace. Their involvement in declaration of electoral outcomes also promotes transparency and reduces tension in the country.

The views of these respondents are held by Arthur (2010) who reiterated that as the fourth estate of the realm, the media has been instrumental in safeguarding the country's democratic principles by performing its watchdog and monitoring functions. It has done so by exposing attempts by various groups to buy votes and influence the electorate not only in the run up to elections but also during the elections itself. In particular, it has acted as a check on the government and public office holders by raising issues of transparency and accountability.

4.4.2 The Role of Chiefs and Religious Leaders

A respondent from the CitiFm asserted that intervening bodies like the traditional and religious leaders play influential role in moderating the behaviour of political leaders. For instance, the traditional and religious leaders persuade key political actors in Ghana to be

moderate in their speeches and actions in order not to inflate unnecessary passions and emotions for conflict. Again an EC official was of the belief that traditional and religious leaders work together to ensure that tensions among political parties do not escalate into armed conflict. Religious leaders and chiefs in most part serve as the spiritual fathers or “god fathers” of most of these politicians, which makes it possible for the traditional and religious leaders to step in when there is degeneration in the relationship and breach of trust among the parties. Furthermore, an official from the KAIPTC also made reference to the role of the chiefs and religious bodies in calling people to order. He reiterated that the religious and the traditional rulers act in ways that restrain the behaviour of the political leaders. This goes a long way to prevent excesses in the actions of the political leaders which might have promoted conflict. A respondent from the NPC corroborated this when he suggested that religion has helped Ghanaians a lot. Religious principle of non-retaliation preached by the religious leaders has greatly contributed to non-violence among many Ghanaians. Again, mutual respect for religion among Christians and Muslims has contributed to religious tolerance among Christians and Muslims.

Besides, an official from the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana, also added that the role of the religious and traditional leaders as “peace preachers” during elections has contributed in no small way to the brimming peace we have witnessed. The National House of Chiefs and National Peace Council command a lot of regard from politicians due to their influence. Although all their actions are not public it is worth noting that they wield a lot of influence in determining the course of the country. Finally, an official from the KAIPTC commenting on this noted, for instance, the influence of the Asantehene’s call to all leaders during political seasons. He quipped that impact of the word from such an esteemed king on the actions of politicians is enormous. It will often be difficult if not impossible for anybody with that kind of clout to declare a word that will command such

audience if not the traditional leaders. Their influence both on constituency and regional representatives of political parties helps to constrain political tensions.

4.4.3 The boarding school system

An official from the KAIPTC intimated that the boarding school system has helped forged national unity among the educated elite in Ghana. Thus Nkrumah's policy of promoting national unity through the boarding school system has ensured that students of different ethnicity live in a common room (dormitory) which helps promote friendship and national integration by eliminating mutual suspicion among students of different ethnic groups. This view was supported by an official from the NPC who also stated that the boarding school system as the legacy of colonialism which was continued by Dr Kwame Nkrumah promoted integration among different ethnic groups who have learnt to live harmoniously. The effect is the promotion of peaceful co-existence among Ghanaians. In furtherance of this, a respondent from the CitiFm also shared similar sentiment when he asserted that the boarding school system has helped to promote togetherness among the elites. In this regard, people who went to the same school though may belong to different political parties are able to interact in ways that promote national unity. For instance, *Mr. Kwadwo Mpianim, a one-time Chief of Staff under Kuffour administration revealed that when some element in the NDC persuaded Professor Mills not to concede defeat to Kuffour in the 2004 elections, he together with some of his mates in Achimota were able to impress on him to concede defeat. According to Mr. Mpianim, this was possible because Professor Mills happened to be their mate at Achimota.* Equally, an official from the CDD also opined that the school system, especially the boarding school system, promotes integration of different cultures as well as inter-marriages. Therefore, typical issues of ethnicity which have endangered the peace of Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya and other places are unlikely to happen in Ghana.

