

**POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT**

**PROMOTING EXTRA-ELECTORAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE  
OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION (NCCE) IN THE  
GREATER ACCRA REGION OF GHANA.**

**BY**

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THE AWARD OF MPhil POLITICAL SCIENCE DEGREE**



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## DECLARATION

I, Attivor Henry Augustine Mawutor, declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research under the supervision of Dr Rosina Foli and Dr Emmanuel Yeboah-Assiamah. I confirm that this work does not contain any material previously published or submitted by another person for the award of any degree. All sources used for this study have been duly acknowledged and referenced.





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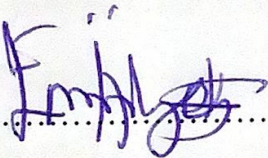


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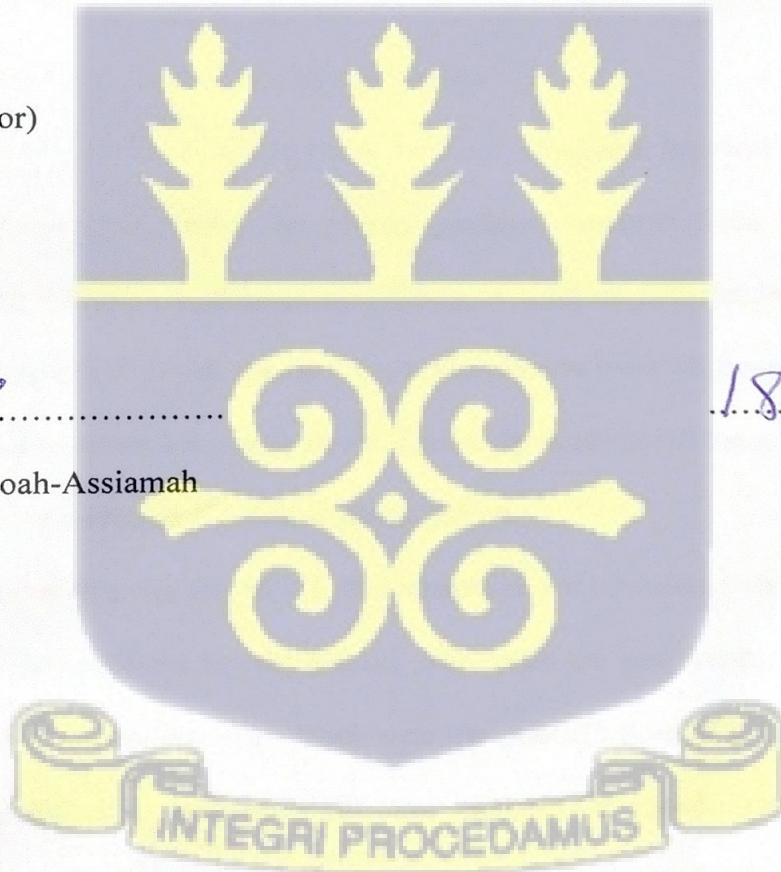


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## ABSTRACT

Debates surrounding the importance of civic education, particularly its relationship with political participation, have been extensive. These two concepts are widely recognized and studied as prerequisites for robust fledgling democracies. This study aimed to contribute to this debate by examining the role of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting civic education and its effect on extra-electoral political participation in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Specifically, the research explored: (1) the constitutional mandate of the NCCE; (2) the strategies adopted by the NCCE for providing and promoting civic education (3) the impact of these strategies on extra-electoral political engagement; (4) the challenges affecting the NCCE's ability to provide and promote civic education; and (5) recommendations for enhancing the NCCE's effectiveness and efficiency.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach for data collection. Surveys were employed to explore citizens' perspectives, while interviews gathered insights from NCCE personnel, academics, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). A total of 200 residents in the Greater Accra Region were sampled via survey, and eight individuals were purposively selected from the NCCE, CSOs, and academia for interviews. The study highlighted the association between civic education and extra-electoral political participation.

The findings revealed that while the NCCE had strategies for advancing civic education, their impact was largely unperceived by the public, who reported not having received such an education. This lack of awareness correlated with the public's limited involvement in extra-electoral political participation activities. However, the NCCE faced significant challenges, primarily related to funding. Based on expert interactions and survey findings, the study offers recommendations to enhance the NCCE's effectiveness in promoting civic education and improving the quality of extra-electoral political participation in Ghana.

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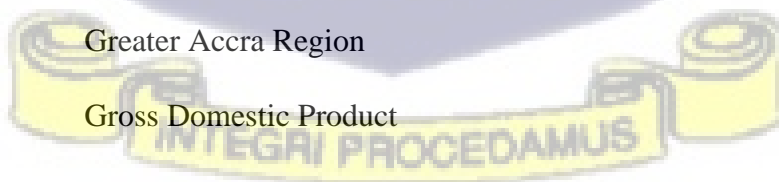
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASSP	African Social Studies Program
CCE	Centre for Civic Education
CE	Civic Education
CECs	Civic Education Clubs
CEJOCU	Civic Education Joint Coordination Unit
CEPES	Civic Education and Political Engagement Study
CPP	Convention People's Party
CREDO	Center for Curriculum Renewal and Education Development Overseas
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EC	Electoral Commission
EDC	Educational Development Center
EIU	Economic Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
FIIAPP	International and Ibero American Foundation for Administration and Public Policy
FM	Frequency Modulation
GAR	Greater Accra Region
GDP	Gross Domestic Product



GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
GOG	Government of Ghana
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBID	Ibidem (Latin: At the Same Place)
IPD	Inter Party Dialogue
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
NCC	National Cooperative Council
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NCEP	National Civic Education Program
NCGW	National Council of Ghana Women
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NLC	National Liberation Council
NRC	National Redemption Council
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
PNP	People's National Party
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
TUC	Trade Union Congress
TV	Television
UFC	United Farmers Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIS	United States Information Service

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Civic education (CE) and political participation have recently garnered significant attention from academics and policymakers globally. Despite the implementation of civic education programs in many democracies, academics express increasing concern over rising rates of political indifference and disengagement (Leigh, 2018). In the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, this study critically explores the National Commission for Civic Education's (NCCE) role in fostering and promoting extra-electoral political engagement, such as collective action and contact activities. This first chapter provides the background to the study, outlines the problem statement, presents the research objectives and questions, discusses the study's justification and rationale, defines key concepts, details the scope and limitations, and describes the overall organization of the thesis, all in relation to the NCCE's role in addressing Ghana's low level of extra-electoral political engagement.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Political participation has attracted significant scholarly attention due to its centrality in understanding and upholding representative democracy. Indeed, democracy is established when citizens can voice their grievances and escalate their concerns to the broader public, thereby holding their governments accountable (Teorell & Torcal, 2007; Armah-Attoh et al., 2014; Owusu, 2017; Asante, 2020). Political participation, or public engagement, encompasses a range of activities through which individuals formulate and communicate their opinions on governance and societal issues, and endeavor to influence decisions that impact their daily lives.

For the purpose of this study, political participation is defined as the extent to which citizens exercise their right to engage in political activities, either directly (e.g., protesting, demanding

rights, contributing to election campaigns, voting, joining political parties, and contacting government officials) or indirectly (e.g., exerting influence over or participating in local or national policy decisions through their representatives). In both developed and emerging democracies, there are significant concerns regarding dwindling civic involvement, low voter turnout, and declining public confidence in the institutions of representative democracy (Ekman & Amna, 2012; Armah-Attoh et al., 2014; Awuni, 2020). As a potential solution to declining political participation rates and rising political indifference, educators and policymakers increasingly emphasize civic education (Leigh, 2018).

The Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Democracy Index for 2021 provides insight into persistent global threats to democracy. The annual Democracy Index, which measures the level of democracy worldwide, reported a total score of 5.28 in 2021, a decrease from 5.37 (on a scale of 0-10) in 2020. This drop represents the largest decline since 2010. According to the EIU's assessment, less than half (45.7%) of the global population currently resides in a democracy, a considerable decrease from 49.4% in 2020. In 2021, only 47 (28.1%) of 167 countries saw an improvement in their democracy rankings, with most countries experiencing a decrease or stagnation in their average scores (Unit, 2022).

Average global ratings dropped most significantly in two categories: civil rights (-1.00 on a scale of 0–10) and electoral process and pluralism (-0.47). Additionally, average global scores for political culture and governmental performance also declined (-0.38 and -0.37, respectively). The political engagement category is the only one to have shown improvement since 2008, with a cumulative increase of 0.78 (ibid).

Ghana, as a nation, proudly holds the enviable accolade of being the first country to gain independence on the African continent and is justifiably considered a beacon of democracy in Africa (Armah-Attoh et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the consolidation and institutionalization of more substantive aspects of democracy, as observed in established Western democracies,

remain elusive. Despite over six decades of statehood and eight successful general elections with turnouts ranging from 50.16% to 85.12% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022), essential foundations of democracy, such as comprehensive civic education, broad public engagement, and robust public accountability, have largely remained underdeveloped during Ghana's Fourth Republic (Awuni, 2020; Unit, 2022).

Current research indicates that Ghanaians rarely participate in their democracy beyond electoral voting. According to the Afrobarometer Round 9 (2022) survey, which evaluated the quality of democracy and governance in African nations, 86% of Ghanaian respondents reported never having spoken with a Member of Parliament about a pressing issue or to express their opinions, while 64% stated they had never spoken with an assembly member. Furthermore, 95% of respondents indicated they had not attended a protest in the preceding year, and 71% stated they never would (Afrobarometer, 2022).

Considering these concerning statistics, former American President Barack Obama lamented the weak health of the nation's democratic institutions in a landmark speech to Ghana's parliament on July 11, 2009. It can be argued that the country's weak institutions can partly be attributed to the widespread avoidance of necessary everyday citizen-state engagements, particularly at the local level of governance. The core of the problem lies in how citizens are integrated into the political process beyond general elections.

The NCCE was established by Act 452 of the NCCE Act, 1993, with a mandate to encourage citizens to engage in politics by fostering knowledge of the principles and goals of the Ghanaian constitution (NCCE, 2011). Since its inception, the NCCE has maintained a nationwide presence through its district and regional offices, providing a platform to educate residents in every community (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014).

Despite its positive contributions to fostering good behavior and developing active and engaged citizens, the impact of civic education remains inadequate internationally and,

specifically, within the Ghanaian context (Bawa, 2011; Leigh, 2018). Evidently, many Ghanaians are unable to contribute effectively to national dialogue on nation-building. Therefore, it is crucial to carefully consider the factors that impede civic education from fulfilling its intended purpose. Furthermore, it is critical to investigate the trend of civic disengagement and the NCCE's role in deepening informal forms of political participation, such as collective action and contacting public representatives and administrators. The Greater Accra Region is particularly relevant due to its cosmopolitan and nationally representative nature as the home of Ghana's capital city, Accra.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

For Ghana's democracy to flourish, most citizens need to participate in politics regularly, encompassing activities such as voting in general elections, participating in protests, signing petitions, boycotting, writing letters to elected officials or public administrators, staying informed, debating issues, attending community or civic meetings, and paying taxes (Ekman & Amna, 2012; Agyemang-Duah, 2012; Awuni, 2020).

Despite being in place for almost 30 years, the NCCE's initiatives have not sufficiently educated the public about their rights and obligations as citizens, democratic principles such as tolerance and cooperation, electoral procedures, community volunteerism, major state, economic, social policies, and government operations, among other areas (Bawa, 2011). Similarly, the results of nine Afrobarometer surveys conducted between 1999 and 2022 provide further insight into Ghana's extra-electoral political engagement.

**Table 1.1: Popular Assessments of Citizens' State Engagement 2002 - 2022 (%)**

Contact Type and Category	2002	2005	2008	2012	2014	2017	2019	2022
Member of Parliament - Never	86.8	82.9	84.6	86.0	87.1	84.1	84.8	85.5
Member of Parliament - Once/A Few times/Often	12.2	16.1	14.3	13.1	12.5	15.6	14.9	14.5
Local Councilor - Never	83.1	85.2	63.4	68.4	72.2	71.3	69.6	64.4
Local Councilor - Once/A Few times/Often	15.3	13.9	35.9	31.1	27.3	28.4	30.2	35.6
Political Party Official - Never	83.5	77.9	-	85.0	85.8	78.9	79.0	81.6

Political Party Official - Once/A Few times/Often	15.3	21.4	-	14.2	13.8	20.9	20.6	18.4
Govt. Official at a Ministry - Never	89.9	85.6	86.0	88.9	89.0	87.4	-	-
Govt. Official at a Ministry - Once/A Few times/Often	9.0	12.8	12.9	9.7	10.6	12.1	-	-

*Source: Adapted from Afrobarometer survey, Round Two to Round Nine*

According to table 1.1, most Ghanaians (between 63 and 90 percent) have never interacted with any of their elected national and local representatives, political party officials, or any government ministries or institutions since 2002.

**Table 1.2: Citizens' Engagement in Community Meeting and Communal Actions (%)**

Activity and Category	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2016	2019	2022
<b>Attending Community Meetings</b>									
No (Would never do this)	36.6	21.9	6.2	8.4	15.8	18.5	14.0	22.0	25.0
No (But would do if I had the chance)	-	20.2	36.5	33.3	42.2	38.6	35.3	28.2	38.8
Yes (Once/twice, Several times/Often)	63.4	57.0	56.2	57.7	41.8	41.7	50.0	48.9	36.1
<b>Joining Others to Raise Issues</b>									
No (Would never do this)	47.0	36.7	11.4	12.7	26.4	22.0	22.5	26.6	31.0
No (But would do if I had the chance)	-	22.3	36.7	33.0	37.0	43.4	42.5	29.0	36.4
Yes (Once/twice, Several times/Often)	53.0	39.1	50.8	53.1	36.5	32.9	33.8	43.8	32.6
<b>Attend Demonstration/Protest March</b>									
No (Would never do this)	91.4	82.5	67.2	69.2	83.5	59.2	67.1	65.4	70.8
No (But would do if I had the chance)	-	7.8	21.9	19.8	11.8	32.0	24.6	19.0	23.7
Yes (Once/twice, Several times/Often)	8.5	7.5	7.5	8.9	4.4	6.6	6.3	14.7	5.3

*Source: Adapted from Afrobarometer survey, Round One to Round Nine*

Moreover, table 1.2 shows that from 1999 most Ghanaians (averaging 66 percent) never attended community meetings, joined others to raise issues, and attended demonstrations or protest marches.

The trend of civic disengagement, as indicated by the Afrobarometer surveys, poses a significant threat to the foundation of Ghana's democracy. If not addressed promptly, this trend could worsen and erode the gains made under the Fourth Republic (Owusu, 2017; Awuni, 2020). This study, therefore, focuses on the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) as a key state actor mandated to address this problem, specifically by examining its role and strategies in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation. It is, therefore, imperative to revitalize research into political engagement, a tradition that has long been interrupted.

Specifically, it is important to emphasize the effect of civic education on Ghanaian citizens' political socialization and involvement. Historically, research on political involvement in

Ghana's Fourth Republic has concentrated solely on elections (Ayee, 2001; Boafo-Arthur, 2005; Bawa, 2011; Agyemang-Duah, 2012; Browne, 2013), with limited focus on other essential forms of political participation. Notable research covering civic education and political participation in Ghana and beyond includes the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) through its Afrobarometer Surveys, which measure democratic consolidation in Ghana and Africa at large; Afriyie (2015), who discussed how the NCCE developed public education programs in Ghana's Ashaiman Municipality; and Abudu and Fuseini (2014), also examined the curricular implication of civic awareness and engagement in Ghana. Sam et al.'s (2019) investigation into civic participation and engagement among Kenyan and Ghanaian students as well as their correlates is also relevant.

While Niworo et al. (2016) examined the effect of civic education on political involvement in the Sissala East District of Ghana, Bawa (2011) also examined the NCCE and Ghana's democracy in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly. Asiamah (2015) also assessed popular political participation in Ghana's Fourth Republic. The above studies however did not focus critically on the low rates of extra-electoral political participation in view of the activities of the NCCE under Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Considering this problem, this research seeks to examine how engagement in collective action and citizen-state interactions through contact activities can be developed in the populace of Ghana. To address the low levels of extra electoral participation reported by the Afrobarometer surveys from 1999 to 2019, we need to take a critical look at the NCCE, because although the Commission has been conducting civic education activities for nearly three decades, a thorough assessment of how these activities influence the less formal methods of political participation such as engagement in collective action and contacting public representatives and administrators is lacking.

By studying the role and efficacy of the NCCE in fostering greater public engagement in collective action and contact activities with public representatives and administrators in the Greater Accra Region (GAR), the study seeks to close this gap in the literature. Primarily, the study focuses on the Greater Accra Region because there is no significant study on citizens' engagement in community meetings and communal actions and citizen-state engagement through contact activities and the contribution of the NCCE in that enclave. As a result, it is worthwhile to look at the NCCE's activities in GAR.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the constitutional mandate and established roles of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting citizen participation in Ghana.
2. To explore the strategies adopted by the NCCE in the provision and promotion of civic education for extra-electoral citizen participation in the Greater Accra Region.
3. To assess the impact of the NCCE's civic education strategies on extra-electoral political engagement among citizens in the Greater Accra Region.
4. To identify the challenges affecting the NCCE's ability to effectively provide and promote civic education for extra-electoral citizen participation.
5. To recommend practical ways to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the NCCE in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation in Ghana.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the constitutional mandate and established role of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting citizen participation in Ghana?

2. What strategies does the NCCE adopt in the provision and promotion of civic education for extra-electoral citizen participation in the Greater Accra Region?
3. What is the impact of the NCCE's civic education strategies on extra-electoral political engagement among citizens in the Greater Accra Region?
4. What challenges affect the NCCE's ability to effectively provide and promote civic education for extra-electoral citizen participation?
5. What practical recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the NCCE in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation in Ghana?

### **1.5 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALE**

The importance of civic education and its relationship with political participation are widely recognized as prerequisites for robust democracies. This study is justified by the growing concerns over declining citizen engagement in democratic processes, particularly beyond electoral participation, both globally and within the Ghanaian context.

In Ghana, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) plays a vital role in civic education, which is a key means of promoting political participation. However, despite the NCCE's constitutional mandate and sustained efforts over three decades, empirical evidence, notably from Afrobarometer surveys, consistently indicates a persistent low level of extra-electoral citizen participation in Ghana. This observed disconnect between the NCCE's intended role and the actual levels of citizen engagement highlights a critical gap in understanding. Therefore, a focused investigation into the effectiveness of the NCCE's strategies and the challenges it faces in promoting extra-electoral participation is imperative.

By empirically examining the NCCE's operational realities in the Greater Accra Region, this study aims to provide nuanced, evidence-based insights into the practical implementation of civic education and its impact on citizen engagement. The findings will not only contribute significantly to the academic literature on political participation and civic education in budding

democracies but also offer actionable policy prescriptions for enhancing the NCCE's effectiveness and strengthening democratic consolidation in Ghana.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

This section defines the key concepts central to this study to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the thesis.

**Political Participation:** For the purpose of this study, political participation is defined as the extent to which citizens exercise their right to engage in political activities, either directly (e.g., protesting, demanding rights, contributing to election campaigns, voting, joining political parties, and contacting government officials) or indirectly (e.g., exerting influence over or participating in local or national policy decisions through their representatives).

### ***Extra-Electoral Citizen Participation***

This refers to forms of political engagement that occur outside of formal electoral processes. It includes activities such as collective action (e.g., protests, demonstrations, community meetings) and contact activities (e.g., writing letters to officials, engaging with local councilors, joining advocacy groups).