4.4.4 The trajectory of election outcomes

A respondent from the CitiFm pointed out that successive elections in Ghana have tended to produce an electoral cycle which ensures that every 8 years there is a change in government. This gives hope to the losing party that assumes that within no time, they will come to power again. This therefore moderates how they react to loss of power. To buttress this, an official from the Political Science Department quipped that somehow, the fact that we have been alternating power is also another issue. The violence will become general if persistently one political party wins all the elections and the others fear that they do not have any chance at all to win. But fortunately, in Ghana the two major parties have been alternating in power. So the party that loses an election finds solace in the fact that eight years will surely come and it will be their turn to clinch power.

4.4.5 Effective Civil Society Organizations

An official from the CDD suggested that CSOs play significant role to prevent escalation of electoral violence into armed conflict. For example, the CDD has established what they called Political Environment Alert (PEA) through which monthly statements are issued to alert the security agencies and the EC on areas of potential violence. These alerts to the security agencies also promote prompt and strategic deployment to the hot spots to prevent escalation of conflicts.

This was supported by an official from the IDEG who indicated that CSOs play meaningful role to reduce electoral violence. For instance, he intimated that IDEG has introduced what they called Peace and Anti -Violence Actions. Thus, in every election year IDEG collaborate with the national election task force by alerting them to areas of possible violence for prevention. IDEG also educates the electorate on the possible consequences of electoral

violence as well as the various hot spots where violence is likely to erupt. All these are done to prevent the possible eruption of violence and escalation. Finally, an official from the Political Science Department posited that CSOs play a vital role in calming tensions and getting factions to smoke peace pipe. He underscored that often some of the activities of some of these institutions are not seen publicly, but they contribute a lot to the sustenance of our peace. Thus, they are able to work behind the scenes to calm what could have easily led to an outbreak of violence.

The views of the respondents are supported by Arthur (2010) who asserted that besides the role and contribution of the media, the achievements and accomplishments of Ghana's democratic consolidation process have been aided to a large extent by the dramatic improvement in the political space for expression and representation. This is very much evident in the activities of CSOs. While some of the domestic civic groups that played a role in exerting pressure on the government during the transition process have metamorphosed into political parties in the current democratic dispensation, a number of them have still maintained their role as CSOs and have played crucial roles in deepening and sustaining the democratic process in Ghana. As demonstrated by the examples below, domestic civil society groups have played critical roles in sustaining the country's young democracy by being the channels for promoting and protecting the values of various groups, shaping public opinion, influencing public policy and reporting on political activities. They have broadened and stimulated political participation and supplemented the efforts of political parties by encouraging Ghanaians to be involved in the electoral and voting process. They have also mobilized the public through press conferences, aggregated the interests of various groups and communicated their political and democratic demands to policy-makers, as well as sent memoranda and delegations to the government.

4.5 ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROMOTION OF PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

The respondents were oblivious of the fact that institutions ranging from constitutional, civil societies and auxiliary ones play several roles in the quest to ensure peaceful elections. Among some of the roles as illustrated by the respondents are education, elections monitoring and observation and supervision. On education they noted that citizens are sensitized on the need for peaceful elections, their responsibilities before, during and after elections, and the various avenues for redress if they have any challenges with the election system. Elaborating on this a respondent for the National Peace Council noted that the council often organizes programs to sensitize people who could easily cause mayhem during elections. These groups often include the popular “vigilantes and macho-men”.

Another indispensable role of these institutions is the coverage of elections. This role according to the respondents is mostly carried out by the media and civil society organizations. The respondent from Citi FM, for instance noted that CSOs such as CDD Ghana, Star Ghana and IEA do a lot of work in this regard. Thus, they are able to mobilize resources and go to the interiors of Ghana to observe the happenings during elections. The respondent from CDD also noted that their outfit for instance operates what is termed as Political Environment Alert (PEA). This he noted is used to release periodic statements on electoral issues in the build-up to elections. These reports according to him offer neutral opinion as the operations of the organization is not manipulated by political parties . Citing an instance he noted;

“In 2008, people were very apprehensive about pictures of supposedly killed supporters of NPP in the Volta Region posted on social media. People did not know that they were pictures from mortuaries. But when CDD released a statement on the issue that it was false, immediately tensions subsided.” (Field note, 2018)

The above indicates that the success of elections does not rest on a single individual or institution but on a collaborative effort. These institutions, however, face some challenges in their quest to discharge these roles. Evidenced from the data gathered, the most disturbing of these challenges are financial, logistics constraints and political interference.