### ***Civic Education (CE)***

Civic education refers to the process of educating citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and the principles of democratic governance. It aims to encourage informed, active, and responsible citizens capable of participating effectively in public life.

### ***National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)***

Established by Act 452 of the NCCE Act, 1993, the NCCE is Ghana's principal state institution mandated to promote and sustain democracy by educating citizens on their civic responsibilities and rights and fostering an understanding of the Ghanaian Constitution.

## 1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

### *Geographical Scope*

This study is geographically delimited to the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. This region was selected due to its cosmopolitan nature and its national representativeness as the capital city, allowing for a diverse range of citizen perspectives and a broader operational setting of the NCCE.

### *Thematic Scope*

The study primarily focuses on the role of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation. It examines the NCCE's strategies, their perceived impact, and the challenges encountered in this specific area of civic engagement. While acknowledging the importance of electoral participation, this study deliberately focuses on non-electoral forms to address a recognized gap in existing literature.

### *Timeframe*

The study considers the period from the establishment of the NCCE in 1993 to January 2023, allowing for an assessment of its long-term impact and evolving strategies.

### *Limitations*

While efforts were made to ensure comprehensive data collection, the study faced certain limitations. Firstly, reliance on self-reported data from citizens regarding their awareness and participation may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. Secondly, the qualitative data, while providing rich insights, is based on a limited number of interviews with NCCE personnel, CSOs, and academics, which may not capture the full spectrum of experiences across all districts or organizations and the society at large. Thirdly, the study's focus on the Greater Accra Region, while justified, means that findings may not be directly generalizable to other regions of Ghana without further localized research. Finally, as highlighted by the NCCE

itself, resource and funding constraints may have influenced the scale and reach of their programs, which could indirectly affect the perceived impact on citizen participation. While this study identifies funding as a challenge, a detailed financial audit was beyond its scope.

## **1.8 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

This thesis is structured into six chapters, each building upon the preceding one to provide a comprehensive analysis of the NCCE's role in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation.

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter provides the background to the study, outlines the problem statement, presents the research objectives, and questions, discusses the study's justification and rationale, defines key concepts, and details the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review. This chapter presents a comprehensive review of existing literature on political participation, extra-electoral engagement, and civic education, both globally and within the Ghanaian context. It identifies theoretical gaps and contextualizes the study within current academic debates.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study, specifically the Cognitive Mobilization Theory. It outlines its core tenets, strengths, weaknesses, and its relevance to understanding the relationship between civic education and citizen participation.

Chapter Four: Methodology. This chapter details the research approach, design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments (surveys and interviews), data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Five: Presentation and Discussion of Findings. This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the collected data, including demographic characteristics of respondents. It then discusses these findings in relation to the research questions and objectives, analyzing the NCCE's strategies, their impact, and associated challenges.

Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations. This concluding chapter provides a concise summary of the study's key findings, draws conclusions based on the research objectives, and offers practical recommendations for enhancing the NCCE's effectiveness and promoting extra-electoral citizen participation in Ghana. It also highlights areas for future research.

## **1.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter has successfully laid the groundwork for the study by providing a comprehensive introduction to the research topic. It has highlighted the background to the study, articulated the problem statement, outlined the research objectives and questions, and discussed the justification and rationale for undertaking this research. Furthermore, key concepts were defined, and the scope and limitations of the study were delineated, along with an overview of the thesis organization. The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into the literature, methodology, findings, and conclusions of this research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen a revival of civic education debates. According to scholarly research, the apparent decline in worldwide political engagement is the fundamental cause for the revived interest in the practice and purpose of civic education (Eten, 2015; Leigh, 2018). This chapter of the study reviews the pertinent existing scholarship on civic education and political participation. A literature review's objective is to provide a summary of pertinent sources of reference materials, such as books and journal articles, and institutional records among others to connect the current study to the larger ongoing debate, fill gaps in existing literature, and expand earlier studies (Fink, 2014).

This method involves summarizing, categorizing, synthesizing, and comparing earlier research works to analyze a body of published knowledge. The review's objective is to explore the body of knowledge about the connection between civic education and political engagement, with a focus on the NCCE's role in fostering increased political involvement in Ghana's democratic processes, particularly extra-electoral participation. As a result, this element of the study aims to assess and value the body of knowledge already available on the NCCE, civic education, and political engagement in Ghana and elsewhere.

The following themes are used to divide and review relevant literature in order to accomplish the goal of this chapter: gaining knowledge about political participation; the connection between political participation and democracy; recognizing the idea behind civic education; civic education in Ghana, Africa, and the rest of the world; recognizing the NCCE's significance in civic education; review of the empirical research on civic education and political involvement; gaps found in the literature; assessment of civic education and political involvement in Ghana; and bottlenecks in civic education.

## 2.1 UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The notion of political participation has received a lot of attention from scholars and researchers alike, resulting in several conceptualizations and definitions. According to generalizations drawn from a cursory review of the various definitions, political participation is broadly understood to refer to individual citizens' actions that have the potential to affect governmental and political structures and procedures. A duo of the earliest scholars of political participation Milbrath and Goel (1977) argue that the concept of political participation can be extended to include ceremonial as well as support activities. Notwithstanding this, there have been several contestations on the need for a redefinition of political participation. However, it is important to understand some classical definitions of the concept.

McClosky (1968) for example defined political participation as voluntary activities performed by members of a given society that is based on the selection of leaders and rulers and has direct or indirect implications on government policy formation and direction. This definition focuses on the relationships between governments and citizens, which has served as a basis for other conceptualizations and definitions that have expanded the scope of political participation. One of such scholars, Lam (2003) portends that political participation is inclusive of all lawful as well as unlawful activities that are geared towards the provision of support, promotion of demands, creation of debates, and other political expressions directed towards the administration that are made vocally, through the media, or both.

More specifically, Lam (2003) emphasizes that the process of political engagement entails actions that are completely meant to question the existing status quo and directed at some private organizations, such as university managements and enterprises. This definition of political participation refers to activities and hobbies that result in criticism of or support for the government. These actions, which are not merely aimed at or restricted to governments, could be legal or criminal, nevertheless.

Consequently, influencing government activities either directly (by influencing the development and implementation of public programs) or indirectly (by influencing the choice of public officers) should be a consideration in the definition of political engagement. Therefore, participation in politics includes both local and international activities. McClosky (1968) also highlights the voluntary character of political engagement, which encompasses the actions of choosing representation, gathering information, debating public issues, participating in meetings, making monetary contributions, and interacting with elected officials. Active forms of political participation exist as well, such as applying formally to political parties, canvassing, and registering voters, writing, and delivering speeches, working in various capacities on political figures' campaigns, and running for public and party office (ibid). However, other scholars have opined that there are newer and broader activities that can be seen and conceptualized under the realm of political participation.

Firstly, Norris (2002) has extended the definition to include varied and diverse forms of political participation by espousing that political participation refers to multiple forms of civic engagement that have evolved over the years and have emerged in modern societies to augment traditional methods. Furthermore, he argues that political participation is a nexus of the agencies who are collective organizations, and repertoires which include the activities usually used in political expression, and the targets of these, which refers to the political actors that the citizens target to influence.

Another set of definitions and conceptualizations have focused on the actions that should be categorized as political participation. In this regard, the idea that the citizens' job in any political process is to cast a ballot against their leaders creates a dangerous and discriminatory perception of democracy – a liberal model of democracy contends that citizens have meaningful preferences when it comes to the choice and selection of candidates, which can be

expressed indirectly through a representative system which are independent of democratic processes.

Additionally, the categorization and inclusion of acts as political participation requires the inclusion of both conventional and unconventional acts that are directed towards the democratic structure. Voting, affiliation with and active participation in political parties and groups, interactions with representatives, public servants, solicitors, associations, the media, and corporate actors on a personal level, requests for assistance from public officials or other people of political influence, formation of political groups, sending gifts to officials or hosting meals, participation in campaign activities, and cooperative political action are just a few examples. It is worth noting that these activities are typical of mature democracies like western democracies.

Significantly, Verba and Nie (1972) provided an early categorization of political participation. The writers argued that there are four main forms of political engagement: voting, advocating, engaging authorities, and community involvement. It is important to state that their conceptualization of activities that can be characterized as political participation excluded activities that revolved around protests. However, the authors would later come to conceptualize political participation in a broader and multidimensional sense, focusing on the conventional and unconventional approaches (Verba et al., 1995).

Similarly, Dalton (2008) submits that there are several types of political participation and engagement. In his book titled “Citizen Politics,” Dalton espoused the four models of political participation advanced by Verba and Nie (1972) above and added two more approaches which included protests and other divisive political ideologies, as well as online activism. Dalton (2008) argues that in each typology of political participation, there are different levels of pressure that is exerted on government and political officials, varying degrees of possibilities of conflicts, different efforts required to participate in these activities and a difference in the

nature and amount of cooperation that is required in each of these political activities. To communicate with the government or public officials, political actions have a variety of orientations and competencies. To illustrate, Verba et al. (1995) contended that voting for instance is limited in its ability to convey information to the government and political leaders, while other political activities such as establishing contact with the elected representatives and government officials make room for more specific and detailed messages to be conveyed to the political elites and representatives.

In a study to distinguish between political activities and specifically explore gender-based disparities in political participation, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010) compared political activism, such as participating in protests, signing petitions, calling for a boycott of goods for political, moral, and environmental considerations, and making contacts with political figures, to other significant but less institutionalized behaviors like voting and party membership. The study's findings, which emphasize the institutionalized and non-institutionalized political participation forms, also show that there are different types of political activism because some are collective in nature while others are private, some are direct while others are indirect in their methods, and so on (ibid).

The differing classifications and categorizations of activities that form part of political classification highlights some challenges to researchers. Kitschelt and Rehm (2008) assert that the different types of political participation that have been described so far are fragmented and solitary. Moreover, Van Deth (2001) estimates that the learning of political participation in the previous five decades is testament to a growing number of the types of political action. Kitschelt and Rehm (2008), however, lend some credence to the fact that political participation is contextual and requires the involvement of several modes and actors. In the same vein, Birch (2007) argues that it is important and imperative to understand and provide clarity on the activities that can be characterized as political participation based on the ambiguous and

subjective nature of the various debates on political participation. This perspective is also buttressed by Ekman and Amna (2012).

It is crucial to distinguish between civic engagement and political participation, as these terms are often used interchangeably but carry distinct meanings in academic discourse. Civic engagement is a broader concept, encompassing individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern, promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes. This can include activities like community service, volunteering, or participating in local neighborhood associations. Democratic engagement is considered a component of civic engagement, specifically related to applying knowledge, skills, and commitments to public life through the democratic political process. In contrast, political participation is more narrowly defined as an activity that is intended to, or has the consequence of, affecting government action, policies, or the selection of public officials.

While civic engagement can foster political participation, not every civic activity is inherently political. For instance, discussing political issues with friends or reading news might be considered civic learning or engagement, but they only become political participation when they are explicitly aimed at influencing those in power or public policy. This study, therefore, focuses on the subset of civic engagement that directly aims to influence political processes and outcomes, particularly those outside of formal electoral activities.

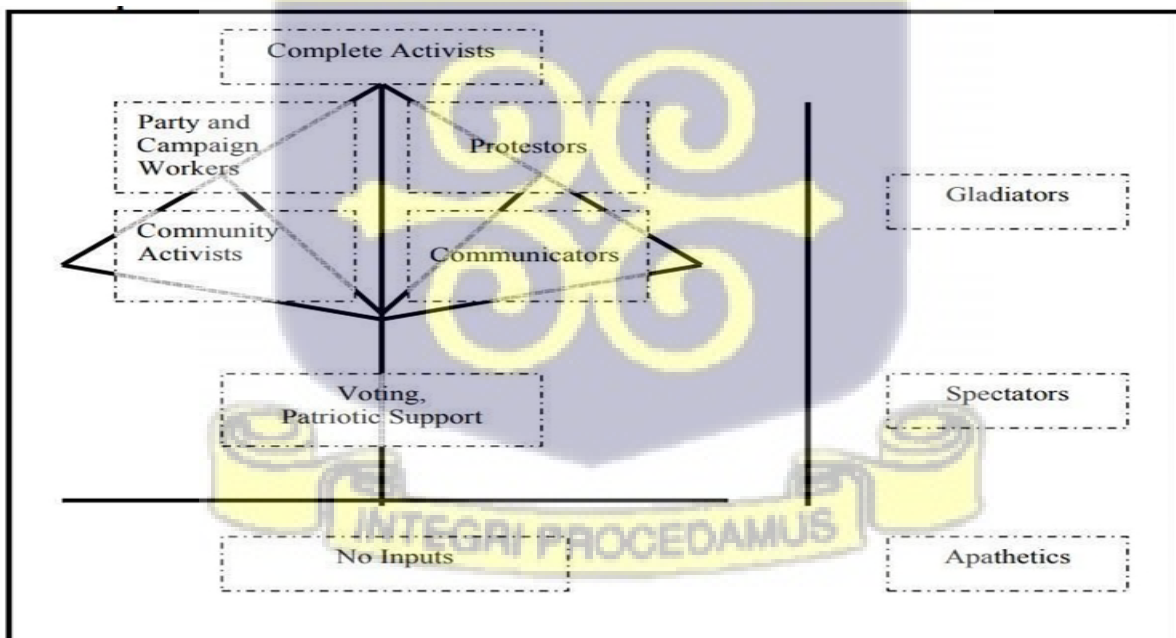
## **2.2 FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

According to Robert Dahl, the role of citizens in democratic governance has changed from that of ancient Athens and the city-state to contemporary democratic governance (Dahl, 2002). Over the past 2,500 years, there have been significant changes in the opportunities for public involvement in politics. There are many different types of participatory engagement, according to studies on political and civic involvement in many nations (Milbrath & Goel, 1977; Barnes

& Kaase 1984; Verba et al., 1995; Brady, 2003; Rollero et al., 2009; Teorell & Torcal, 2007; Ekman & Amna, 2012).

First, a model of political participation was created by Milbrath and Goel. The model had only one dimension from the outset. Three groups of citizens are distinguished. Depending on the level of a person's political participation, the model was built on a pyramidal structure. Only a small portion of the populace—the "gladiators"—participates in politics to any significant extent. Most citizens, who are referred to as "spectators," participate in public elections exclusively as "voters." Apathy is more prevalent than active participation; these people are referred to as "apathetics" because they do not vote or engage in political discourse (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). The authors developed the one-dimensional model into a multi-dimensional model that included other types of activism in addition to the intensity of political activity. The model below depicts the five gladiator variations that Milbrath and Goel identified (1977, pp.11-21).

**Figure 2.1: Milbrath and Goel's Multi-Dimensional Model Regarding Political Participation**



*Source: (Milbrath & Goel, 1977, p.21)*

For the observers, casting a ballot is more of a show of allegiance to the political system than it is a desire to have an impact on the outcome of the election. The observer aspires to uphold both the accepted societal norm and his or her own idea of a decent citizen. Compared to more sophisticated activism, voting only requires a minimal amount of knowledge and motivation. "Communicators" engage in activism by writing letters of support or opposition to politicians or the media. Participation in political discourse is also required. Individuals who create groups or work inside already-existing groups or organizations are referred to as "community activists." It also encompasses those who contact and attempt to influence prominent figures to have an impact on their behavior. "Protestors" engage in street protests, protest meetings, and protest marches to sway elected leaders. If they believe it is essential, this faction may even resort to more radical tactics like riots. The political campaign activities are actively participated in by "party and campaign employees." Additionally, it could entail joining organizations or groups that are not affiliated with political parties (Milbrath & Goel, 1977, pp. 11–21). These varied types of activism do not represent discrete actions. To influence politics, people may employ a variety of activism strategies. Complete activists are those who participate in all these types of activism (Milbrath & Goel, 1977, pp.11-21).

Furthermore, Barnes and Kaase (1984) argued that the conceptual enlargement of the notion of participation brought about a distinction between "conventional" and "non-conventional" participation, with the latter encompassing relatively new political actions such as writing letters to the editor of newspapers, boycotting goods, occupying public places, participating in strikes, and occasionally using physical force. The expression "action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes" was used to describe this new group of behaviors in contrast with the actions undertaken by the elites (Brady, 2003).

Likewise, Rollero et al. (2009) contend that different forms of political participation can result in either direct or indirect political action. They emphasize that political participation goes

beyond just the conventional act of voting and includes things like joining a political party or non-profit advocacy group, running for office, and getting involved in campaigns. A more comprehensive definition of political participation has recently been developed by Teorell and Torcal (2007), who drew their inspiration from studies by Verba and Nie (1972) and Brady (2003). They also introduced a typology that includes citizen actions intended to influence the political outcomes in a community. Five factors are considered in their typology: Voting is the most basic form of participation, followed by charitable giving, product boycotts, signing petitions, and party activity, which includes being a member, activist, or sponsor of a political party. Protest activity, which includes participating in demonstrations, strikes, or protests, is the next most basic, followed by contact activity, which includes contacting organizations, politicians, or other public figures. The authors also present empirical data demonstrating the strong connections between various manifest forms.

Nevertheless, latent types of participation are not considered by the typology of Teorell and Torcal (2007). Although the concept of latent participation is not new (see, for instance, Parry et al., 1992; Van Deth, 2001), it has received less attention in more recent analyses. Latent involvement consists of two parts. The first is what is known as "invisible" participation; it refers to people's interest and attentiveness in politics as well as their psychological involvement in politics. The second component consists of "non-political" or "semi-political" activities that, while not directly related to politics, may still have a significant impact on customary political behaviors. Examples include reading newspapers or browsing the web, giving money to deserving causes, posting opinions on blogs, and engaging in a variety of other pre-political activities that are not related to the social circle of family and friends (ibid).

The two types of participation (manifest and latent) that were previously mentioned were intersected with two degrees of political activity in a matrix that Ekman and Amna (2012)

thoroughly explored (individual and collective). Their plan aims to unite all civic and political action under one overarching framework.

In their taxonomy, "manifest political behaviors" are defined as all behaviors— individual or group—that are intended to influence political outcomes and government decisions. This includes behaviors that are goal-oriented, logical, observable, and quantifiable. Even "contact activities"—such as contacting elected officials to request action or write them a report—are regarded as forms of formal political participation. Membership in a political party, labor union, or nongovernmental organization is a common example of this class at the group level. These "formal efforts" were supplemented by extra-parliamentary actions, according to the authors. The phrase "non-conventional" is frequently used in the literature to describe these behaviors, however Ekman and Amna (2012) believe it is outmoded and prefer the term "activism."

In fact, several behaviors that were once seen as unconventional, like strikes, are now widely practiced by residents. The writers distinguish between legal and illicit versions and favor the term "extra-parliamentary." The former includes taking part in protests and strikes, being militant in feminist and environmental organizations, and other forms of group participation. Such personal acts include distributing fliers, signing petitions, and making purchases based on moral, ethical, or environmental considerations. However, some extra-parliamentary methods, such as refusing to pay for a metro ticket to protest public transportation policies, violent manifestations, protests, or riots started for ideological purposes are unlawful (racist or extremist groups).

Ekman and Amna (2012) include latent forms of political participation (also known as "civil participation") in their categorization. In these forms, the psychological component represented by attention to and interest in political and social issues (what they refer to as "social involvement") corresponds to, and in some cases precedes, the behavioral component that they named "civic engagement." According to Martin and Van Deth (2007), these two factors are

separate even if they are connected. More specifically, civic engagement refers to the way members of a community participate in activities that enhance the lives of marginalized groups or help to determine the society's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Some notions of civic participation place a focus on performing volunteer work for one's neighborhood, whether an individual does so on their own or as a member of a group (Diller, 2001).

The idea put forth by Ekman and Amna (2012) is novel in that it considers disengagement as a different kind of participation that can be active or passive. The passive type describes the actions of those who voluntarily delegate others to manage the "res publica", they are uninterested in politics, do not follow political discourse, and have no political opinions. And perhaps most crucially, they are unconcerned. The term "active form" describes the actions of those who actively disapprove of politics and actively avoid it during elections by not only refusing to cast a ballot but also by participating in protests. The former is a-political behavior, whereas the latter is anti-political. Extreme instances of this orientation, with young immigrants of the second generation protesting a society from which they feel excluded, can occasionally occur in the suburbs of big cities.

The work of Armah-Attoh et al. (2014), who define the various forms of political participation in a briefing paper titled "The Practice of Democracy in Ghana: Beyond the Formal Framework," is also crucial. They claim that almost all the indicators of a participatory democracy, such as involvement in collective action, employment with a party or candidate and attendance at campaign rallies, and engagement with formal and informal leaders, lag far behind the formal framework. Since there are so many forms, typologies, and conceptualizations of political participation, it can be difficult for academics to decide which forms to include when beginning a research study on them. Involvement in neighborhood groups and meetings, teaming up with others to address development issues, taking part in protests or demonstrations, and contacting local elected officials and representatives will be

thoroughly reviewed in this research. This study focuses more closely on local inter-electoral involvement in Ghana's fourth republic because there are not many published studies on the topic. Once more, to avoid becoming mired in the complicated issues surrounding numerous typologies and classifications of political involvement activities, only the contact and group forms of political participation will be explored in this study.

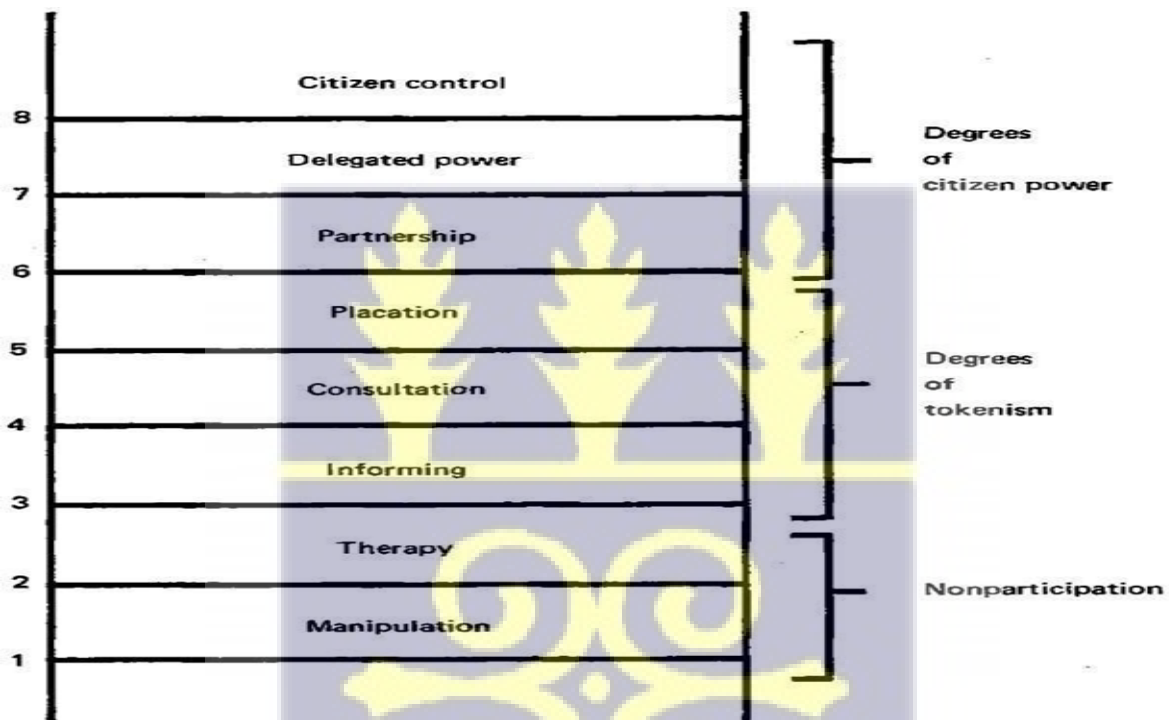
### **2.3 THE LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The Ladder of Citizen Participation, which Sherry Arnstein proposed in 1969, outlines how empowered public institutions and politicians deprive citizens of power and how levels of citizen agency, control, and power can be raised. It is one of the models of democratic public involvement that is most frequently used and influential. Arnstein's research made a key contention that is still valid today as it was in 1969: redistribution of power is necessary for citizen engagement in democratic processes to be deemed "participation" in any real or practical sense. According to Arnstein, civic engagement translates into civic power. Participation just "allows the power holders to claim that all sides were considered but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit" without an actual reallocation of power, such as financial compensation or decision-making authority. The current situation is maintained (1969, p. 1).

According to Arnstein, citizen participation is the deliberate inclusion of the citizens who are currently excluded from political and economic processes through the redistribution of power. It is a tactic used by the underprivileged to participate in deciding how information is disseminated, objectives and policies are formed, tax dollars are distributed, programs are run, and benefits like contracts and patronage are distributed. As a result, they can profit from the advantages of a wealthy society. In other words, participation without redistribution of power is a pointless and discouraging process for the powerless (Arnstein, 1969, pp. 1-2).

An eight-rung metaphorical "ladder" is used to illustrate Arnstein's typology of citizen participation, with each rung denoting a rising level of citizen agency, control, and power. Arnstein adds a descriptive participatory power continuum that extends from nonparticipation (no power) to varying degrees of tokenism (counterfeit power) to varying degrees of citizen participation in addition to the eight "rungs" of engagement or actual power (ibid, p. 2). An illustration and explanation of the model follows.

**Figure 2.2: Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation**



*Source: (Arnstein, 1969, p. 3)*

### **1. Manipulation**

Manipulation, which is an "illusory" kind of participation, occurs when public institutions, representatives, or administrators trick the public into thinking they have control over a system that was designed to deny them that authority. In the words of Arnstein, "people are put on rubber-stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the explicit aim of 'educating' them or engineering their support. The bottom rung of the ladder represents the distorting of

participation into a public relations vehicle by those in positions of power, as opposed to genuine citizen participation (1969, pp. 3-4).

## **2. Therapy**

Public employees and administrators who "think that helplessness is identical to mental disorder" create pseudo-participatory initiatives to make citizens believe they are the issue when in fact it is well-established institutions and policies that are the root of the issue. Participation as treatment is what is meant by this. According to Arnstein, "What makes this sort of 'participation' so invidious is that citizens are engaged in considerable activity, but the focus of it is on healing them of their 'pathology,' rather than eliminating the racism and oppression that create their "pathologies" (1969, p. 4).

## **3. Informing**

While Arnstein agrees that the most crucial first step toward legitimate citizen participation can be educating citizens about their rights, obligations, and options, she also points out that "The focus is frequently on a one-way information flow from the government to the public, with no channel or power of negotiation offered. Meetings can also be used as venues for one-way communication by employing the simple strategy of presenting shallow information, avoiding challenging questions, or giving irrelevant responses." Citizens are "intimidated by futility, legalistic jargon, and the prestige of the official" when given information, leading them to accept it as true or agree with the claims made by individuals in positions of authority (Arnstein, 1969, p. 4).

## **4. Consultation**

According to Arnstein, "inviting people's thoughts might be a reasonable step toward their full engagement," analogizing it to informing citizens. When consultation procedures are "not linked with other modes of engagement," however, this step of the ladder remains hollow because it offers no guarantee that public concerns and suggestions will be considered. The

most widely used methods for gathering public input include public hearings, neighborhood gatherings, and attitude polls. Participation is reduced to a mere window-dressing formality when decision-makers only permit this amount of public input. People are mostly seen as statistical abstractions, and how many attend meetings, take brochures home, or respond to surveys is used to gauge participation. What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have 'participated in participation.' And what power holders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving 'those people' (Arnstein, 1969, p. 4).

### **5. Placation**

When citizens are given a small amount of power over a process, but their involvement is largely or entirely tokenistic, citizens are only involved to show that they were involved— this is known as participation as placation. As Arnstein put it: "Placing a few hand-selected "worthy" poor people on the boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, the police commission, or the housing authority is an example of a placation strategy. The have-nots can be easily outvoted and outsmarted if they are not answerable to a community constituency and the traditional power elite hold most seats" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 5).

### **6. Partnership**

Public organizations, representatives, or managers engage in participation as partnership when they give citizens the power to bargain for better terms, overturn decisions, split funding, or submit requests that are at least partially granted. According to Arnstein: "In reality, power is redistributed at this rung of the ladder through negotiations between the people in power and the people. Through institutions like joint policy boards, planning committees, and impasse resolution techniques, they consent to divide up the planning and decision-making duties. The ground rules are not subject to unilateral modification once they have been established through give-and-take" (1969, p. 5). She does point out, however, that in many partnership scenarios,

citizens instead seize power through initiatives like protests, campaigns, or community organizing rather than public institutions sharing it voluntarily.

### **7. Delegated Power**

Participation as delegated power occurs when public organizations, administrators, or officials cede to citizens at least some degree of management, control, decision-making, or funding. Delegated power could be demonstrated by a citizen board or corporation that is given the responsibility of running a community program rather than just taking part in one. As Arnstein (1969, p. 5) put it: "At this point, the ladder has been climbed to the point where the significant cards are in the hands of the citizens, ensuring their accountability for the program. Power brokers must initiate negotiations to settle disputes rather than yielding to outside pressure."

### **8. Citizen Control**

"Participants or residents can run a program or an institution, be in full control of policy and administrative aspects, and be able to negotiate the terms under which "outsiders" may change them," according to Arnstein (1969). In citizen-control scenarios, for example, a community organization would receive direct public money and would then have total discretion over the allocation of that funding (p. 5).

#### **2.3.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE MODEL**

Like any model, structure, or simplification, the Ladder of Citizen Participation can only offer a certain degree of explanation. Two common criticisms of two-dimensional models are that they frequently interpret lower levels as universally negative (or worse than) and higher levels as positive, and that they are unable to adequately capture the layered complexity or fluctuating power dynamics that are frequently at play in real-world participatory situations (or better than). This is particularly true for models that can be seen as graduated, upward-moving hierarchical scales. For instance, in some circumstances (such as district administration decisions about teachers and staff), it may be entirely acceptable to inform the community

about already made decisions. However, as Arnstein points out, the model's simplicity is precisely what makes it helpful as a conceptual tool: the ladder reveals the essential distinctions between the powerful and the helpless by juxtaposing them (1969, p. 6).

Other issues with the model are also outlined by Arnstein. "The justification for using such simplistic abstractions is that in most cases the have-nots really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic "system," and power holders do view the have-nots as a sea of "those people," with little comprehension of the class and caste differences that exist among them."

## **2.4 UNDERPINNING FACTORS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

In a democracy, each person's political voice ought to be given the same weight as everyone else's. When people express their concerns, their interests are more likely to be taken into consideration when making policy. Therefore, it is crucial to consider what motivates people to participate in politics (Verba et al., 1995). A summary of recent research on the variables that predict political engagement follows.

In their research on the "Personal Values and Political Participation Hierarchy," Pacheco and Owen (2015) discovered various personal traits that affect or limit a person's ability to engage. Results of the Fifth Wave of the European Serial Survey (2010) served as source of data for the research. It was discovered that individuals differ in their personal characteristics, which either encourage or discourage them from engaging in political behaviors. Political engagement was categorized in a hierarchy, ranking from none to medium to strong, and from traditional voting to more expensive alternative or extreme voting, considering personal values. People who are more adaptable and self-transcendent are more willing to take part in radical and expensive political actions (Pacheco and Owen, 2015). As a result, those who are more receptive to change had a 23.7% higher likelihood than conservatives of going from low to high levels of participation (pp. 13-14).

Although the study emphasizes the link between personal values and specific participatory behaviors, it does not explore the reasons why some people choose not to engage at all or the personal values that relate to those individuals. Varying political systems have different costs associated with them, which is known as the relativity of cost. Voting costs may differ from those in Africa or Asia depending on where you live in Europe or America. The hierarchy of participating activities may not be related to the relevance of that activity, which means that the same political deed may demand distinct personal values under various political structures. Additionally, it does not explain how these values are gained or whether they are flexible (Asiamah, 2015).

While investigating the relationship between political participation and political trust and the existence of civic community and networks in ethnic communities the following observations were discovered. Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean civic communities and networking groups in Amsterdam were found to be correlated with better levels of political engagement and trust. The sheer quantity of civic organizations and, more crucially, the predominance of close connections among them, stimulate participation and confidence. They contend that a group's involvement in community concerns and local politics are mutually inclusive (Fennema & Tillie, 1999).

According to the study's findings, there is a strong correlation between civic engagement and trust across different ethnic groups and their networks both inside and outside of these organizations. Turkish citizens scored highly on both participation and trust, whereas Antilleans scored poorly on both. In other words, 13% of Turks, 23% of Moroccans, 27% of Surinamese, and 41% of Antilleans scored poor on involvement. In terms of political trust, Turks had the lowest level of mistrust with a score of 36%, followed by Moroccans with a score of 60%, Surinamese with a score of 61%, and Antilleans with a score of 75%. These results are consistent with the civic engagement of the different ethnic groups, with Turks exhibiting the

highest level of civic engagement and organizational connectivity, followed by Moroccans. Surinamese and Antillean communities, which are on the lowest end of the civic community spectrum, are characterized by weak intra- and inter-organizational linkages, respectively, which would supply the required social capital for political action.

In their article "Politics in Peer Groups: Exploring the Causal Relationship Between Network Diversity and Political Participation," Quintelier et al (2012) explore the connection between network diversity and political participation as well as the connection between political participation and political action among young people. They use empirical studies by Putnam (2000) and Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) to show how social networking or voluntary association and political engagement have a well-established connection. They used data from a Belgian political panel study that assessed sixteen-year-old Belgians' involvement patterns in 2006 and followed up in 2008. The study found a link between political engagement and ethnic, cultural, and political diversity. As a result, young people who are exposed to diverse networks tend to have high levels of political curiosity and peer discussion, which are important for political participation.

The study also showed that involvement and network diversity had an interaction relationship. This paper's main claim is that network density can increase political engagement through network mobilization. This study significantly advances political participation in the pursuit of recovering civic engagement in its current condition of decline. Not only did it show the connection, but it also offered a timeline for raising engagement by enticing young people to build extensive political and ethnically diverse networks. However, it does leave behind people who are more likely to be selected into these networks by addressing the causal pathway from mobilization into different social networks through to influencing political activity and vice versa. Not all young adults use social networking. As a result, those who take part need to stand

out from those who do not, and it is more likely that these people will have special resources that make them more prone to being used in these organizations.

Research by Giugni et al. (2014) on Muslim ethnic minorities in Switzerland revealed an important connection between associational involvement and political participation. They argued that different ethnic groups varied in their levels of political engagement, with Turks having the highest levels of engagement (35.9%), followed by Maghreb Muslims (40.9%), who had the lowest levels (40.9%). More Turks continued to engage in contacting activities. There was a strong association between involvement and religious affiliation that had a 90% level of confidence. Also, a substantial association between inter-ethnic organizations and overall participation, with a confidence level of 99.9% was established. The study's main goal was to establish a connection between associational involvement, social capital, and political participation.

The study not only established a link between political engagement and social capital gained through various associational activity, but it also demonstrated how associations' multifunctionality contributes to local associations' greater participation rates. Although Giugni et al's study found a link between religious affiliation and political engagement, individual participation cannot be directly linked to the social capital derived from such religious organizations. Therefore, a religious organization that mobilizes its members through consciousness and encourages them to engage differs from one whose members play distinct roles and are given the necessary values and abilities to do so. The high levels of contact activities attributed to Turks are primarily a result of the social trust built via inter-ethnic interaction.

Kriesi (2008) highlights the critical role that institutions and political structures play in promoting political involvement in his essay "Political Mobilization, Political Participation, and the Power of the Vote." He argues that to structure contemporary democratic governance,

a representative system based on regular election competition must be utilized. Under such a representative or party government, citizens may only keep participating in politics to raise voter turnout and involvement. Another reason elections are losing power is that democratic institutions like the court, bureaucracy, and governing bodies cannot be held accountable by the public through voting. As a result, people start to protest more politically. Kriesi uses examples from France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland to show how voting and non-traditional forms of government have an inverse connection.

The study suggests a remedy for the low levels of electoral participation by making efficient use of the media for political parties and political leaders, in addition to highlighting the importance of elections. However, the study demonstrates that a focus on institutions and agencies too much limits citizens' ability to participate. Due to its limitations, the study is unable to explain autonomous political actions like contacting public officials.

Additionally, “Barriers to Political Participation of Puerto Ricans and Hispanics in Osceola County, Florida (1991-2007)”, a study conducted by Cruz (2010), reveals institutional and systematic factors that can impede the political activities of specific groups, including Puerto Ricans and Hispanics. According to Cruz, systemic and structural impediments that go beyond socioeconomic factors primarily strengthen the participative attitudes that these groups have developed (p. 261). Cruz's study looks at the national beliefs and practices that affect these groups' political engagement as well as the structural hurdles that keep people from actively participating in politics in the nation. Various sources, such as newspaper articles, interviews, and analyses of court cases from 1990 to 2006, are used to support the argument. For Hispanics, the largest obstacles to participation were principally a lack of financial resources, a predominance of the working class, and low language proficiency (approximately 48%). Cruz's examination of political participation in Osceola County demonstrates how institutional

practices and lower socioeconomic status frequently have an impact on political engagement in racially diverse environments.

Cruz was also able to demonstrate how the widespread use of the local tongue by the populace over time increased voting participation. However, by focusing only on electoral involvement, the study adopts a limited conception of political engagement and ignores a wide spectrum of political actions. Cruz once more noted that effective mobilization led to high rates of political engagement among Hispanics and Puerto Ricans. By concentrating on mobilization, it falls short of explaining whether the issue of low participation can be solved either by mobilization initiatives or by improving people's position. Low involvement levels cannot be primarily attributed to the structural traits he discovered because the study fails to show a causal connection. Other nations with opposing circumstances, including Britain, also experience low levels of electoral engagement (ibid)

Now I turn to the models and explanations that have been developed to serve as tools to investigate what motivates citizens to participate. Institutional or agency mobilization, sociocultural effects on society, a person's personal characteristics, and socio-demographic factors that influence a person's political activities are a few examples of the explanations that can be offered for political participation (Asiamah, 2015; Riutta, 2009). Although the explanatory value of each of these is universally acknowledged by authors, various authors assign varying weights to each explanation. For instance, Bratton's (1999) research reveals that the primary argument in explaining participation is between institutions and culture, whereas Verba et al. (1978) focused on the interaction of socio-economic and institutional elements. He concludes that while institutions (i.e., people's connections to "organized bodies of formal rules") "are more important than cultural values in explaining participation," the two groups of factors "work in tandem," and thus, democratic consolidation "is best conceived as a process of reciprocal co-determination between institution building and cultural change" (1999, pp.