4.5.1 Financial constraints

Ten out of the eleven respondents acknowledged the effect of financial constraints on their activities. Most of the CSOs' budget is drawn from sponsorships and as such their actions would come to a standstill or will not be ran on a national basis if they are unable to secure adequate funding. The situation is not different for the public institutions that have state budgetary allocations. Lamenting on this, the EC officials recounted how the commission has often been under- resourced or received resources very late. Thus, the late receipt of resources by the EC for the execution of its work hampers its activities. An official posited: "if you get the resources from the state on time you can plan very well, so if you plan and the resources are not coming then you will be put under pressure and when you work under pressure you commit mistakes" (Field Note, 2018). He further noted that even though the Election Security Task Force's structure was designed and accepted in early 2016, it never received any funding for its activities in the 2016 elections. A similar situation if not worse is told of the NCCE. The official noted that they had to often rely on donor funding to carry out their activities during elections.

4.5.2 Political interference

Another issue that the respondents identified as challenging the activities of institutions is the interference of politicians. Unanimously, the respondents held the view that politicians, and particularly the government in power, have often interfered in the activities of institutions in the state. The president's power to appoint and dismiss at any time and the authority to grant

or revoke the permission of CSOs often affects their effectiveness. The officials from the EC identified this as a major challenge. They noted that the police, for instance, have their head i.e. the IGP, who is basically a political appointee, and acts at the behest of the president. Loyalists of the ruling party who violate the laws during elections often get fired at the call from a high office. This is because such political appointees occupy their office because the president is happy about their work. Once he is not happy they can be removed from office. This interference thus makes the police ineffective when it comes to dealing with electoral violence.

4.5.3 Weak institutions

Most of the respondents again identified weak institutions as a challenge in dealing with electoral violence. Closely linked to political interference, they argued that most of the institutions have been engrossed in politics. This has created a distrust among the general populace in their acts that have political connotations. Elaborating on this, the official from CDD stated that some of their reports are often considered as politically motivated and as such denies them the audience.

4.6 THE LIKELIHOOD OF GHANA GETTING PLUNGED INTO ARMED VIOLENCE

On this issue, most of the respondents were of the view that Ghana is not immune to armed violence. They argued that if the consistent violent skirmishes during elections are not well managed, they could subsequently degenerate into violent conflicts. Commenting on this, an official from the NPC intimated that the violence associated with elections remains one of the biggest threats to Ghana's democracy. Citing the insurgence of vigilante groups for instance, he noted that when people are ready to do anything for their party to win, then the safety of democracy cannot be assured. Such attitude, he pointed out, is dangerous and unhealthy for

democratic development. To avert this, Ghana would have to work at making elections an ordinary activity where people go about their daily routine. On his part, a respondent from IDEG posited that, although we have been able to escape the experiences of countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and La Cote d'Ivoire, steps must be taken to consolidate it. He noted

“Almost every election has threats of outbreak of violence. There is Delta force here, Asoka Boys, Bolga Bulldogs. We have so far been very lucky... So, we have to take adequate measures to stop these localized incidents from becoming nationalized. Because if violence breaks out within localities and one person dies, it is just one person too many, even within a small area” (Field note, 2018).

To buttress this, an official from the KAIPTC iterated that the localized clashes as witnessed in Ghana depict the genesis of the experiences of its sister countries that have experienced armed electoral violence. He lamented the increasing activities of vigilante groups whose operations normally go beyond the security agencies' management capability. This means that when these groups multiply and recruit more people into their fold, the country is heading towards a dangerous end. This was supported by a respondent from WANEP who suggested that, the overly partisan and hate speeches are drifting the country towards a dangerous terrain. He noted that comparative study by his outfit on the 2012 and 2016 Ghanaian elections revealed a rise in violence. To this end, he argued that one would not need any divine unction to predict that if such a trajectory continues the democratic credentials of the country look bleak. Finally, an official from the CDD noted that we have been fortunate, all the characteristics that exist in other African countries like Rwanda, Sudan, neighboring Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Nigeria that sometimes are faced with serious conflicts and sectionalism are all here in Ghana. This fortune can however not be relied upon forever. If steps are not taken to remedy such escalations, recounting success will not always be the case.