549-554). To support this dualistic account for political engagement, Bratton (1999, p.583) emphasizes that "we must acknowledge the false dichotomy created by theorists who would have us choose between institutional and cultural modes of analysis". Below, each explanation is examined in greater detail.

### *Socioeconomic Status (SES)*

A person's degree of participation is mostly determined by his or her level of education, income, and occupation, which has been widely supported by research (Riutta, 2009). According to Verba et al., "The economically and socially better-off control politics," this assertion is true everywhere (1978, p. 2). Unfortunately, this leads to "Government policy acts and inactions maintaining and reinforcing the status of those who are better off" (ibid, p. 2). However, Verba et al. (1978) qualify the favorable association between SES and involvement in several ways in their comprehensive analysis. Although they contend that the individual pressures derived from SES work uniformly across all countries, they acknowledge that "collective motivations," represented in several types of institutions, intervene to alter the linear link between SES and participation. Voting is one such instance, which, on the one hand, is less susceptible to socioeconomic variance than many other forms of involvement (since voters cannot, for example, select when to participate) (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). On the other hand, voting has in some nations (the United States) been more strongly connected to SES than in others (Bratton, 1999).

According to Verba et al.(1978), education is not as strongly associated to involvement on the community level as it is on the national level. They also distinguish between the effects of SES on local and national levels. This is significant because it raises the question of whether civic education also has different effects on involvement at the local and national levels. Most people feel that participation is typically encouraged by education. According to Milbrath and Goel, who cite numerous studies, "persons of higher [SES], especially those with greater education,

are more likely than people of lower status to become heavily invested psychologically in politics" (1977, p. 47). Furthermore, Campbell et al. (1960) stress that, "Perhaps the most reliable predictor of political activity is the number of years of formal schooling". They extensively cite Almond and Verba (1963) to explain how and why education encourages participation. Among their justifications are that educated people are more aware of how decisions made by the government affect them, they follow politics and election campaigns more frequently, have a wider range of opinions, are more likely to believe they are "capable of influencing the government," and are more likely to be members of "some organization"(Milbrath & Goel, 1977, p. 99-100; Schuller et al., 2004).

However, Riutta (2007) argues that compared to other forms of participation, education has a weaker correlation with voting behavior. This confirms expectations that civic education will likewise correlate less with voting than with participation in other political activities. According to Milbrath and Goel (1977), one reason educated people vote less frequently is that in some nations, higher levels of education do not increase feelings of patriotism, system affection, political happiness, or the conviction that voting is a civic duty. Information from India and Japan demonstrates that the more aware and informed populace are, the less patriotic and more hostile to the system they tend to be (ibid, p. 101).

### ***Institutions***

As argued by Verba et al. (1978), Bratton (1999), and Bratton et al.(2005), one needs to define institutions in a micro sense to understand individual-level variance in participation within the same nation-state. This is about "citizen associations with official rule-making organizations" (Bratton 1999, p. 554). It is worthwhile to quote in full Bratton's explanation of micro level institutions, the mechanism(s) connecting people to them, and their impact on participation: When people register to vote, or when they join political parties or nonprofit organizations, they acquire institutional affiliations. Institutional links differ between people and offer a

promising basis for separating active from inactive citizens since people have some discretion over their portfolio of affiliations. Institutions themselves also differ in how strictly they enforce their regulations. Voter registration is a worldwide legal necessity for casting a ballot, although membership in volunteer organizations is usually always optional. Any institutional effects on political involvement can be expected to differ according to the type of affiliation rule, with mandatory affiliations having a bigger influence than voluntary ones. Membership in voluntary associations appears to enhance involvement (Almond & Verba, 1963) more consistently. Through organizations focused on their neighborhood, place of job, or religion, people have the chance to improve their civic competences, such as public speaking, meeting management, and communicating with outside agencies. (Brady, 2003; Bratton, 1999, p. 554)

Such skill development is not a recent phenomenon: "according to Tocqueville, voluntary organizations and interest groups have been considered as training grounds for democratic citizenship and facilitate greater kinds of political participation" (Bratton et al. 2005, p. 39). Political parties and nonprofit organizations are regarded as the most crucial entities for understanding citizen engagement by both Bratton (1999) and Verba et al. (1978). This is because "they represent the main institutional linkages between the public and their government, thus links by which the preferences of citizens are communicated upward to political leaders" (Verba et al. 1978, p. 81).

Particularly significant are political parties since they mobilize voters and aggregate personal preferences (Bratton, 1999; Milbrath & Goel, 1977). According to Bratton et al., people who identify with a political party are almost 17% more likely to vote than those who are not (2005, p. 299). Additionally, Milbrath and Goel claim that "it is apparent from many studies that people who are organizationally involved participate in politics at rates much greater than citizens who are not so involved" (1977, p. 110). In addition to party action, academics have discovered that involvement in organized religion is "particularly favorable to political

activism, especially if it is organized congregationally rather than hierarchically" (Bratton et al., 2005, p. 40).

### *Culture*

Furthermore, "culture" needs to be defined in a micro sense when describing individual level variations within single countries. It considers things like one's "psychological inclinations and subjective preferences of individual political actors" (Bratton 1999, p. 553) and one's position in patronage networks (Bratton et al. 2005). Interest in politics appears to be one of these factors that are most frequently mentioned. Verba et al. (1978) point out that it is possible to be engaged in politics and still be inactive, as well as the opposite—to be uninterested in politics and still participate. These writers claim that these discrepancies are the result of "institutional meddling" (p. 291). However, involvement and level of interest typically go hand in hand (Bratton 1999; Milbrath & Goel 1977; Verba et al. 1978). In Bratton's dataset, "interest in politics was the only attitude that consistently explained overall political engagement and each of its modalities. This variable certainly belonged in any universal explanation" (1999, p. 568). Additionally, he discovered that "simple correlation tests revealed that male gender, age, and rural residence were all positively and strongly related to this variable" (1999, p. 568).

Regarding the forms of engagement impacted, interest is said to relate "more strongly to campaign, community, and protest actions and less strongly to voting and contacting" (Milbrath & Goel 1977, p. 46). "Political efficacy feeling" is a different collection of psychological cultural elements that are important to political engagement. This includes irrational emotions like confidence and self-worth. According to Milbrath and Goel (1977), several studies have discovered that perceptions of political efficacy—such as the conviction that "I can affect decisions made"—increase engagement. This is especially true for participation that is more active, like campaigning and community service. Women have been discovered to feel less capable than men, according to the authors. Thus, women would stand to benefit the most if

civic education increased democratic views, particularly efficacy, given that their level of engagement is typically lower than that of men's (Riutta, 2007).

### ***Demographic Characteristics***

In fact, sex appears as a condition and predictor of participation in the literature, most frequently. According to many reports, men are more politically involved than women (Bratton 1999; Milbrath & Goel 1977; Verba et al. 1978). In fact, Milbrath and Goel note that this is "one of the most strongly substantiated findings in social science," with men being more likely to engage in politics than women (1977, p. 116). In general, men are "much more likely to participate" in politics than women, according to Bratton (1999, p. 565), who also concludes that "gender is a better demographic predictor of participation than socioeconomic level." Men spend more time than women in situations with political stimuli, contributing to this in part (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). The only area where there is less gender discrepancy is in voting (Verba et al., 1978). Age is another driving factor. "Many studies around the world have found that participation climbs consistently with age until it reaches a peak in the middle years, and then gradually diminishes with old age," write Milbrath and Goel (1977, p. 114). According to Bratton (1999), age is only positively connected with voting; age has no bearing on any other aspect of involvement.

### ***Context***

Living in the center (metropolitan areas) or peripheral is one of the most significant contextual correlations with involvement (countryside). People who live close to the center of society are more likely to participate in politics than people who live close to the periphery, according to Milbrath and Goel (1977, p. 89). However, the authors' next statement makes it seem as though this claim may not be as "thoroughly proven" as they had first thought: The literature reveals at least two distinct patterns. According to one theory, people who live in cities are more likely to be politically involved than people who live in rural areas. According to the alternate

viewpoint on urban-rural differences, there is either no link or an unfavorable one between residing in an urban area and participating in politics, notably voting (ibid, pp. 106-7). In fact, Verba et al. (1978) discovered that because communities in rural areas are smaller and individuals know one another, community participation is higher there. However, this clearly does not apply to all geographic situations or participative activities. In conclusion, this subsection discussed recent research and explanatory factors that predict political participation and identified and examined social capital, institutional or agency mobilization potential, and micro-analytic or individual resources as the main influences on participation in a political system.

## **2.5 RELEVANCE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Political participation is evident in a sizable number of volunteer activities. The goal of these actions is to influence lawmakers to alter their public policies or run for office themselves. To develop democracy, political engagement is essential since it gives individuals who are directly impacted by policies a voice. One of the most essential civic duties that a citizen can conduct is voting in elections. Political participation, however, also refers to activities like political campaigns, monetary contributions to politicians or causes, and contacting public officials. A politically active citizenry regularly petitions, protests, and works with legislators to raise the living conditions of the public (Greer, 2022). Being involved in politics is crucial in many respects because it is the lifeblood of democracy.

### ***Legitimacy for Public Institutions***

The democratic legitimacy afforded by most of the populace participating in political activities allows for more effective governance. Public institutions' reputations are likely to increase when there is a high level of civic participation (Greer, 2022). In effect more chances for active citizenship are created because the three branches of government will be held accountable through public participation. Involved citizenship helps to increase communication and

information sharing, which strengthens the bond of trust between the government and its populace.

### ***Greater Social Cohesion***

The social capital gap can be closed by citizens cooperating to fulfill their civic responsibilities. There is potential to unite separate communities when the nation is more tolerant of different ideas. Building relationships within social groups is facilitated by marginalized groups coming together with majority groups to discuss topics that concern them. As a result, a robust network will be developed that enables the diverse public to establish more enduring bonds based on a deeper comprehension of one another's problems. The best policies and decisions for the entire society are produced by more equality in political involvement (Greer, 2022).

### ***Improved Service Delivery***

Establishing the necessary infrastructure for higher socioeconomic living conditions depends on government projects and programs. Public service investment will take place when sincere candidates who have the interests of the entire community at heart are elected to office (Arieko & Kisimbii, 2020). It is more probable that the community's expressed needs will be addressed. Participating in politics ensures that leaders that are responsive to public needs are given power. It encourages accountability, which lowers management and maintenance expenses. Vandalism and other property crimes are less likely to occur in a community where people feel heard. Citizens may grow a sense of community ownership with better governance through an elected office. This feature means they will complement and assist governments, therefore, enabling faster and easier decisions. Reducing conflict is a critical advantage that promotes democratic trust through better communication. This shared responsibility among citizens will contribute to the improvement of their quality of life (Greer, 2022).

***More Excellent Capacity Building and Learning***

The borders and restrictions of many public bodies are not well known by citizens. Citizens will be able to use those services more effectively if they are more informed of and involved with public institutions and how they operate. The public is encouraged to be optimistic and confident through this procedure. In addition, fostering support for capacity building in particular interest groups through citizen participation is crucial. This technique is effective at encouraging marginalized and excluded populations to engage in political activism (Arieko & Kisimbii, 2020).

***Citizen Representation and Needs Redress***

Political engagement is a useful way for the public to express issues to elected officials and authorities. The message can reach the right decision-makers with widespread support for dangerous circumstances. With this kind of public involvement, society will have a say in how the issue is resolved (Arieko & Kisimbii, 2020). Widespread public engagement in politics is necessary to attain proper representation. Additionally, a broad representative sample will guarantee that the underrepresented groups in society are not forgotten. The affected populace may become apathetic when the voices speaking for the people are not connected to them (Greer, 2022). These public leaders frequently lack perspective and are unable to effectively address the problems facing countries other than their own.

As previously stated, public participation has a variety of advantages, however, promoting meaningful public input into the decision-making process is the main goal of public participation. Thus, public participation offers a chance for interaction between the public and the decision-making institutions. This communication can serve as an early warning system for public concerns, a channel for the dissemination of precise and timely information, and a tool for sustainable decision-making (Arieko & Kisimbii, 2020). When public participation is a

two-way process where both the agency and the public can learn and benefit, these advantages apply the identification and incorporation of the public's values into decisions that affect them. This goal is made possible by effective public participation (ibid).

## **2.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.**

Democracy became the dominant form of government and decision-making following the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, which marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. As a result, democracy has attracted scholarly attention over the past three decades. The wave of democracy blew across the world resulting in the creation of new democracies. This resulted in notions among scholars including Fukuyama (1992), who underscored that the spread of liberal democracy to almost every corner of the world will result in all nations inadvertently becoming liberal democracies. Nonetheless, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2004) establishes that the increase in the adoption of democracy by countries has resulted in a situation where a substantial number of countries are facing difficulties consolidating and deepening their democratic gains.

One of the arguments has been the delivery of desirable democratic outcomes since many of the developing democracies transitioning have seen a lack of democratic depth and development. Kotzè (2010) contend that most of the democracies have failed to move towards liberal democracies, with many of them showing signs of electoral and pseudo democracies. While electoral democracy refers to countries whose democratic practices are characterized by regular elections, without authentic contest for power, coupled with non-accountability on the parts of the wielders of political power resulting in the undermining of effective political equality. Pseudo-democracy on the other hand are democracies in which elections are held but, is a facade in an environment where the playing field favors the hegemonic class (Kotzè, 2010). According to Nohlen and Stover (2010), the thrust of most studies concerning democracy has been along the fringes of two umbrellas: understanding how democracy has diffused into non-

democratic parts of the world and the deepening of democracy as well as democratic consolidation. However, there has been a gravitation among scholars towards the deepening of democracy and democratic consolidation since the ideology of democracy is widespread, but the quality of democracy is still lingering and leaves much to be desired (Schedler, 1998). Democratic consolidation refers to the steps taken to increase the significance of political participation through measures that minimize the factors that undermine political participation in the first place (Nohlen & Stover, 2010).

It can be gleaned from the above that political participation is not only central but pivotal to the process of democratic consolidation. Moreover, Nohlen and Stover (2010) posit that the participation of ordinary people or citizens in the formulation and implementation of public policies through political participation is what distinguishes democratic regimes from autocratic and authoritarian ones. This is contingent on the notion that democracy is supposed to serve the needs of citizens rather than those of the political leaders. As such, Shin (1999) argues that democratic consolidation is dependent on commitment and strict adherence to the norms and statutes of democracy within which political participation is supreme.

Inherent in the definition of democracy, according to Birch (2007), is the view that citizens are supposed to have the freedom to participate in the realm of politics especially the provision of an enabling atmosphere that fosters the opportunities for private citizens to participate in elections, organize pressure groups and political parties and have the freedom to express their views on political issues regardless of how popular (or not) they are with the government without fear of severe ramifications. Birch (2007) defines political participation as involvement in the process of government by private citizens who are distinct from public officials or elected political leaders and representatives. The process of political participation enables citizens to actively engage themselves in the processes concerned with the creation and implementation of government policies, selection of leaders, etc. Similarly, Ekman and Amna (2012) provide

a more concise definition of political participation where it was captured as actions that are directed at influencing decisions of governments and political outcomes.

Political participation is an essential requirement for every democracy since it serves as the channel through which citizens can communicate information bothering on their needs, preferences and concerns to government and political decision makers (Dalton & Klingemann, 2007; Chang & Chyi, 2009). Political participation is a valuable process, since citizens that participate in political activities have their voices heard and have direct impact on how political decisions are made. In an effective democracy, there should be equality among individuals in terms of their political rights and voices to help safeguard citizens' interests and make sure that government treatment, actions and decisions that affect them are favorable, once these preferences and needs have been expressed (Verba et al., 1995).

To conclude, Birch (2007) argues that democratic theorists after Rousseau have accepted that opportunities for political participation by citizens provide avenues for the consolidation of democracy. Political participation serves as a conduit between the public and the government and political elites and guarantees the effective functioning of democracy (Kitschelt & Rehm, 2008). In the same vein, Dalton (2008) states that democracy is celebrated due to its involvement of the public and as such loses its credence and validity when the public is excluded from the process of governance, making political participation a fundamental part of the process of democratization.

## **2.7 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF CIVIC EDUCATION.**

Like the concept of political participation, civic education has also been contested and debated by academics. Patrick (2002) asserts that civic education refers to the process of teaching knowledge, skills and dispositions that are essential for citizens to become responsible and effective in representative and constitutional democracies. To Dahl (2002), the process of civic education is pivotal to the youth as it engenders democratic attitudes, skills and knowledge that

empowers them to engage and participate in the democratic ecosystem. This is achieved through equipping the youth for life in the public realm and enables them to be involved in the debates around major happenings in their society such as laws, public policies, and activities of public and private organizations, political actors and social issues that are vital.

Also, Dahl (2002) indicates that there are four tiers to the process of civic education which include socialization, participation, humanization, and lastly faith in democracy and the acquisition of knowledge bothering on civic competence. Socialization refers to the process of learning and awareness of children and youth about their families and communities, about human rights and about duties and participation in social life. The participation realm of civic education refers to the realm where citizens engage in the institutional life of the state, market, and civil society. This enables them to develop and achieve what Dahl referred to as collective consciousness (ibid). Touching on humanization, he argues that it is public life that helps and enables citizens to develop an understanding of national obligations as well as the relationships that exists between locality, nationality, and humanity. Lastly, he explained the tier of faith in democracy and acquisition of knowledge to refer to the process by which citizens gain access to and can directly or indirectly influence every decision that has direct implications on their lives, liberty, and property.

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2002) civic education is an essential requirement in any democracy since it helps in the realization of several goals such as the impartation of knowledge about the various democratic practices and institutions, instillation of essential and core democratic beliefs and values and the encouragement of active and informed political participation. This is succinct, according to (Brammer et al., 2012), who claimed that civic education is the type of education whose goal is to inculcate in citizens the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed for effective and

efficient citizenship. It also refers to the understanding of the various political institutions, concepts, and processes of civic life, as espoused by Faour and Muasher (2011).

A perspective provided by the UNDP (2004) avers that the process of civic education encompasses three main elements such as civic disposition, civic knowledge, and civic skills:

Civic disposition concerns itself with the ability of the citizens to develop the confidence that is required to effectively participate in civic life. This confidence empowers them to assume roles, rights and responsibilities that are associated with the democratic environment that they find themselves in. The UNDP (2004) argues that this also enables the citizens to be able to adopt and internalize some basic values of democracy such as tolerance and fairness, while being able to exercise their rights and responsibilities dutifully.

The second essential element of civic education which is civic knowledge refers to the degree to which the citizens understand their political environment and have a firm grip on their social, economic, political, and civil rights (UNDP, 2004). It also involves the rate at which the citizens with a democratic environment understand how their democratic system operates, while concurrently knowing the various roles and responsibilities of citizens and political leaders alike.

Lastly, civic skills being the third element of civic education refers to the acquisition of skills that enable the citizens to explain, analyze, interact, evaluate, defend a position, and monitor various processes and outcomes (ibid). This means that they can use these skills to make informed deliberations and participation in civic as well as political processes.

### **2.7.1 Civic Education Globally**

Civic education's primary goals are to promote democratic and participatory governance and to promote civic engagement. As a crucial complement to efforts which improve the practice of good governance, civic education aims to raise the demand for good governance thus, an

informed and involved public (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2012). Through civic education, a wide range of societal issues like domestic violence, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS have been addressed as well as political and governance issues like corruption, civic apathy, or post conflict reconciliation.

The interest in educational initiatives to help emerging democracies is not surprising given the demise of communist regimes following the end of the Cold War. Civic education or education for democracy, however, has not just been practiced in post-communist nations and other nations with a recent history of democracy (Quigley, 2000). It is evident that established democracies widely acknowledge the need for democracy to entail more than the creation of democratic institutions and the crafting of constitutions (ibid). In the end, a democracy must exist in the minds and hearts of its people to work. A political environment that fosters democracy is necessary.

During the 1990s, there seemed to be a rapidly expanding interest in developing and implementing educational programs in schools that were meant to help young people become capable and responsible citizens in democracies. Although attention is increasingly being paid to students in colleges and universities as well as community or adult education programs, historically this emphasis has been most directly focused on pre-collegiate civic education programs (Quigley, 2000).

To further clarify, Rietbergen-McCracken (2012) asserts that most of civic education is frequently applied in formal schooling. Civic education is taught in elementary and secondary schools all around the world as a normal subject, and the many Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that promote this aspect of the approach have a wide range of pedagogical tools accessible. It is evident that extra types of civic education are provided by informal education and information-sharing activities. Civil society needs to play a big part in implementing these kinds of applications. Voter education, programs to raise awareness of social and political

rights for underprivileged groups, such as immigrant communities or the poor, and leadership development for neighborhood civil society activists are a few examples of common uses of civic education outside of schools.

Additionally, civic education has been used in the public domain to improve the democratic functioning of local governments or political parties. Civic education is usually combined with various tactics for discussion and capacity-building to assist people and civil society groups in better organizing themselves, interacting with one another, and speaking out against injustice (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2012). For example, a civic education program might stress the necessity for community leaders to get specialized training in communications, or it might be followed by the setting up of forums for residents and advocacy initiatives (UNDP, 2004). A civic education campaign that was integrated into a larger program for democratic administration is well-exemplified by the UNDP's work in East Timor. (RietbergenMcCracken, 2012).

Previously, most civic education programs were only available in the countries where they were created. However, there has been a growing trend among educators in emerging and advanced democracies to collaborate and share mutually beneficial ideas, programs, and experiences since the fall of communism (Quigley, 2000).

For instance, since its founding, Civitas International has provided funding for civic educators' conferences in South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia (Quigley, 2000). In all, there are around 90 centers that make up Civitas International. As a service to people interested in civic education, the association also oversees the website Civnet ([www.civnet.org](http://www.civnet.org)), which connects civic educators with their foreign counterparts. USIS (United States Information Service) offices (now a component of U.S. Embassies) around the world have supported civic education programs by offering travel grants and minor grants to promote civic education initiatives in the countries where they are located to strengthen the Civitas movement.

Another Civitas project is the Cooperative Civic Education Exchange Program, which the United States and partner nations in East and Central Europe, Eurasia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia are conducting. This program's goals are to: create and implement civics and government programs for students that draw on the experiences of participating eligible countries; assist eligible countries in the adaptation, implementation, and institutionalization of such programs; and develop exemplary curricula and teacher training programs in civics and government and make them available to educators from the United States and other eligible countries. (Mason, 2015).

In addition to the networks in civic education associated with Civitas International and the Center's Civitas Exchange Program, there are other international networks in the area supported by institutions like the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United States Agency for International Development, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP), and the Soros Foundation.

### **2.7.2 Civic Education in Africa**

Cappelle et al. (2011) have noted that historical, social, political, and cultural forces have an impact on how citizenship education programs are conceptualized and delivered across all contexts. This explains why over time, in the context of African communitarian cultures, civic education policies and programs have adopted a communitarian outlook in line with African communitarian values (Eten, 2015). Indigenous citizenship education, which was collectivist in nature and aimed to create "acceptable and useful" people in African communities, existed before the continent of Africa encountered the western world (Eten, 2015). Eten further notes that civic education was non-existent in African countries during the colonial era because the colonial mission was not aimed at developing a critical citizenry (ibid). The immediate postcolonial period as a result did not realize any serious widespread efforts to champion civic education, except in rare cases where for the purposes of garnering public support and loyalty

for military juntas and civilian dictators, there were some forms of political education delivered to the people.

Much later in the decolonization process, however, the post-colonial governments of Africa were faced with the task of promoting national unity and cohesion in efforts to bring different ethnic groups and political units together for national development, and they achieved this through the incorporation of citizenship education into the school curricula, as well as the establishment of public institutions to inculcate values of patriotism and nationalism in their citizenry (Eten, 2015). One such continent-wide effort to promote national unity and cohesion through the school curricula found expression in the design of the African Social Studies Program (ASSP) which saw the introduction of Social Studies into African schools following a 1968 Mombasa Conference (EDC/CREDO, 1968). According to Okoth and Ayango (2014), the consequences of African colonialism included educational policies and systems that were focused on ensuring citizens' unquestioning allegiance to the state for nation-building.

Notwithstanding this negative past, there has been appreciable progress of civic education campaigns in Africa over the past thirty years. Particularly, Civitas Africa is a Civitas initiative that was funded by the U.S. Department of Education with the primary goals of teaching the fundamental values, principles, and processes of democracy at pre-collegiate levels; fostering the development of competent and responsible participation by young people; and promoting mutual understanding and respect among African and U.S. teachers and students. To further these goals, Civitas Africa has the following objectives: develop and implement effective civic education curricula in African and U.S. school systems; provide professional development institutes for elementary and secondary teachers and preservice teacher-educators in Africa and the United States; increase the knowledge of African and U.S. educators and students about the history and governance of their countries; administer exchange visits of educators and civic leaders in the United States and selected African countries to improve education for democratic

citizenship; support independent research and evaluation to determine the effects of civic education programs on the knowledge, skills, and character traits of students in Africa and the United States: and conduct international meetings to plan and administer program activities (Mason, 2015). Participatory countries included Senegal, Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, and the United States.

In Africa, civil society organizations like community organizations, NGOs, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, international development organizations, media organizations, the private sector, and government agencies are among those providing civic education services (outside of schools). Seminars, workshops, focus group discussions, drama, simulations, role plays, radio and television programs, information technologies (like blogs, internet forums), and other informal teaching and information-sharing techniques are some of the tools most frequently used in civic education activities (Mason, 2015). The emphasis is on participatory and cooperative methods of learning.

Another tool used in civic education programs (mostly school or university-based ones) is ‘service learning’ where participants spend some time in their communities, involved in political action such as for example attending or organizing political meetings or protests, or gathering signatures for petitions (Garman, 1995). The World Bank Institute's 2005–2007 Africa Good Governance Program on the Radio Waves program serves as a good illustration of how media can be used to promote civic education. With the intention of assisting municipalities in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in creating more open and effective municipal governments for their residents, this distance learning program was transmitted to those municipalities via digital satellite radio technology. The program presented a step-by-step methodology for participatory budgeting and introduced viewers to the concepts, definitions, and tools of civic participation and governance (Hirschfeld, 2008).

### 2.7.3 Civic Education in Ghana

Public sector efforts to promote civic education in Ghana are driven at two levels: through Ghana's formal school curriculum and through the activities of a constitutionally established body called the National Commission for Civic Education (Eten, 2015). First, the formal school system in Ghana incorporates civic education, sometimes referred to as citizenship education, into the curriculum in a variety of methods and at various levels. While citizenship education is taught at certain levels as a stand-alone subject, at other levels it is integrated as a topic within several subject areas. Upper elementary students are taught citizenship education at primary schools, and junior and senior high students are taught citizenship education through Social Studies. Second, the NCCE has the authority to implement citizenship education in Ghanaian society according to the National Commission for Civic Education Act, 1993, Act 452, and Articles 231-239 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014). These constitutional provisions make it clear that the NCCE's explicit mandate to advance citizenship education is restricted primarily to increasing societal awareness of the need for Ghanaians to defend and uphold the Constitution of Ghana as "the fundamental law of the people of Ghana" (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014) and to provide them with information about their civic duties and rights.

As identified by Boateng (1996), an institutional organization should be mandated with the onerous task of teaching the populace how to effectively participate in civic life. The organization, if established, should be funded by the state but must be independent of governmental control. This is important because the process of citizenship education and participatory democracy are absolute complements and as such all democratic entities should make bold efforts at providing meaningful education on political participation (ibid).

Furthermore, Agyeman (1968) argued that the process of civic participation in Ghana occurs through the formal education institutions namely the family, voluntary groups and associations,

churches, peer groups, work groups, political parties, and the mass media. Most iconic is the role of the school in being the pivotal institution for the political socialization of citizens, but this occurs through latent and manifest forms.

Boateng (1996) advocates for the significance of civic education to democracy but claims that within the African sub-region, enough attention and credence has not been given to it. He contends that in well-functioning democracies, there is increased and great access to information, freedom to engage in political and public debates, and in sum the uninterrupted participation of citizens in the process of governance, supplemented by active support and reinforcement from the state. Therefore, he proposed that the process of civic education should be made part of all formal and non-formal educational programs to ensure its maximum exposure to the citizens. This is because democracy is supposed to flow persistently in societies where the culture of democracy is established.

Likewise, Attafuah (1990) advanced that there was the need for Ghanaians to move from passive participation in the political system to a fully and actively participating citizenry who have understood the functions, values, ideas, practices, and institutions of democracy to ensure that Ghana's democracy flourishes. The consolidation of Ghana's democracy was known to require an organized body of citizens that will be given the mandate and power to hold their leaders accountable and transparent to their roles and responsibilities. In that sense, Okudzeto (1996) explains that local and central governments are given mandates to serve the people and as such, there is the need to ensure that the power of the citizenry that makes the process of democracy meaningful is protected. Again, he argued that it was essential for the citizenry to earn their liberties which cement its enjoyment, while making a case on the need for conscious efforts to be made towards civic education without which the benefits of a true democracy cannot be enjoyed.

Moreover, Oquaye (1996) bemoaned factors such as poverty and illiteracy which were affecting the quality of citizen participation in democracy, making such people gullible, desperate, and anxious to accept any person with the promise of a better and improved standard of living. Based on the propensity of the above to affect democratic consolidation, Oquaye (1996) advocated for the development of a strong civil society that is conscious of their obligations and responsibilities towards the state and will defend the stability of the nation. In a similar study, Gyimah-Boadi (2000) proposed that participation, which he conceptualized as the involvement of stakeholders and citizens generally in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies and decisions that have direct implications on their lives, and should revolve around the creation of mechanisms through which the individuals, private sector as well the civil society can participate in the process of governance.

Inferences from the Ghana Human Development Report by the UNDP (2004) shows that education is a basic indicator and facilitator of other elements associated with human development. It was stated that the enlargement of people's choices lies at the heart of human development, and this is based on factors such as good governance and for that matter, civic education becoming the fulcrum on which good governance can be guaranteed. The report is in tune with other studies like Oquaye (1996) and Gyimah-Boadi (2000) that advance the idea that the awareness of citizens is central to national development and a stable and healthy democracy needs to be made a priority.

The subsequent sections will discuss the evolution of civic participation in Ghana from the pre-independence, through to the independence and post-independence periods.

#### **2.7.4 Pre-Independence Civic Education in Ghana**

Foremost, Bawa (2011) argued that one of the ways in which civic education was done before self-determination and independence was through informal means which incorporated the roles of the chiefs, elders, and opinion leaders in educating the masses of people to engage in tax

payment and participate in communal labor. He intimated that the teaching of warriors to defend and protect their homeland in times of war and instability also marked a form of civic education that was practiced for a long time. African societies such as Ghana during their pre-independence phase passed on values to prospective generations using oral traditions, legends, taboos and proverbs and occasions such as festivals, naming ceremonies and funerals as avenues where the citizenry were educated on their civic rights and responsibilities (ibid). During the colonization era, Boateng (1996) notes that the colonial powers also embarked on civic education although it was not fully geared towards promotion of democratic governance. Despite the introduction of electoral and parliamentary democracy, the civic education that was introduced was used to improve the willingness of colonial subjects. This process made it easier for the colonial masters to obtain the cooperation they needed from their subjects to further the attainment of imperialist aims and ambitions.

The method of indirect rule used by the British allowed the colonial masters to administer through the chiefs who helped the colonial powers in the implementation of their policies. The chiefs helped the colonial masters in the collection of taxes for the purposes of developmental projects. This, according to Boateng (1996) required a degree of public education that was meant to encourage the citizens and subjects to pay such taxes. The payment of taxes showed the performance of the civic responsibilities of the subjects.

#### **2.7.5 Civic Education During the Post-Independence Era.**

The fight for self-determination and independence required the use of educational institutions by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to inculcate his vision of a self-government now into the citizenry (Agyeman, 1968). Other evidence of Nkrumah's fight for independence shows his establishment and introduction of the Young Pioneer Movement in all schools in 1960, as well as the formation of the Ideological Institute in Winneba where the National Association of

Socialist Students was formed as the students wing of the Convention People's Party (CPP) (ibid). Gleaning from the above examples, the establishment of these institutions by Nkrumah was to instill the spirit of anti-colonialism in the young generations and provide political education based on the socialist ideology of the CPP.

Moreover, Agyemang (1968) affirmed that other institutions such as the National Cooperative Council (NCC), the Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC), United Farmers Council (UFC) and the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW) were formed to enable people embrace and put into practice the ideology of the ruling party whose membership was made mandatory for all adults to be able to become politically active in the country. The nature of civic and political education during Nkrumah's tenure gravitated toward a socialist system, emphasizing ideological alignment with the Convention People's Party and Pan-Africanist values. Boateng (1996) extends this argument by stating that there were no existing official programs for civic education that revolved around the adoption of democratic principles and values, but the existing political education structures were aligned with the propagation of the socialist political ideologies and objectives.

Subsequently, the Nkrumah-led administration was replaced by the National Liberation Council (NLC) military regime that set the tone and lay the foundation for the enactment of liberal democracy. Danso (1996) in a chronicle of events stated that this government created the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in June 1967. The CCE, which was first chaired by Dr. Busia, was charged with the duty of making sure they provided the basis for a paradigm shift to true democracy. According to him, the CCE was established "...to reintegrate and unify the society, teach tolerance and respect for political ideas, prepare the groundwork for constructive opposition as well as helping the populace to understand the limits of government power and authority. It was also to teach people about how to evaluate others as leaders" (Danso, 1996, p. 75). However, the CCE was encumbered with some challenges, chief of which was its tag as a

political party, resulting in Busia vacating the position as its chairman days before the ban on the formation and activities of political parties was lifted. Busia became Prime Minister in 1969 and the CCE became dormant due to the lack of support from Busia's government (Danso, 1996).

According to Boateng (1996), the 1972 National Redemption Council (NRC) takeover, which ended the Progress Party's administration and, consequently, the existence of the CCE, is one of the worst tragedies the country has ever experienced in terms of civics. This is because the center was a sizable organization with a national scope of operations. Boateng (1996) asserts that "the idea of the CCE was basically sound, and that in the short time it was in operation... it was able to do some valuable work," even though there were opposing views regarding the activities of the organization. Its only unfortunate circumstance is that it was perceived as the work of a single political party or individuals from a specific background.

The year 1979 saw the dawn of a new government by the People's National Party (PNP) but according to Bawa (2011), there was no formal attempt made towards the re-establishment of the CCE between 1979 and 1981 when this government ruled the country. Bawa (2011) notes that, the mandate of civic education reverted to the schools where it was taught as one of the subjects in the curricula. Publicly, institutions, organizations, and bodies such as Institute of Adult Education participated in the domain of undertaking civic education within this period since it was seen as an essential process of building up the masses to develop interest in political participation.

#### **2.7.6 Civic Education in the Fourth Republic**

The Fourth Republic stands tall as the only era in Ghana's political history in which there were bold and conscious efforts in accentuating previous efforts at civic education in Ghana, notably the establishment of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in 1993. This was because the constitution that was formed under the Provisional National Defense Council

(PNDC) government signaled the country's return to constitutional rule and provided fertile grounds for the establishment of the NCCE, which was mandated with the power to undertake civic education duties. The NCCE is a body that was created by the constitution to ensure the sustenance and the increase of the awareness of constitutional democracy among Ghanaians, to help in the attainment of both political and social stability and to foster economic growth and integrated development through civic education. This was to be achieved through the observation of democratic principles like impartiality and non-partisanship through the help of a well-trained and motivated workforce (NCCE, 2011). The legitimacy of the NCCE is provided by the constitution of 1992, specifically articles 231-239, as well as the National Commission for Civic Education Act, 1993, Act 452 (ibid). This act makes provisions for the composition and the functions of the NCCE. The maiden members of the NCCE were announced and subsequently inaugurated in September 1993.

The structure of the NCCE is such that it has nationwide presence through the establishment of several national, regional, and district offices. The NCCE is seen as one of the few institutions with well-decentralized structures across the length and breadth of the country which provides the avenue to reach out to several people across several jurisdictions and communities. The promulgation of the NCCE served as a vindication for the NDC-led administration from allegations leveled against them based on their non-commitment towards democracy (Bawa, 2011).

Overtime, Bawa (2011) explains that some allegations were leveled against this development since the NCCE was seen by some scores of the populace as a propaganda wing of the National Democratic Congress based on the knowledge that the inaugural staff of the NCCE were selected from the revolutionary organs of the PNDC/NDC. Reportedly, there was heightened apprehension among the populace regarding issues of neutrality when it became public knowledge that some of the employees of the NCCE had active political lives, glaringly

showing their support for the NDC, causing a huge dent in the reputation of the NCCE, affecting the confidence and faith that the public reposed in them (NCCE, 1997).

The Fourth Republic chalked other successes in furtherance of civic education aside from the promulgation of the NCCE. Bawa (2011) states that several other organizations and institutions, both public and private, together with a plethora of civil society agencies continued engagement with each other to actuate the agenda of a national civic engineering. He cautioned that civic education should be seen as a shared responsibility and as such, this responsibility should not be shouldered by one organization or institution alone.

Since it was established, the NCCE has fulfilled its responsibilities as mandated by the constitution to educate citizens on their constitutional rights and responsibilities. Makumbe (1995) proffered that a well-thought-out civic education framework should result in democratic participation which results in good governance, but Africa in general and Ghana specifically still have more strides to make (Bawa, 2011). This is because the process of democratization, as portended by Nzongola-Ntalaja (1997) cannot be imported and handed down to African rulers but rather should be a responsibility borne by the continent on its own. Bawa (2011) opines that if Ghana's experience with civic education is anything to go by, there exists a deficiency in the commitment of political leaders since most of them like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah were more concerned with the establishment of ideological institutions that advanced their own ideological and hegemonic beliefs.

NCCE (2001) indicates that the elections in 2000 represented the first time that citizens in Ghana through democratic elections used ballot boxes to replace one democratically elected government which was led by an opposition, with the successful enforcement of constitutional term limits. This was the first step towards the consolidation of the country's democracy and as Bawa (2011) argues, it was a feat that could not have been realized without the indispensable role of the NCCE. The 2000 elections where power was transferred from the outgoing NDC to

the incoming NPP offered the best lens for the examination of how civic education and for that matter political participation had developed. To note, the newly elected government boosted the promotion of civic education and although fraught with a few challenges, the government showed a lot of support and active involvement in the first ever constitutional week that was organized by the NCCE. The activity empowered Ghanaians on the need to uphold the tenets of the constitution (Bawa, 2011).

## **2.8 UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NCCE IN CIVIC EDUCATION.**

As discussed in the evolution of civic education under the Fourth Republic, the NCCE was established through the promulgation of the 1992 constitution under Article 231-239, mandated with the task of creating and ensuring the sustenance of awareness of constitutional democracy. The commission's objective is to help in the attainment of political, economic, and social stability using civic education. The NCCE is tasked with the dissemination of policies, programs, and decisions of government through various mechanisms and this section will discuss some of the ways through which this responsibility is executed.