4.7 HOW TO CURB ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

On this issue, some of the respondents expressed doubt about the possibility of eliminating electoral violence because of the contest nature of elections itself, but the general view held is that it could be minimized and not escalate into armed violence.

4.7.1 Education

Voter education, is one of the surest ways that the majority of the respondents noted could help curb electoral violence. A respondent from KAIPTC suggested that the Peace Council must intensify their education and also help design modalities for peace education in the country. Generally, intensification of public education remains key for understanding the electoral processes and the need to restrain oneself during elections. Citing the 2016 elections as an example, the director of NCCE noted a reduction in the activities of “macho-men” as compared to some previous elections. This he attributed to the education that was given to citizens on what was prohibited and the punishments that one was liable to as a culprit. This sensitization put both fear and assurance in people to not engage in violence.

A Political Science lecturer also opined that educating citizens to understand that elections do not amount to the end of life , and that it involves either winning or losing which will have great impact on reducing tension and anxiety. He further noted that, such understanding through stakeholders and other relevant institutions is the surest way of defusing tension, which potentially could have degenerated into violence. Noting the importance of education in dealing with electoral violence the official from the EC suggested that it should not be put on wait till election time. Thus, there must be conscious effort to institutionalize the campaigns on violence and not only during elections.

4.8 DELIBERATE POLICIES TO REDUCE THE BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH WINNING ELECTIONS

Majority of the respondents identified that the tensions that often accompany elections could be brought to low levels if the incentives for winning elections is reduced. To them, reducing the influence of a victorious party in the state's affairs and the monetary incentives that come with it amounts to a sure way of nabbing electoral violence. A respondent from KAIPTC queried this: "if as an individual I win elections four times and with each gets an ex-gratia, why should I easily concede defeat or retire? This mind set will however be defused if a cap is placed on benefits of being in power.

4.8.1 Professionalism within the media:

The professional conduct of media practitioners was also identified as a way of dealing with electoral violence. Most of the respondents asserted that the media has most often been at the center of electoral violence in Africa. Their unprofessional conduct such as inflammatory language, misrepresentation of facts and concocting non-existing stories serves as the breeding ground for tension and confusion. Commenting on this, Bernard Avle, a journalist, intimated;

"I think professionalism is very important, so the journalist themselves must improve their craft. The kind of people the media give airtime to, is very important. Media must blacklist people who advocate electoral violence. Media houses must have honor codes for reporting in a certain way that will foster peace. Media must work with civil society groups like Star Ghana, CDD, IEA to bring resources together, to focus on issue- based elections. Coverage of elections should not be just about numbers and voter turnout, it must be about tracking of development. When we do all these things the media will reduce the tension in the country." (Field note, 2018)

4.8.2 Strengthen institutions specifically the security agencies, judiciary and the EC

Six of the respondents intimated that the nature of electoral context would definitely generate conflicts and as such the need for institutions to address them. This they argue justifies the

indispensable roles of the judiciary and the security services. But this can only be successful when the institutions are robust and able to rise to the task. Lartey, from KAIPTC, elaborating on this noted that;

“The Election’s Security Task Force has to be acknowledged for its role of containing violence within specific locations but immediately after the elections, the group is disbanded and we come back to normal. The security however often lose trust when it comes to how election related incidences and prosecution are handled. If we can strengthen especially the police by restructuring how the appointments in the service are made, it will allow the police structure to demonstrate professionalism in tackling some of these things. This will inspire confidence in the public who would know that institutions will deal with incidences as they occur.” (Field note, 2018)

He noted also the need to ensure a continuous training of the judiciary to strengthen them in handling election related suits quickly and professionally. Educating judges on handling such cases must therefore not be put on hold until we approach elections.

4.8.3 The need for dialoguing and consensus building on national issues

Seven of the respondents also acknowledged the need to ensure continuous dialoguing and consensus building as a means of mitigating election violence. They argued that one resorts to violence only when he/she feels the turn of events has not taken his/her interest into consideration. Such mind-sets could be dealt with if actions related to elections take into consideration the inputs of all stakeholders through dialogues and consensus reached. On his part an official from the EC quipped that “to promote the sanctity of our election atmosphere, we should continue to hammer on the consensus building solution. The EC could in consultation with other stakeholders put in place mechanisms to reduce abuse of incumbency. If the EC, in collaboration with the Council of State or National Peace Council can put in place a mechanism to be able to inform or to advice the government or put in a mechanism that has representation to check and reduce abuse of incumbency, it will help. Because, if a person feels that the resources belongs to all of us and the one in power is using the resources

to the disadvantage of the opposition parties it may cause violence.” (Field Note, 2018). Citing “*The Dialogue Series*”, for instance, where the IGP invited all political party representatives to the CID headquarters where a dialogue was held with the Catholic Bishop’s Conference, the Christian Council and every conceivable institution one can think of, played a significant role in preventing violence in the 2016 election.

4.8.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the nature of politics in Ghana, Factors that account for electoral violence in Ghana, Mechanisms for addressing election related violence in Ghana, Reasons why electoral violence in Ghana has not degenerated in to violent conflict, Roles and challenges of institutions in the promotion of peaceful elections in Ghana, The likelihood of Ghana getting plunged into armed violence and finally, How to curb electoral violence.

Chapter five, will focus on the summary and findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the findings drawn from chapter four. This is attained by identifying the topical issues discovered in the data and how it relates with the existing literature. The exercise would then form the basis for drawing conclusions on the issues under consideration. The chapter proceeds with recommendations to help address the infractions realized. These recommendations are drawn from the topical issues brought to the fore in the summary of findings and tailored towards contributing to the enhancement of peaceful election for democratic consolidation.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of findings has been discussed under various thematic headings. These headings are derived from the research questions which are based on the objectives of the study. The central objective that the study sought to achieve is to assess electoral violence in Ghana.

5.1.1 Factors that account for the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana

The following factors were identified as causal factors for recurrent electoral violence in Ghana. The first factor accounting for recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana is the Winner-Takes-All Politics. The study revealed that the system of politics we have which is “winner takes all” has created an atmosphere that has led people to link their fortunes to that of their political parties. The winner-takes- all politics creates conflicts especially where people are excluded from governance. That once you win an election it means the others who

did not win are cut off from the governance of the country because of that, those who are losing may want to find means of preventing that defeat that is coming.

Additionally, the study revealed unemployment and inequality as another factor promoting recurrence of election violence in Ghana. The study discovered that there are high levels of inequalities in the economy. The study revealed that many youth cannot find jobs in the system, and this has led to mass unemployment, social and economic hardships which are unbearable for many of these people, precipitating violence. Again, these unemployed youth assume they have nothing to lose, which makes it possible for political parties to deploy them for violence.

More so, mutual mistrust in the political system was identified as another factor promoting recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana. The study revealed that mutual mistrust has contributed to electoral violence. There is a lack of understanding among the political parties and other stakeholders in the electoral processes in Ghana. This breeds mistrust. Hence people perceive of electoral manipulations even among EC officials, leading to party agents questioning every process undertaken by the officials.

Furthermore, weak state institutions were also identified as a factor contributing to electoral violence in Ghana. That state institutions in Ghana, especially the security institutions, have not worked adequately to stamp out violence in our body politics. For example, the security institutions fail to jail people who commit violence when their party is in power. This has promoted a lot of impunity in the system. Besides, the politicization of our security institutions and the judiciary have also undermined these institutions from adequately punishing those who break the law.

Additionally, lack of education was identified as another cause of recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana. Low levels of education have created an erroneous impression in the minds of illiterate populations that democracy guarantees them the right to do anything. This has engendered electoral violence in many constituencies populated by illiterates.