### ***Civic Education Clubs (CECs)***

The Civic Education Clubs (CECs) are mechanisms that are used by the NCCE to propagate policies and programs of the government. It helps in reaching out to major constituents of the electoral population, particularly the youth. This mechanism was inaugurated in 1996 and generated a lot of euphoria which subsequently died down for varying reasons, fundamentally including financial and logistical problems upending the ability of the commission in general and the clubs to pay their human resource personnel (Bawa, 2011). This had direct implications on the effectiveness of the clubs since it affected the ability of the staff of the NCCE to run these clubs.

Bawa (2011) assessed the nature of these clubs in the western region for instance and argued that the formation of these clubs was geared towards the civic education targeted at children

and regularly took place in schools. CECs take the form of voluntary scout movements, sports groups and religious associations comprised mostly of the youth and these have been very instrumental in the advancement of civic education and the engendering of civic norms and values. The focus of this initiative is on school-based programs. The challenge as advanced by Bawa (2011) was the limitation of this program to a few schools in some communities in the Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana. In a broad stroke, the school-based programs were geared towards the transfer of democratic knowledge, values and skills that would empower the children to participate in society in a responsible and effective manner. Bawa (2011) further observes that civic education targeted at adults has been the preserve of some Non-Governmental Organizations instead of the NCCE and governmental institutions, where it was done on a voluntary basis on areas such as education of voters, knowledge on human rights and leadership training of citizens. The nature of their operation was mostly informal and one-off sessions with the intention of restructuring the programs.

### ***Civil Centers***

The NCCE commissioned civil centers which are to be found in communities to facilitate the access of the citizenry to materials such as the constitution of Ghana, newspapers and informational materials that would help improve their knowledge of civil rights, as well as games such as Ludo, Ghana Constitution games and monopoly to facilitate relaxation of the users (Bawa, 2011). The purpose of these centers is to serve as an interlocutor for the dissemination of civic messages (NCCE, 1997). This is in part true because of the frequency with which the officers of NCCE visit these sites and engage in interactions with those that patronize this establishment on important topics of national interest. Bawa (2011) contends that the Western, Volta and Central Regions were the first places where this strategy was piloted, and this has resulted in the ubiquity of these centers in these regions. However, some logistical factors such as the inadequate reading materials, lack of vehicles or motorbikes, lack of support

given to the personnel that maintain these centers, as well as the absence of appropriate infrastructure served as deficiencies that negatively affect the efficiency of these centers in achieving the desired outcomes (ibid).

### ***Radio Programs***

The media, particularly radio, remains one of the most utilized ways in which the commission advances its mandate of civic education. Bawa (2011) explains that officials of the commission appeared as resource persons to answer questions put to them by some radio and FM stations, or in certain cases, presented specific programs as a mechanism to reach out to a large section of the populace. The effectiveness of this strategy was seen in the high level of civic awareness of the citizens based on a wide range of topics that were discussed including but not limited to political tolerance, corruption, human rights, social issues and environmental pollution and degradation (Bawa, 2011). Examples of these programs are “Yeshiesa” and “Civic Agenda” that was held in local radio stations in the Western and Upper West Regions, respectively. Some of the local stations, as part of their corporate social responsibilities provided airtime to the commission to educate the masses on civic issues, although the degree of effectiveness and continuity differed across the regions in Ghana (NCCE, 2011). Most of these programs have collapsed while others suffer the bleak future of being taken off the airwaves due to financial issues pertaining to sponsorship that requires the commission to pay for the airtime that hitherto, was free (Bawa, 2011).

### ***Public Education***

The NCCE also organizes programs that are purposely designed to address the importance of public organizations in the sustenance of democracy as part of the processes involved in consolidating the country’s democratic gains, principles, practices, and institutions. These include the Armed Forces, Police, Parliament, political parties, religious bodies, and the youth (NCCE, 2001). For instance, in the year 2000 the commission partnered with the Armed.

Forces of Ghana to advance some seminars targeted at officers and their families on the processes of democracy and constitutionalism. The seminar was themed “The Military in Ghana’s Quest for National Integration, Democracy and Constitutionalism.” This helped the members of the force to appreciate their roles as enshrined in the 1992 constitution (Bawa, 2011). Other instances include a partnership between the NCCE and the High Command of the Ghana Police Service in 2000 where a joint civic education workshop was organized for the police across the length and breadth of the country to understand their roles in the process of maintaining law and order in Ghana’s democracy.

## **2.9 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIC EDUCATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: A GLOBAL DEBATE.**

Many academics, including Verba et al. (1995), Carpini and Keeter (2003), Levine and Lopez (2004), and Browne (2013), have attempted to support the thesis that political participation and civic education are related, while others, including Galston (2001), USAID (2002), and Finkel and Ernst (2005), have investigated the negative relationship between civic education and political participation.

According to Carpini and Keeter (2003), who conducted research on the association between civic education and political participation, there is a complex relationship between civic education and political participation in that political knowledge helps citizens who are on the periphery of opinion formation and political action to participate in politics more effectively.

In a similar study to prove the thesis of a positive relationship between civic education and political participation, Verba et al. (1995) found a correlation between education and civic skills, claiming that skills such as reading, and writing are very important for effective and efficient political participation, to wit, increase in the level of education results in greater political participation.

Conversely, Galston (2001) argues that there are instances where civic education has negative impacts on political participation. In a study of the United States, the author argued that regardless of the strides made in the pursuit of increased formal education in the last five decades, there has been negligible effect on political knowledge, evidenced in the inadequate political knowledge possessed by college graduates. Similarly, Finkel and Ernst (2005) who focused their study on Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe based on an earlier study conducted on South African high school students in 1998, used a variety of indicators to measure democratic orientations such as measures of political knowledge, civic duty, tolerance, institutional trust, civic skills, and comprehension of legal forms of political action.

The authors adduced from their study that despite the ubiquity of civic education in emerging democracies in these parts of the world, there were few changes in the democratic orientations of students. They argued that although it is valid that civic education has direct implications on political participation, its effects on democratic values and skills are debatable. This is buttressed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2002) who in an assessment of the relationship between civic education and democratic political participation contended that at certain times, civic education has little effect on democratic values such as political tolerance and trust in some democratic and political institutions.

Notwithstanding the above counter arguments, civic education has been argued to be instrumental to political participation through the promotion of awareness of civic issues. Kurtz et al. (2003) argued that civic education has at its core, the improvement of the civic awareness of the citizenry. Finkel (2011) tested this thesis in South Africa, Poland and the Dominican Republic and revealed that citizen education can increase the awareness of the citizenry on the various political processes in the jurisdictions under study, and this was more highlighted in countries that have established democratic processes, practices, institutions, and values. Kurtz et al. (2003) also established in their study that civic education increased political participation

especially in terms of increasing the likelihood of the citizens to vote and other processes such as increase in civic knowledge and engagement. Particularly, 71% of the sampled individuals indicated that voting was a necessity in a democratic setting and accounted for what makes a citizen a good and responsible one (Kurtz et al., 2003). 90% of the respondents that were exposed to civic education indicated that another tenet of being a responsible citizen is obedience of the law (ibid). Other measures that showed this positive relationship with citizenship education include paying attention to government, contacting elected officials and others. This study, just like the ones discussed before, gives a lot of credence to the importance of civic education in increasing public knowledge on civic issues.

In a related study, Owen et al. (2011) demonstrated that higher levels of citizenship education have positive relationship with political knowledge. Using data from the Civic Education and Political Engagement Study (CEPES, 2010), the authors argue that people who have not had any form of civic education in school tend to have lower knowledge of common things about the government and politics as compared to those that undertook a civic education or a social studies course. Similarly, Owen et al. (2011) notes that 64% of people that have either taken up a citizenship course or participated in a civic education program have a higher propensity to know basic facts about American politics such as the number of senators compared to those that are deficient in citizenship training.

Finkel (2011) assessed Kenya's Citizenship Education Program (NCEP) and pointed out that there were sizeable differences between Kenyans that were exposed to the programs and those that were not. Instructively, Finkel (2011) argued that those that frequented the workshops organized to help realize the objectives of the program recorded increased awareness of the Kenyan Constitution and the various processes such as knowledge of the various proposals being recommended for the constitutional reform. Compared to Owen et al. (2011), both studies establish common grounds for the importance of civic education among electorates.

## **2.10 EFFECTIVENESS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN GHANA: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT**

There have been few studies done in Ghana with respect to the relationship between civic education and political participation. The following section presents an empirical discussion of pertinent studies.

To commence with, Abudu and Fuseini (2014) evaluated the curricular implication of civil awareness and engagement in Ghana by focusing on civic activities, the level of awareness of these civic activities, and the relationship between the public's level of awareness and their civic engagement. The methodology was an experimental one that involved 120 respondents. The results of this research indicated that the participants (experimental group) that were exposed to some degree of civic education were able to endorse all civic activities.

This was the case since they received education on them, resulting in a higher level of awareness on civic issues as compared to their control group.

Abudu and Fuseini (2014) argued that the findings of the study demonstrated a strong disparity in the level of awareness of civic issues between the group that were given some degree of civic education and those that were not given any civic education. This also affected their tendency to participate in community service. The study underscored the importance of civic education and its centrality to civic engagement and participation in democratic processes, recommending that the curriculum of schools should be made to compulsorily include activities that advance the civic awareness and civic engagement of its students.

Sam et al. (2019) collaborated on a study that sought to evaluate the civic engagement and participation among Ghanaian and Kenyan tertiary students, with a specific focus on the factors that account for their civic engagement. The study included 554 participants with 355 Ghanaians and 199 Kenyans, while data was collected using quantitative questionnaires adopting measures such as political attentiveness, motivation for participation, barriers to

participation, social endorsement, orientation to social democracy, national identification, institutional trust, trust in government, religiosity, social efficacy, and values. Compared to Kenya, the Ghanaian students had low levels of citizen engagement. However, the factors that affected the level of civic engagement were demographic factors such as gender and age, personal values, which had no significant effect on civic participation; but political interest and attentiveness, barriers and motivation were more significant to the process of political participation, coupled with trust, social endorsement, and social efficacy. Moreover, one keen observation from this study is the level of priority that the youth should be given in civic education frameworks and strategies.

Taking into consideration the instrumentality of the NCCE in civic education in Ghana, some studies in civic education and political participation have also focused on this institution. Bawa (2011) for instance examined the significance of the NCCE on the consolidation of Ghana's democracy, focusing sharply on Cape Coast. The author contended that the education of citizens on their constitutional rights and responsibilities is a valuable tool in the advancement and preservation of the country's democratic gains, and as such, the role of the NCCE cannot be overlooked.

The study was a public perception study which examined the level of awareness among the residents of Cape Coast with regards to the activities of the NCCE. The findings show that most of the citizens that participated in the study indicated that they were knowledgeable about the NCCE, its functions and activities. The study also showed the effectiveness of the commission regarding education on social issues like HIV/AIDS, alongside civic, electoral, and constitutional education. Bawa (2011) concluded that the NCCE regularly organized seminars for Ghanaians, with the media being one of the most effective means by which the commission performs its duties. These resulted in a populace knowledgeable about their human rights such as their freedom of religion, speech, movement, and the press. This study is relevant

to this present study as it provides the context for which further studies on the NCCE can be explored, especially in other jurisdictions where the organization has been decentralized.

A similar study was conducted by Niworo et al. (2016), which sought to understand the impact of civic education on political participation in the Sissala East District in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The authors agree that the democracy of a country is consolidated when its citizens can participate actively in the various democratic processes and forms the foundation for democratic nations such as Ghana. This study specifically focused on evaluating the implementation of civic education programs by the NCCE and its ability to enlighten the populace on civic issues, therefore enhancing their democratic participation. The study adopted a mixed method approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools and methods of analysis.

The study augmented the perspectives of proponents of the positive relationship between civic education and political participation. Findings from the study suggest that those that benefited from the civic education program had increased levels of political participation based on indicators such as readiness to vote, membership of political parties, participation in elections by contesting, engagement in communal services and participation in effective deliberations that demand accountability, transparency, and probity from political leaders (Niworo et al., 2016).

## **2.11 CHALLENGES IN CIVIC EDUCATION**

This section discusses the barriers that are encountered in the process of civic education abroad and in Ghana based on previous empirical studies.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (2008) advances that the disparities between the rural and urban areas have major consequences on the effectiveness of civic education attempts. Some of these factors which are key challenges in the civic education

agenda in Sudan include, level of literacy, accessibility, language, religious denominations, and the marginalization of women.

In addition, Katusiimeh (n.d.) argues that, for Uganda, most of the issues associated with civic education was due to poor coordination. The author argues that the organizations that have been given the mandate to carry out civil education were formally adopted in the Civic Education Joint Coordination Unit (CEJOCU) which served as a mother body that was tasked with the planning, oversight and implementation of civil education strategies and activities throughout the length and breadth of the country. Unfortunately, this did not yield any successful results due to the failure on the part of the mother body to provide equal and fair treatments to all its members, as well as the failure to provide information in a timely manner that was necessary for the development and implementation of efforts.

The organization was further saddled with unclearly defined goals, financial issues that bothered on transparency and other hindering factors such as inadequate consultations and relational issues. Civic education was limited to electioneering activities on polling day, and more integral educational elements such as educating the masses on the importance of elections is left to the political candidates who do this in ways that align with their agenda (ibid).

Jamieson (2013) also explored the importance and the state of civic education in the United States and revealed that they were fraught with five challenges that affected their ability to improve the quality and accessibility of civic education efforts. The author indicated that, chief among these challenges was the lack of priority given to the quality of civic education by the state, non-availability of textbooks to facilitate civic education at the curricular level, economic inequalities in the civic education activities organized in schools, with the needs of high income students being prioritized over those of lower income, insufficient funds available to schools to implement strategies to advance civic education, and lastly, the political polarization and

duopoly making civic education a pawn in the hands of political elites. Jamieson (2013) indicated that these problems limit the impact of civic education.

There have been attempts to bring clarity to the challenges facing civic education in Ghana. The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA, 2019) in assessing the barriers to citizen participation in Ghana argued that the process of participatory governance is key in any democratic setting. Furthermore, the process of civic education is saddled with apathy exhibited by the citizens irrespective of the freedoms of expression and association, both being fundamental rights. MFWA (2019) indicates that majority of Ghanaians (94%) have not embarked on demonstrations and protests according to the 2019 Afrobarometer report, with 65% indicating they will never participate should the need arise.

Additionally, the 2019 Afrobarometer report indicates that there is low interest among Ghanaians in participation in political rallies, working for parties or candidates, contacting their formal and informal leaders. Also, MFWA (2019) highlights that the lack of effective civic education programs contributes to this apathy, as citizens are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities beyond electoral voting and lack knowledge of avenues for continuous engagement with their leaders.

## **2.12 GAPS IDENTIFIED IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review has provided a comprehensive overview of political participation, civic education, and their interrelationship, both globally and within the Ghanaian context. While existing scholarships extensively cover electoral participation and the general importance of civic education, several gaps remain that this study aims to address.

Firstly, there is a notable scarcity of in-depth empirical research specifically focusing on extra-electoral citizen participation in Ghana, particularly at the local level and its direct linkage to civic education efforts. Much of the existing literature on Ghanaian political participation tends

to concentrate on electoral processes, leaving a void in understanding how citizens engage with governance between elections.

Secondly, while the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is widely recognized as the primary state institution for civic education in Ghana, there is limited empirical assessment of the effectiveness of its specific strategies and activities in fostering extra-electoral participation. Existing studies often acknowledge the NCCE's mandate and general activities but lack detailed analysis of their tangible impact on citizens' engagement beyond voting.

Thirdly, the literature, highlights a conceptual ambiguity between "civic engagement" and "political participation." While this study has clarified this distinction in Section 2.7 and 2.1 respectively, the broader literature sometimes confuses these terms, leading to research outcomes that may count non-political civic engagements as political participation. This study, by focusing specifically on extra-electoral political participation (i.e., activities aimed at influencing government action or public policy outside of elections), contributes to narrowing this conceptual gap in the Ghanaian context.

Finally, there is a need for more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by civic education institutions like the NCCE in Ghana. While financial and logistical constraints are frequently cited, a deeper exploration of how these challenges specifically impede the promotion of extra-electoral participation, and how they interact with public perceptions (e.g., partisan tags, apathy), is less explored. This study aims to provide a more granular analysis of these institutional and contextual barriers.

### **2.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the prior body of knowledge which underpins this study. Specifically, the concept of political participation was discussed, together with its relationship with democracy across the world. The chapter also explained the concept of civic education. The

chapter continued with a historical assessment of civic education in Ghana, the establishment of the NCCE and ways in which it executes its constitutional mandate of civic education. The chapter culminates in an empirical assessment of relevant literature on the effectiveness of civic education on political participation as well as the challenges that exist as far as civic education is concerned. This review has highlighted the critical role of civic education in fostering democratic participation, particularly extra-electoral forms, and has identified key conceptual and empirical gaps in the existing literature. These gaps underscore the necessity of this study's focused investigation into the NCCE's strategies, effectiveness, and challenges in promoting extra-electoral citizen participation in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study. Specifically, the discussions revolve around the explanation of the Cognitive Mobilization Theory with a closer focus on Dalton's proposition of the theory, an analysis of the core tenets or assumptions of the theory, the strengths and weaknesses of the theory as well as a summary of the chapter.

#### 3.1 EVOLUTION OF THE COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION THEORY

The concept of cognitive mobilization was proposed by Inglehart (1997) to explain the factors that affect the political participation of citizens in postindustrial societies such as education and increased access to education. Inglehart (1997) studied several societies and concluded that political participation is also dependent on other factors such as economic and cultural development, based on his comparative observation of several societies. Through longitudinal studies of European societies, he assessed the effects of level of education on different age groups based on the premise that levels of education and access to education are increasingly improving and rising. Inglehart (1997) defines cognitive mobilization as the development of skills that are needed to aid in the manipulation of political abstractions and the coordination of activities that are remote in space and time. Individuals within society that do not possess these skills according to Inglehart (1997), have the tendency to be seen as outsiders to the political life of modern nation-states.

Social mobilization is a broad process that includes several stages such as industrialization, urbanization, widespread literacy, universal suffrage, among others which several western societies have been able to complete successfully (Inglehart, 1997). Cognitive mobilization is used by Inglehart (1997) to refer to the skills that are nonetheless relevant to the ability of

individuals to cope with their political societies. However, the most significant development in cognitive mobilization is the development of a more educated and informed populace since it has the tendency to increase the quality of democratic practices. The precursor to this theory was the theory of Subjective Political Competence by Almond and Verba (1963), which was used to study the involvement of citizens in the political system mainly how citizens perceived the political structures as well as the institutions through their opinions and the extent to which people believed they could participate in political decisions at the local level. According to the authors, the higher the subjective political competence, the higher the probability of the citizens being politically active.

Some earlier literature has linked the concept of cognitive mobilization to political parties, arguing that political identification is psychological and emotional, both of which are formed in the process of socialization (Campbell et al, 1954). Campbell et al. (1960) extend this argument by advancing political parties as funnel models which determine the attitudes and votes of the citizens. Converse (1964) developed another concept that is linked to cognitive mobilization known as political sophistication, where the emphasis was on the degree to which ideologies and beliefs influence political behavior. The idea was to understand the adherence of the citizens to their ideological constructs and assess their ability to understand and apply political information in their assessment of issues or decisions on how to vote. The most politically sophisticated citizens, Converse (1964) argues, are the individuals that have the highest education, have high political involvement and are well informed, while the less politically sophisticated individuals are those whose political party identification determines their voting patterns. The Cognitive Mobilization theory is also closely tied to the functional model by Shively (1979) where the author sees political parties translating political information to citizens.

This study is geared towards the adoption of Dalton's works, since it has been accredited as being the most influential in the research of cognitive mobilization. His cognitive mobilization theory of political literacy and participation is discussed next.

### **3.2 DALTON'S COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION THEORY OF POLITICAL LITERACY AND PARTICIPATION**

The theory that underpins this study is the cognitive mobilization theory of political literacy and participation, associated with Dalton (2002). This theory was one of the major strands of ideas within the broader remit of the mobilization theory, which includes the social mobilization theory and the resource mobilization theory. The theory internalizes the process of education and political involvement, advancing that political mobilization as well as political engagement affects the tendency of individuals to mobilize their mental capacities and capabilities to participate and deal in politics. Dalton (1984) argues that the central theory is the argument that political education has a strong influence on political participation through the improvement of the cognitive skills of voters in learning about politics which enables them to derive greater gratification from participating in the political system. In a sense, the process of political education serves as a socialization process that increases engagement through the development of the cognitive skills of citizens enabling them to process complex political information about the political system, thus enhancing their civic duty (Denny & Doyle, 2008). Campbell et al. (1960) submits that there is a relationship between education and political involvement in that, rising levels of political education increases the political consciousness of the citizens due to the incapacitating nature of the lack of education. Popkin and Dimock (1999) in the advancement of a low information rationality hypothesis argue that citizens with low levels of political or civic education have a lessened propensity to participate in politics, in contrast to those with high levels of civic or political education. Nie et al. (1996) also argued that political education does not only provide support to democratic principles but

simultaneously increases the cognitive proficiency and intellectual skills which improves the ability of citizens to understand political events and act in an informed and rational manner. Also, Carpini and Keeter (1996) state that people with high levels of political knowledge can match their interests with public issues, while Nie and Junn (1993) have advanced that political education facilitates the process through which electorates acquire political information and skills that enables them to engage in politics.

The role of the mass media is crucial to the cognitive mobilization theory. According to Dalton (2002), organizations like the mass media have a propensity to strengthen the public's political acumen. The mass media's accessibility in democratic systems can be used to inform electorates, raising their level of political sophistication.

### **3.2.1 CORE TENETS OF DALTON'S COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION THEORY OF POLITICAL LITERACY AND PARTICIPATION**

The following are the basic assumptions of the theory that are employed in this study.

- Education is an important indicator and determinant in measuring knowledge and participation due to its ability to impact on the cognitions of citizens making them more politically conscious.
- Guaranteed access to political education increases the engagement of the citizens in politics thus enabling them to process political information and enhance their civic duty.
- There is apathy among citizens who do not have access to political information and education, affecting their ability to actively engage in politics.
- Developments in mass media technologies and greater access to education decrease the costs of access to education, thereby increasing the tendencies of citizens to understand political happenings and participate meaningfully.

### 3.2.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DALTON'S COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION THEORY OF POLITICAL LITERACY AND PARTICIPATION

The theory is one of the most widely used theories in the literature revolving around political participation and civic education. Dalton (2008) posits that the theory of cognitive mobilization is central to understanding political participation as well as the changes that are associated therein. Inglehart (1990) asserts that, a citizenry that is better educated and informed demonstrates a better degree of cognitive mobilization. That is, these individuals become more politically sophisticated, and this is caused by higher levels of education, among other factors such as incorporation of women and changes in priorities towards expression.

Moreover, Alaminos and Penalva (2012) conducted a longitudinal study to assess how cognitive mobilization affects potential political participation using different countries in Europe. The study validates one of the underpinnings of the theory, which elucidates its contextual nature and its dependency on distinct factors aside education. The findings of the study illustrate that political crises contribute to increasing the level of mobilization in general but increases among younger adults.

Putri and Mubarak (2020) assessed the influence of political literacy on the political participation of beginner voters in regional elections in West Sumatera. The study used cognitive mobilization as its theoretical framework and the findings of the study confirms the core argument of the theory, as there was seen to be significantly positive effects of innovative political literacy on the political participation of novice voters in an objective and rational manner using a regression test.

Badaru and Adu (2021) in a more recent study studied the political awareness and participation of University Students in post-Apartheid South Africa. The researchers were concerned with the declining rates of youthful participation in politics after the apartheid in South Africa. The study gave credence to how political awareness impacts political participation based on the

significant correlation between the level of awareness of students used in the study and their political participation. This was due to their access to political information and the additional fact that they were students in the tertiary institution, indicating their level of education. The core hypothesis of the cognitive mobilization theory where there is argued to be a relationship between access to information, education, and political participation by Inglehart (1990) is affirmed by researchers Badaru and Adu (2021).

The weakness of this theory is its generalization of the relationship between access to information, level of education and political participation. This position is empirically demonstrated by Poletti (2015) who argues that younger, well-educated, and more politically interested citizens are less likely to participate in political activities than citizens that are poorly educated. Poletti (2015) argues that politically educated individuals are more likely to join unconventional political activism. These conclusions were gleaned from a study of Italy where Poletti (2015) assessed if the mechanism of cognitive mobilization should be considered as a key indicator that influences trends of participation in political parties and activist associations. Contrary to the tenets of the cognitive mobilization theory, its expectations were not met as seen in the low membership of political parties across educational levels, although higher among educated members than the uneducated members.

However, the rate of participation according to Poletti (2015) is on the decline and the increasing participation of individuals in activist associations do not have any relationship with education, as participation was more in the past compared to low participation in a more urbanized, literate, and industrialized world.

Poletti (2015) argued that the central thesis of the cognitive mobilization theory deserves a reassessment, reconceptualization, and reexamination, especially on the mechanisms in which the theory should operate. The author laid emphasis on the education-information-participation

nexus and its deficiency at the organizational level, although it is still a significant theory in assessing the nexus at the individual level.

### **3.3 RELEVANCE OF THE THEORY TO THE STUDY**

The Cognitive Mobilization Theory, particularly Dalton's (2002) emphasis on political literacy and participation, provides a robust framework for this study by linking the NCCE's educational mandate to citizen engagement. The theory posits that increased education and access to political information enhance citizens' cognitive skills, enabling them to better understand complex political issues and processes. This enhanced political literacy, in turn, fosters greater and more informed participation in the political system.

Specifically, the NCCE, as Ghana's primary civic education institution, acts as the 'teacher' in this framework, employing various strategies to 'school' citizens in political literacy. By disseminating information on civic rights, responsibilities, and democratic principles, the NCCE aims to develop the cognitive skills necessary for citizens to engage meaningfully in public life. This aligns with the theory's premise that access to political education increases citizens' capacity to process political information and enhances their civic duty. Dalton (2002) advances that the development in technology, education and the mass media have a direct impact and influence on political participation. The mass media is an independent and augmenting tool that can serve as sources of political information and education increases political consciousness and sophistication.

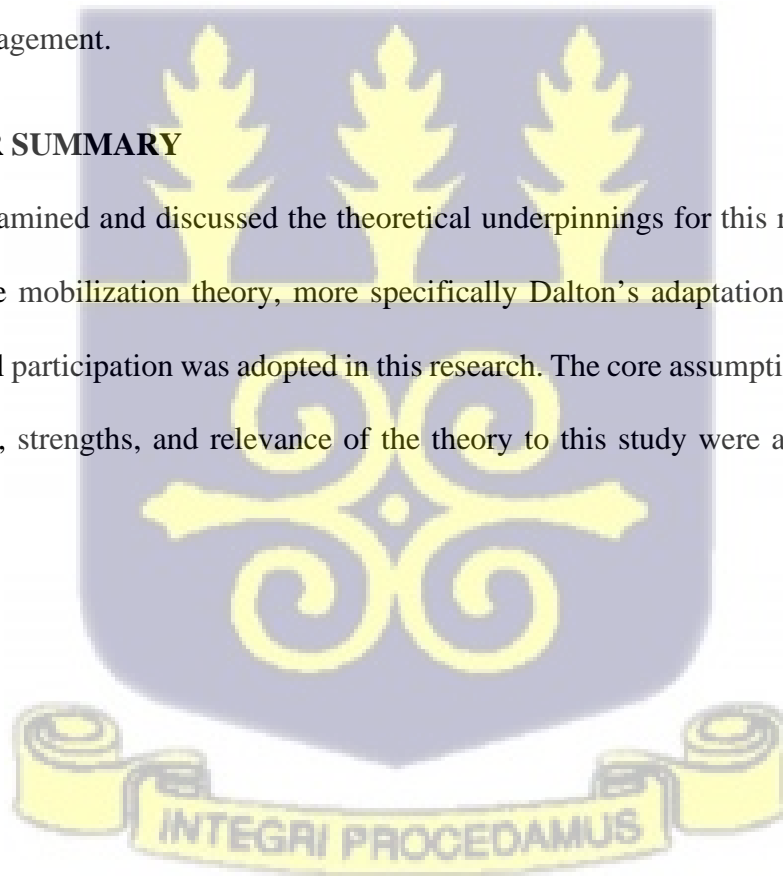
Therefore, this study utilizes Cognitive Mobilization Theory to assess how the NCCE's strategies influence the development of these cognitive skills among citizens, particularly in relation to extra-electoral participation. The observed low levels of extra-electoral engagement, as highlighted by Afrobarometer surveys, suggest a potential gap in the effective 'mobilization of citizens' cognitive capacities for these specific forms of participation. By examining the NCCE's strategies and the challenges it faces (such as funding, logistics, and structural

problems, as noted by Bawa, 2011), this research directly investigates the institutional mechanisms through which cognitive mobilization is either facilitated or hindered in the Ghanaian context.

The findings of this study will serve as an important empirical test for the applicability of Cognitive Mobilization Theory in understanding citizen participation in a nascent democracy like Ghana. The research questions, focusing on the NCCE's strategies, their effectiveness in fostering cognitive mobilization competencies (e.g., political sophistication and participation in extra-electoral activities), and the challenges limiting the NCCE's ability to deliver impactful civic education, are directly informed by this theoretical lens. The study will thus provide insights into how institutional efforts can enhance citizens' cognitive readiness for active democratic engagement.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This section examined and discussed the theoretical underpinnings for this research. The use of the cognitive mobilization theory, more specifically Dalton's adaptation of the theory to explain political participation was adopted in this research. The core assumptions of the theory, the weaknesses, strengths, and relevance of the theory to this study were also explored and discussed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

Like all other branches of social science, political science is concerned with developing a better systematic understanding of the complexities of political outcomes and other reality-based phenomena. In this context, a "disciplined way" denotes the rigorous scientific techniques (research methodology) used to examine a social issue (Berger, 1986).

A study's research methodology outlines the plan and framework for the investigation, detailing how the research is to be conducted. It emphasizes the key scientific rules that must be followed to produce reliable outcomes. Accordingly, MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) contend that the type of data to be gathered, the analytical tools to be used, and most importantly, the underlying research problem, determine a suitable research methodology.

As a result, this chapter outlines the techniques and strategies employed to collect information to address the study questions on the influence of civic education on extra-electoral political engagement in the Greater Accra Region. It provides an explanation of the research design, methods employed, and other details about how the research was conducted, including the study area, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, and data sources.

#### 4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

In the field of social science, there are three primary types of research approaches, each with its own fundamental presuppositions, guiding concepts, and research agendas. These are the mixed, qualitative, and quantitative approaches.

Despite their variations, Mehta & Roth (2015) demonstrate that due to their diverse benefits, all approaches can be used to interpret and explain the same social phenomenon. However,

each research strategy offers a unique interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation by eliciting distinct types of data during collection and analysis (Djamba, 2002; Mehta & Roth, 2015).

The mixed-methods research approach is the most appropriate methodology for this investigation. This approach offers the methodical development of strategies and procedures for the comprehensive implementation of empirical studies. Thus, the mixed-methods strategy provides guidelines and processes for empirical data gathering and processing. A synthesis of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, or a mixed-methods approach, also provides a wholesome answer to a study topic (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The research is primarily supported by quantitative design, complemented by a qualitative design to provide additional explanatory depth. Before detailing the mixed-methods strategy, it is pertinent to describe its two primary constituent approaches—qualitative and quantitative research methods. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach because it offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between civic education and extra-electoral political participation. This approach allows for the triangulation of data, combining the statistical breadth provided by quantitative methods (assessing patterns and perceptions across a larger sample) with the in-depth insights into the 'how' and 'why' offered by qualitative methods (particularly regarding the NCCE's strategies and challenges). This integration strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings, providing a more holistic answer to the research questions than either approach could achieve independently.

#### **4.1.1 Quantitative Research Method.**

The choice of a specific approach is influenced by the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and axiological considerations, in addition to the techniques used for data gathering and analysis. The ontological position that holds that social reality can be understood independently of our mental constructions, and that researchers may uncover the fundamental principles

underlying social behaviors, is more in line with the quantitative researcher. As a result, phenomena are understood to follow pre-existing social action determinants (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the quantitative researcher aligns with positivists who place a strong emphasis on measurement and empirical observation of social events (Creswell, 2014). A quantitative researcher with an epistemological perspective rooted in positivism will use this method to evaluate general laws regulating social behavior and to establish causal links between variables through the rigorous and objective assessment of social phenomena (Creswell, 2014).

Therefore, quantitative research encourages the value-neutral evaluation of social phenomena. To conduct an unbiased evaluation of social phenomena, methods such as questionnaires and statistical analytical tools are employed. Thus, a quantitative approach enhances the researcher's confidence in generalizing the study's findings.

However, there are certain drawbacks to quantitative research methodology. The use of quantitative research techniques has been shown to favor general principles and correlations between variables, often at the expense of local and contextual factors. Consequently, a study exclusively employing a quantitative approach may not fully capture the nuances of local situations unrelated to the variables being studied. While quantitative analysis offers breadth, it often lacks depth. The quantitative research method's focus on accurate measurement and generalizability often neglects in-depth investigation of social issues. Thus, the types of questions that can be posed and the tools available for data gathering and analysis are constrained by the quantitative researcher (Creswell, 2014).

#### **4.1.2 Qualitative Research Method.**

Comparatively, qualitative research is a methodical approach for understanding the "how" and "why" of a particular social problem from the viewpoint of an individual or group (Creswell, 2014). Ontologically, qualitative research is consistent with constructivism or interpretivism. Qualitative researchers hold the ontological stance that multiple social realities exist, and that

people's attempts to understand their surroundings produce social reality. They adhere to contextually specific interpretations of social reality (Biggam, 1993).

The qualitative researcher consequently aims to actively include respondents and examine the meanings of social phenomena as perceived by the participants during the empirical inquiry process. To comprehend people's perceptions of social reality within a particular temporal or situational environment, the qualitative researcher uses open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014). Thus, qualitative methodology may subscribe to a variety of approaches for investigating social phenomena that encourage a deeper understanding of the event.

In-depth exploration examinations are a key component of qualitative research methodologies, as they help participants articulate meanings and knowledge from their perspective. This fosters a deeper comprehension of societal issues and aids in illuminating how certain contextual aspects might advance understanding of regional problems. The results of qualitative investigations, however, cannot be generalized to a wider population, as they typically apply only to a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2014).

#### **4.1.3 Mixed Method Research Strategy.**

Research in the social sciences now widely accepts the mixed-methods approach, commonly understood as the integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The employment of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and their blending in a study, is known as a mixed-methods strategy and is based on several ontological and epistemological tenets (Creswell, 2014).

Furthermore, pragmatism and mixed-methods research are ontologically consistent. The philosophical school of thought known as pragmatism, developed by Pierce, Mead, and Dewey, and more recently by Rorty (1990) is not associated with any single school of thought (Creswell, 2014). It outlines a more pragmatic strategy for achieving the "best understanding" of a social issue by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques (ibid.). Additionally,

pragmatists hold a different epistemological stance from realists or relativists, believing that true knowledge can only be attained by using both quantitative and qualitative techniques in a manner that addresses a societal issue. As a result, the rigid dichotomy between the acquisition of objective and subjective knowledge is avoided in mixed-methods research. The mixed-methods technique employs both open-ended and closed-ended questions, as well as statistical and text analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The mixed-methods approach is sometimes criticized for not strictly adhering to a single style of inquiry. The argument against mixed methods is that they may lack the singular conceptual underpinnings found in purely qualitative or quantitative research. Consequently, it differs from purely qualitative or quantitative methods in that it does not adhere to a rigid philosophical position like "subjectivism" or "objectivism," which some argue could lead to an analysis without a firm philosophical foundation. Nevertheless, it has been argued that the strict division between quantitative and qualitative methods is often unnecessary, as few researchers employ only one type of empirical study throughout the entire research process.

The study's mixed methods approach successfully addresses the shortcomings of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in comprehending social processes. Due to these constraints, relying solely on one research strategy may not fully capture the practical knowledge derived from a combination of subjective and objective information relevant to a social problem (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach is ideal for this study as it allows the researcher to leverage the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches while mitigating their respective disadvantages. This approach provides rich information and a deeper understanding of the subject, which can enhance the generalizability of the research's findings. For instance, the researcher can accomplish this by using survey data from a large sample for quantitative analysis and then following up with a small group of people to conduct interviews and further investigate the subject in depth.

## 4.2 DYNAMICS OF RESEARCH AREA

### 4.2.1 Profile of the Greater Accra Region

The Greater Accra Region, with a total land area of 3,245 square kilometers, is the smallest of Ghana's 16 administrative regions. This constitutes 1.4% of Ghana's overall land area. With 5,455,692 inhabitants (49.1% men, 50.9% women) in 2021, it is the second most populated area after the Ashanti Region, accounting for 17.7% of Ghana's total population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022).

The Greater Accra Region is the most urbanized in the country, with 87.4% of its residents living in urban areas. The main city in the region is Accra, which serves as both the capital of Ghana and the Greater Accra Region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022).

The region is politically governed by the local government system. Under this administrative organization, the region is composed of six districts: the Accra Metropolitan Area, Tema Municipal Area, Ga East District, Ga West District, Dangme West District, and Dangme East District. The Chief Executive of each District, Municipality, or Metropolitan Area serves as the representative of the central government but derives authority from an Assembly of elected members (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022).

The three main ethnic groups are the Akan (39.8%), Ga-Dangme (29.7%), and Ewe (18%). The largest sub-ethnic grouping, the Gas, constitutes approximately 18.9% of the population. Most persons who identify as religious are Christians (83.0%), followed by Muslims (10.2%), atheists (4.6%), and followers of traditional religion (1.4%).

Of the 1,945,284 people aged fifteen and older, 1,377,903 (70.8%) are economically active. Of those economically active, 82.6% reported having a job, 4.0% had a job but did not work, and 13.4% were jobless. The unemployment rate in the region (13.4%) is greater than the national average of 10.4% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). According to the occupational structure,

24.7% worked as production, transport, and equipment operators, and 42.0% were employed in sales and service-related occupations.

As anticipated, the region has a higher percentage of professional and technical workers (10.8%) than the national average (6.5%).

#### **4.2.2 Profile of the National Commission for Civic Education**

In accordance with Article 231 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the National Commission for Civic Education Act, 1993 (Act 452 of the Ghanaian Parliament), the NCCE is an independent, nonpartisan government agency. Through civic education, the Commission aims to uphold democracy and instill in Ghana's citizens a sense of their rights and responsibilities.