Moreover, monetization of politics was found to be another cause of electoral violence. The study revealed that political parties are able to mobilize resources from unknown funders in order to execute their campaigns. This puts a lot of pressure on politicians who assume that they must win the elections in order to pay off their debt and to mobilize enough resources to wage the next campaign.

5.1.2 Why electoral violence in Ghana has not degenerated into armed conflict

The following conditions were identified as the factors which have prevented the degeneration of electoral violence into armed conflict in Ghana.

First of all, the role of the media was identified as a critical condition which has helped to prevent electoral violence in Ghana. It was revealed that the media plays a critical role to ensure that violence in Ghana does not degenerate into serious conflict. That media coverage plays an intervening role as media personnel are able to impose their influence on political leaders. Thus the media plays an auxiliary role by acting in ways that moderate the behaviour of political leaders. Again, the rich contribution from radio discussions, especially those related to the flaws in the EC's operations have helped to forestall peace and moderated otherwise violent electoral processes.

It is also striking to note that the role of the chiefs and religious leaders has also helped prevent electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflicts. They moderate the

behaviour of political leaders. It was revealed that traditional and religious leaders work together to ensure that tensions among political parties do not escalate into armed conflict.

Additionally, the findings revealed that the boarding school system acts to prevent electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflict. The boarding school system has helped forge national unity among the educated elite in Ghana. The system ensured that students of different ethnicity live in a common room (dormitory) which helps promote friendship and national integration by eliminating mutual suspicion between and among students of different ethnic groups.

In furtherance of this, the trajectory of election outcomes was identified as another factor which has helped prevent election violence from escalation. The study discovered that successive elections in Ghana have tended to produce an electoral cycle which ensures that every eight years there is a change in government. This gives hope to the losing parties which assume that within no time, their party will come to power again.

Moreover, the study found out that effective civil society organizations have played significant roles to prevent election violence from degenerating into armed conflict. Those CSOs play significant role to prevent escalation of electoral violence into armed conflict. For instance, the CSOs have established what they call Political Environment Alert (PEA) through which monthly statements are issued to alert the security agencies and the EC on areas of potential violence.

5.1.3 Measures to forestall the recurrence of electoral violence in Ghana's future elections

The following conditions were identified as factors that forestall recurrence of violence for future elections in Ghana.

First of all, the National Peace Council was identified as a critical institution that helps forestall recurrence of violence in Ghana's future elections. The study revealed that the NPC was one of the mechanisms to address electoral violence in Ghana. The study found out that the NPC mediates between and among political parties and candidates when any misunderstanding arises before, during and after elections. For instance, the NPC makes the political parties sign peace pacts to ensure peace during campaigns and also engage in shuttle diplomacy to calm down nerves among leaders of the political parties and their candidates before election results are released. The institution has also been decentralized into Regional and District peace boards which contribute to the peace process in the regions and the districts.

Second, the law courts were also identified as a mechanism which is capable of forestalling recurrent electoral violence in future elections in Ghana. The study discovered that the court plays a significant role in addressing electoral disputes and violence in Ghana. For instance, whenever a dispute arises regarding the delimitation of electoral boundaries the final point of arbitration is the high court after the Chief Registration Review Officer (CRRO) has failed to address it. The study also revealed that any dispute regarding electoral outcomes is arbitrated by the court. These mechanisms are employed by the courts to mitigate electoral conflicts and violence.

More so, the study identified inter-party advisory committees as another mechanism that can help forestall recurrent electoral violence in Ghana's future elections. The IPAC has become one of the main pillars of elections in Ghana as it serves as a medium through which the political parties together with the Electoral Commission meet to address any misunderstandings and differences among them. This has helped to promote cordial

relationships among members of different political parties and thus reducing animosity for possible conflict.

Finally, an elections security taskforce was revealed to be another condition that can help forestall recurrence of electoral violence in future elections in Ghana. The study discovered that the security forces have identified violent- prone places as “hot spots”. Thus, during elections they teamed up with the EC to deploy security personnel to these hot spots. The police have identified over 1000 hot spots that they provide security during elections. By identifying and deploying security personnel to these hot spots the police are able to maintain peace before, during, and after the elections.

5.1.4 The nature of the political system in Ghana

The study revealed the following as the nature of elections in Ghana.

First, the study revealed two party systems as the nature of elections in Ghana. It was revealed that Ghana’s political system is dominated by these two dominant political parties, ie, NDC and NPP. These political parties have been winning elections since the inception of the Fourth Republic, where there has been the alternation of power between these parties with the other political parties not able to make significant impact during elections.

Furthermore, the research discovered acrimonious and conflictual relations as a nature of the political system in Ghana. Ghanaian politics is characterized by massive acrimony mostly between the government and the main opposition. The political terrain in Ghana ceases not to witness banter between the government and the opposition.

Lastly, the study revealed the neo-patrimonial politics as a key nature of the political system in Ghana. The politician often uses the ordinary Ghanaian to achieve his or political ambition

after which they are ignored. The people however see the politicians as their source of good fortunes. One would have to establish some good tides with political bigwigs if he or she is to enjoy any benefits from the government in power.

5.1.5 The Impact of Violence on Democratic Consolidation in Ghana and Africa

The study revealed that democracy in Ghana is characterized by violence though not to the degree of violence in other places on the continent. Nonetheless, this violence when not controlled can degenerate into armed conflict, undermining democracy in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. The study further revealed that these skirmishes indicate that Ghana is sitting on a time bomb. That the country is not immune from armed conflict, and which undermines democratic consolidation in Ghana.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Ghana has managed to conduct seven successive, free and fair elections upon return to democracy in the Fourth Republic. Each of these elections has experienced some minimum level of violence and tensions. The major political parties have been in the forefront of such violence. The threat of this violence degenerating into armed conflicts has led CSOs to design strategies to forestall these skirmishes.

The study indicated that there are multiple sources of violence ranging from mutual mistrust to high levels of unemployment and income inequalities.

The study also indicated that certain institutions, such as the security task force and National Peace Council, and the chiefs and religious leaders, when taken care of will be able to perform some intervening roles to moderate the behaviour of the political class.

Finally, low levels of education have not helped in the promotion of democracy in Ghana. There is therefore the need to promote education as a means of sensitizing the citizens on the need for democratic development.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made by the researcher:

First, there must be the promotion of violent free elections based on the depoliticization of ethnicity by political parties. To achieve this there must be an elite consensus building by the various political parties we have in Ghana to avoid the use of ethnicity to gain cheap political advantage. The parties' electioneering campaigns should be based on issues affecting the people. Anything outside interest aggregation and articulation should be discouraged to enhance smooth democratic development.

Second, the state must provide adequate mass and civic education on elections and democracy. The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) mandated by the 1992 Republican Constitution to provide civic education should be strengthened. Adequate funds and logistics that are needed for effective and efficient civic education on democracy and elections should be released. It must be emphasized in the civic education that elections are not competitive warfare but rather a peaceful means of selecting leaders to govern society.

Third, there must be the institutionalization and the strengthening of political parties' code of conduct. The modality for the conduct of politics and elections must be entrenched and strengthened or promoted. This code of conduct could include the choice of words that political parties should use at their campaign rally grounds.

Fourth, there must be the strengthening of the Inter-party Advisory Committee (IPAC). The Electoral Commission (EC) should promote discussions and consensus building at IPAC meetings. Political parties should seek clarifications about election modalities at the IPAC meeting. Political parties should note that jaw jaw is better than war. The Inter-party advisory committee has proven to be positive in finding a lasting solution to political party discords.

Finally, there must be an efficient and independent mass media. The media is important to Ghana's democracy to educate the masses about their civic responsibility. The use of provocative and inflammatory speech ought to be discouraged. The mass media in Ghana should discharge its official duty fairly and without bias towards any political party. Besides, in the event of tense electioneering campaigns, the mass media should be professional and calm tension in their reportage to avert the creation of violence. The state should involve itself in the capacity building of the mass media personnel. The enabling environment needed for training and development of the mass media must be created.

The law courts and security apparatus must be guided by the Principle of The Rule of Law in the discharge of their constitutional mandate before, during, and after elections.

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APPENDICE

Department of Political Science

University of Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS

TOPIC: ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA (1992 – 2012)

Dear Respondent,

This is a study being conducted by Master of Philosophy (MPhil Part II) student of Political Science Department on the above topic. The study seeks to investigate electoral violence in Ghana. The information being sought is purely for academic purpose. You are therefore assured that any information and responses provided will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and thus will not be disclosed to any individual, group or organization which might misuse the information. Your name is therefore not required. Thank you for your participation.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KAIPTC

1. What is the nature of party politics under the Fourth (4th) Republic?
2. Comment on the mechanisms (avenues) available for conflict resolution.
3. Do you see them as fair or effective?
4. What are those factors that make Ghana's elections susceptible to violence?
5. Why is it that in spite of the activities of constitutional bodies like NCCE and the security services, there has been the manifestation of electoral violence in all general elections?
6. Can the localized nature of electoral violence which has characterized all elections of the 4th Republic threaten Ghana's credentials as a peaceful country?
7. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflicts as witnessed in other African countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, etc?
8. What are some peculiar measures that can be put in place to forestall electoral violence in Ghana's future elections?

WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACE BUILDING (WANEP)

1. What is the nature of party politics under the fourth republic?
2. Comment on the mechanisms (avenues) available for conflict resolution among political parties and within a political party.

3. What are the factors that account for electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
4. What roles have WANEP been playing in the conduct of elections in Ghana's fourth republic?
5. What has WANEP been doing to help forestall electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflict?
6. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflict as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc.?
7. Does the persistent recurrence of electoral violence threaten the democratic development in Ghana's fourth republic?

GHANA POLICE SERVICE

1. What role does the Service play during the conduct of general elections?
2. What measures does the Service put in place during elections to minimize the incidence of electoral violence?
3. Why is it that in spite of the role of the Service during elections, violence recurs in elections of the fourth republic?
4. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflicts as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc.?
5. What are some of the challenges faced by the Service in the management of electoral violence?

INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, IDEG

1. What is the nature of party politics under the fourth republic?
2. Comment on the mechanisms (avenues) available for conflict resolution.
3. Do you see them as fair or effective?
4. What are the factors that account for electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
5. What roles have IDEG been playing in the conduct of elections in Ghana's fourth republic?
6. What has IDEG been doing to help forestall electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflict?
7. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflict as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc.?
8. Does the persistent recurrence of electoral violence threaten the democratic development in Ghana's fourth republic?

THE MEDIA IN GHANA

1. What is the nature of party politics under the fourth republic?
2. Comment on the mechanisms (avenues) available for conflict resolution.
3. Do you see them as fair or effective?

4. What role do the media play in the conduct of elections in Ghana's fourth republic?
5. What factors in your view account for electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
6. Has the media contributed to the recurrence of electoral violence that has characterised the fourth republic?
7. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflict as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc.?
8. How can the media contribute to minimizing electoral violence in Ghana's future elections?

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION, NCCE

1. What is the nature of party politics under the fourth republic?
2. Comment on the mechanisms (avenues) available for conflict resolution.
3. Do you see them as fair or effective?
4. What has been the role of the commission in the conduct of elections in the fourth republic?
5. What factors account for electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
6. What measures can be put in place by the commission to forestall the degeneration of issues into electoral violence?
7. What are some of the challenges that confront the commission in the process of contributing to peaceful election in the fourth republic?

PEACE COUNCIL

1. What is the nature of party politics under the fourth republic?
2. Are political parties agents of conflict?
3. Comment on the mechanisms available for conflict resolution within and among political parties.
4. Do you see them as effective?
5. What are the factors that account for electoral violence in Ghana's fourth republic?
6. What roles have the Peace Council been playing in the conduct of elections in Ghana's fourth republic?
7. What has the Council been doing to help forestall electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflict?
8. Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflict as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc.?
9. Does the persistent recurrence of electoral violence threaten the democratic development in Ghana's fourth republic?