The Commission is composed of a Chairperson, two Deputy Chairpersons, and four Commission members. Its seven members constitute the Commission's governing body. The governing board provides strategic and policy leadership for the Commission. Five (5) Departmental Directors, directly in charge of the Commission's various departments, assist the Commission members. The Commission has sixteen (16) Regional Offices, headed by Regional Directors, who coordinate the Commission's work in 263 District offices across the country. The Commission has thirty district offices in the Greater Accra Region.

Per the Constitution of Ghana, the Commission is mandated to perform five functions (NCCE, 2011):

- Develop and maintain within the community a sense of the principles and objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana as the fundamental law of Ghana.
- Educate and encourage the public to always defend this Constitution against all forms of abuse and violation.

- Develop policies for the consideration of the Government, from time to time, and programs at the national, regional, and district levels aimed at realizing the objectives of this Constitution.
- Formulate, implement, and oversee programs intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people.
- Assess for the information of Government, the limitations to the achievement of true democracy arising from the existing inequalities between different strata of the population and make recommendations for redressing these inequalities.

To ensure a wider scope for its activities, the Commission collaborates with regional and global organizations like the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), the International Federation of Women Lawyers, the European Union, and others. When Ghana is holding elections, the NCCE's role is highlighted as thorough public education is conducted to inform voters about the voting process and their conduct before, during, and after presidential and general elections. For instance, the Commission educated all electorates about the new biometric voting technology that would be utilized before the 2012 general elections in Ghana.

#### **4.3 SOURCES OF DATA**

Data is vital to the conduct of rigorous academic study. Primary data is data collected by the researcher, whereas secondary data denotes the researcher's use of data already collected by others that are deemed appropriate in answering the research questions posed by a study (Bryman, 2012). As such, data for this research was collected from both primary and secondary sources.

#### **4.3.1 Primary Data Sources**

Primary data for this research was collected from two main sources. These primary data sources are discussed below.

First, data was sourced empirically through respondents knowledgeable about the research topic. This took place through purposive non-probability sampling, where experts highly knowledgeable in the context of the study were interviewed using semi-structured interview schedules to gain an in-depth understanding of civic education and extra-electoral political participation. Through this method, data was obtained from six NCCE personnel in the Greater Accra Region, and one member each from academia and civil society organizations.

Second, a close-ended questionnaire was designed and distributed to two hundred adult residents across the Greater Accra Region in the form of a survey. This data source was fundamental in complementing and explaining the data collected through the interviews. The data collected were designed to gauge the public's awareness of the strategies, effectiveness, challenges, and recommendations regarding the NCCE's activities in relation to extra-electoral political participation.

#### **4.3.2 Secondary Data Sources**

The researcher conducted a desk-based review of available literature on civic education and extra-electoral political involvement internationally and in Ghana, utilizing secondary data sources. The University of Ghana's direct access to scholarly websites and search engines (Google Scholar, Jstor, Taylor & Francis) were used to gather data. Scholarly publications were reviewed from these websites and included in this study. Moreover, annual reports from the NCCE's institutional website and Civil Society reports, such as the Afrobarometer surveys, were extensively consulted. This provided detailed insights into the trend and nature of the relationship between civic education and extra-electoral political participation in Ghana.

#### **4.4 STUDY POPULATION**

A research population is typically a sizeable group of people or entities that are known to share certain traits and are the subject of a specific scientific question. Research is conducted with the population's characteristics in mind. Population is defined by Polit and Hungler (1999) as the sum or totality of all things, people, or entities that meet a given set of requirements.

The study population for this research comprised all adult residents of the Greater Accra Region, from whom quantitative data was collected, and key informants from academia, civil society organizations, and officials of the NCCE, who provided qualitative data.

The rationale for focusing on these groups is multifaceted: representatives from the NCCE provided insights into their civic education activities, strategy effectiveness, and operational challenges. The general adult population, as the primary target of these educational efforts, was crucial for assessing public awareness, roles, activities, and perceived impacts of the NCCE. Furthermore, the inclusion of civil society and academic experts provided external, objective assessments of the NCCE's role in promoting civic education and extra-electoral political participation, offering valuable perspectives on challenges and potential remedies. The involvement of these diverse stakeholders, all significant participants in the civic engagement and political involvement process, enhances the credibility of the study's findings.

##### **4.4.1 Sample and Sampling techniques**

Typically, a sample represents a portion of the population. Sampling is the process of choosing a subset of a population to take part in the study; it is a small portion of the entire population (Brink et al., 2006; Polit & Hungler, 1999). Since the researcher was unable to evaluate every member of the population, sampling became a necessary approach. The sample should reflect the population from which it is taken and be sufficient to allow for statistical analysis. To draw conclusions applicable to the broader community, the researcher aims to conduct research on a representative sample of the population.

As a non-probability sampling strategy, convenience sampling selects respondents based on their ease of access and proximity to the researcher. The sample was thus chosen due to the ease of recruiting participants into the study. Given the large size of the general population for this study, it was not practical to include every single person. This necessitated the researcher's reliance on non-probability sampling strategies, such as convenience sampling, which is widely used. Additionally, it was chosen for its speed, cost-effectiveness, simplicity, and the accessibility of subjects.

To determine popular awareness of the NCCE and its initiatives to encourage increased extra-electoral political involvement, a convenience sample of two hundred men and women from the Greater Accra Region was surveyed. In circumstances where the population is too large, a sample should be appropriately representative, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000). The sample size should be as large as feasible given the time and resources available to the researcher. Using hard copy and electronic questionnaires (via Google Forms), a short close-ended survey was distributed to respondents across the six major administrative districts: Accra Metropolitan Area, Tema Municipal Area, Ga East District, Ga West District, Dangme West District, and Dangme East District.

From the sample chosen, efforts were made to ensure gender balance, with both sexes fairly represented during the data collection process. This was deemed necessary to capture diverse perspectives on civic engagement, as participation patterns and access to civic education can vary significantly between men and women.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select eight subject experts for the semi-structured interviews. Six officials from the NCCE, one expert from a Civil Society Organization, and one academic member were interviewed. The specific organizations or institutions of the civil society and academic informants are not detailed due to confidentiality agreements and the limited scope of this study; however, they were selected based on their recognized expertise in

civic education and political participation in Ghana. This limited number of qualitative interviews was due to constraints on availability and time. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to identify key informants or resource persons with the most pertinent expertise and perspectives on the topic at hand.

The NCCE representatives provided insights into the Commission's mandate, its activities, and how these have impacted civic education and, consequently, extra-electoral political participation. Furthermore, the researcher found it necessary to include experts from civil society and academia. These individuals, functioning as non-party political actors, possess a thorough understanding of the Ghanaian political system and provided expert insights into civic education and its relationship with extra-electoral political participation. Their perspectives offered an objective assessment of the NCCE's role in advancing its civic education mandate, how this reflects in public attitudes towards the political environment in Ghana, and recommendations for addressing challenges that affect the NCCE's performance.

The sample size of a qualitative study is frequently criticized for limiting the generalizability of its results. However, in this study, the purpose of the qualitative data is to offer "descriptive evidence" and in-depth viewpoints that complement the quantitative phase of the analysis. A total of 208 participants, comprising 200 members of the public, six NCCE officials, and one representative each from civil society and academia in the Greater Accra Region, constituted the study's sample.

#### **4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS**

Mixed-methods research is a category of research that integrates qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methodologies, approaches, theories, and/or language into a single study, according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). The mixed-methods approach was chosen because it provides the researcher with multiple ways (methods, data sources, and perspectives) to examine the same phenomenon, enabling a deep understanding of the issue under study. To

enhance the validity of the study's conclusions, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed.

#### **4.5.1 Quantitative Surveys**

The term "survey" in research refers to the process of gathering data from a sample of people by asking them questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). This study methodology enables the use of numerous techniques for participant recruitment, data collection, and instrumentation. It may employ both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Surveys are commonly utilized in social and psychological research because they are frequently used to describe and explore human behavior (Singleton & Straits, 2009).

First, two hundred men and women from the Greater Accra Region, selected via convenience sampling for the study, were given a close-ended questionnaire with eleven (11) questions.

Closed-ended questions offer a limited number of response possibilities to participants. The close-ended survey questions are essential for gathering responses within a constrained range of possibilities. They serve as the cornerstone for statistical analysis methods used in questionnaire and survey applications. Usually, respondents to these questions must select from a predetermined list of options, such as 'yes' or 'no,' or a multiple-choice list.

The use of surveys helped the researcher to answer research questions one to five, which sought to explore public awareness of the strategies used by the NCCE in advancing civic education in the Greater Accra Region. More importantly, surveys focused on assessing the effectiveness of these strategies and gathering suggestions and recommendations on other civic education strategies that could be employed to promote extra-electoral political participation among citizens.

#### **4.5.2. Interview Schedules**

In-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between civic education and extra-electoral political participation, supplementing the limitations of

close-ended questionnaires by revealing deeper explanations and insights into the role of civic education in promoting extra-electoral political participation in Ghana. The interview guide featured questions on the strategies used by the NCCE in advancing civic education, the challenges that have hindered the NCCE's efforts, and recommendations to overcome identified obstacles to advance civic education and extra-electoral political participation in Ghana. Semi-structured interviews incorporate both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research (Galletta, 2013, p. 45). Due to the flexibility of semi-structured interviews, this approach was employed because it enabled the researcher to actively engage with the respondents to obtain in-depth and valuable information on the phenomenon under study (Kapiszewski et al., 2015). The research instrument used for these semi-structured interviews was a well-designed interview guide, which enabled the researcher to gradually progress “toward a fully in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study” (Galletta, 2013, p. 45).

Intensive interviews, also known as in-depth interviews, refer to the one-on-one interview method (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Eight individuals, six from the NCCE, one from a CSO, and one from academia, were selected for semi-structured interviews to achieve this goal. As stated previously, these respondents were questioned about the NCCE's tactics for promoting civic education, the issues that affected this process, and potential remedies. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because, as in this study, they are most appropriate when a researcher has focused narrowly on particular questions from an informant (Baxter & Babbie, 2003).

The researcher first identified the research questions that would yield the necessary data for this investigation. These inquiries stemmed from study questions one through five, which the quantitative survey instrument was unable to explore in depth. Thus, a semi-structured interview guide was designed to assist the researcher in gathering richer information.

In the selection of respondents, a non-probability sampling procedure was utilized. As such, respondents were selected via purposive sampling, which permitted the researcher to target individuals knowledgeable about the NCCE and extra-electoral political participation. These experts also possessed “special insights, not just the potential for a richer description of political processes, but also for more reliable and valid data for inferential purposes” (Beamer, 2002, p. 87). The researcher then met with each participant individually and used the interview schedule to conduct the interviews. These interviews were captured using sound recorders. Later, for the sake of analysis, these audiotapes were transcribed into text data.

#### **4.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

Firstly, for the quantitative surveys, the questionnaires were self-administered by the researcher, and all responses were compiled and entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software. The data was then analyzed using SPSS to run a crosstab analysis between the independent variable of civic education and the dependent variable of extra-electoral political participation. The findings were analyzed using a blend of descriptive and inferential analysis and presented with statistical tools such as charts and tables. Also, qualitative analysis was employed to analyze the primary data collected through the interviews. Qualitative thematic analysis is especially useful in recognizing specific patterns and themes relevant to the study (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Hence, qualitative thematic analysis, as an inductive method, enables a researcher to elucidate themes that provide an accurate explanation of the phenomenon under study (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). A vital aspect of qualitative analysis is iteration (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Iteration enables a researcher to obtain relevant findings through continuous engagement with the data and identification of emergent perspectives, which eventually result in enhanced clarity of research findings (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

Overall, qualitative analysis enhances the accuracy of research by sidestepping the tendency to excessively quantify data and reduce it to a rigid set of categories (Kracauer, 1952). Accordingly, the audio recordings from the qualitative interviews were first transcribed verbatim. The researcher then went through all the data, classifying each unit under the four broad coding categories identified, and formulated findings and recommendations regarding the strategies, effectiveness, and challenges associated with the role of civic education in promoting extra-electoral political participation in Ghana. Then, for the purpose of analysis, each data theme was saved as a distinct file.

Lastly, a thorough analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data was supplemented by discussions of the existing body of research, in accordance with the research questions guiding the study.

#### **4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Every research project includes ethical considerations, as they always arise in projects involving human participants. According to Saunders et al. (2009), research ethics refers to the suitability of a researcher's conduct during the research process, particularly concerning the rights of participants. In other words, study participants should have the freedom to choose whether or not to participate. The research objectives were explained to the survey participants before asking for their permission to include them in the study. Each participant gave their voluntary consent to participate in the study, and the researcher ensured each one knew they had the right to withdraw at any time. Additionally, the study ensured that the data collected was anonymous to maintain a high level of participant confidentiality.

A participant information sheet, outlining the study's purpose, aims, the nature of their participation, and ethical considerations, was given to each participant before the survey and the in-depth interviews to provide an overview of the study's nature and goals. Additionally, prior to the start of the survey and interviews, consent forms were provided to the participants

to formally request their consent to participate in this study. Respondents were informed in an introductory letter that the information acquired, as well as their identity, would be kept confidential during the data collection process. They were also assured that the study would use their responses solely for academic purposes. When storing and processing data, the respondents' confidentiality was strictly maintained.

Moreover, while using secondary sources, the researcher took care to properly cite all consulted academic works, including books, journals, theses, and research materials.

#### **4.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study's operational definition of extra-electoral political participation restricts the range of practices considered. Under Ghana's Fourth Republic, the research was limited to specific extra-electoral political activities, including collective action and citizen-state interaction. This means that forms of engagement such as online activism, global advocacy, newspaper reading, and radio listening, while important, were not directly addressed in the primary data collection, even though citizens may utilize these channels to voice their complaints or contact officials. As Anderson & Kalvelage (1972, p. 72) note, researchers "may feel that their data give reasonably solid indicators of their notions, but a critic of the study may feel that they do not." However, the concept of extra-electoral political engagement used in this study is based on the metrics Ekman and Amna (2012) used to measure such participation, assuming that individuals engaged in these broader activities would likely also participate in the forms considered here. A perceived limitation of the mixed-methods approach is that, by integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques, the overall analysis cannot be strictly categorized as purely objective or subjective.

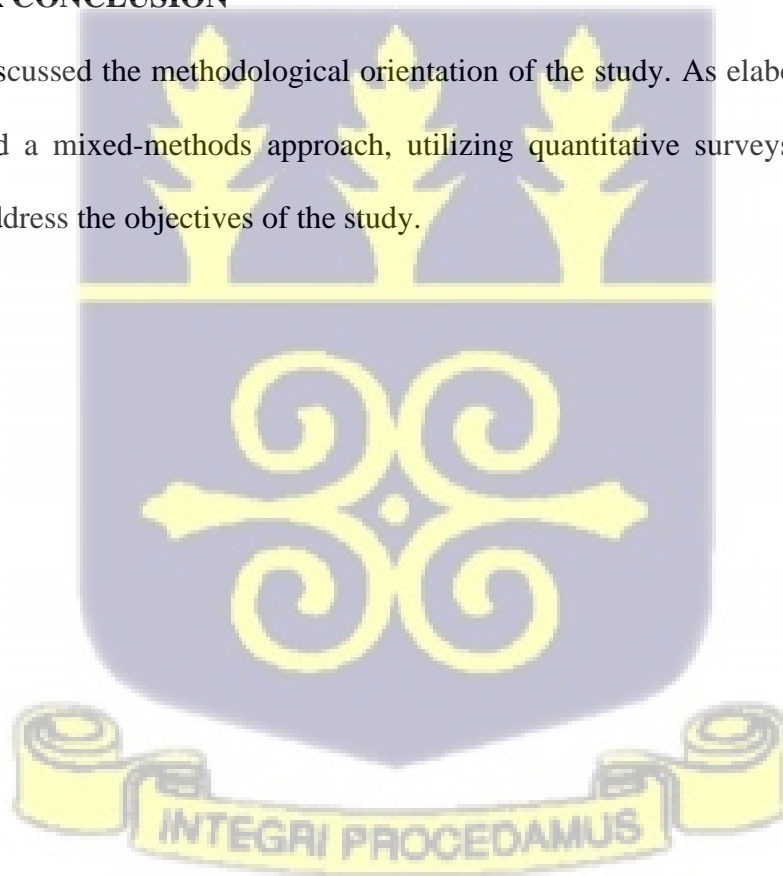
However, this study views this integration as a strength, as it incorporates both subjective and objective perspectives to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As Greene et al. (1989) note, mixed methods offer "complementarity," "illustration,"

"elaboration," "enhancing," and "clarification," providing a more holistic and realistic consideration of the phenomenon under study.

Regrettably, some additional potential key experts or respondents—including other adult residents of the Greater Accra Region, members of academia and civil society, and the chairperson of the NCCE—who could have made significant contributions to the data collection process, were unable to be interviewed despite the researcher's best efforts to secure their cooperation. This limited the study's scope, as the researcher was primarily dependent on the selected primary data respondents and secondary sources for information on the NCCE's role in encouraging extra-electoral participation in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

#### **4.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the methodological orientation of the study. As elaborated above, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to address the objectives of the study.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses findings from the study examining the role of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting extra-electoral political participation in Ghana's Greater Accra Region. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys of 200 respondents, semi-structured interviews with eight key experts and resource persons (NCCE personnel, civil society organizations [CSOs], and academia), and secondary sources. Guided by Dalton's (2002) Cognitive Mobilization Theory, the findings were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The chapter is structured to align with the research objectives: examining the NCCE's mandate and roles, exploring its strategies, assessing their effectiveness, identifying challenges, and proposing recommendations. Findings are presented and discussed in relation to relevant literature, with direct responses from the survey and interviews to improve understanding while ensuring clarity.

#### 5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic profile of the 200 survey respondents provides context for interpreting participation patterns. The sample showed a slight male predominance (57% male, 43% female), with the 24-28 age group most represented (36%) and the 39-43 age group least represented (6%). Educational attainment was high, with 61% holding bachelor's degrees, indicating a literate sample capable of engaging with civic education initiatives. Marital status included 70% single, 28% married, and 2% separated. This youthful, educated demographic suggests potential for cognitive mobilization, though participation levels varied, as discussed later.

**Table 5.1: Demographic Details of Respondents**

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Deviation
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	114	57				
Female	86	43				
<b>Age</b>						
18-23 years	30	15				1.646
24-28 years	72	36				
29-33 years	35	18				
34-38 years	20	10				
39-43 years	12	6				
Above 43	31	15				
<b>Level of Education</b>						
None	1	1				1.043
Basic	7	4				
Secondary	29	15				
HND	13	7				
Bachelor's	122	61				
Masters/PhD	27	14				
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Single	139	70				0.542
Married	56	28				
Separated	4	2				
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>				

Source: Field Data, 2023

## 5.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE 1: CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE AND ROLES OF THE NCCE

The first objective examined the constitutional mandate and established roles of the NCCE in promoting citizen participation in Ghana. As stipulated in Article 231 of the 1992 Constitution, the NCCE is mandated to educate citizens on constitutional principles, encourage defense of the Constitution, and foster awareness of civic responsibilities and rights (National Commission for Civic Education, 2011).

Interviews confirmed this mandate, with NCCE respondent stating, “The mandate of the NCCE involves the education of people (i.e., citizens and the public) about the civic rights and responsibilities” (Field Interview, 2023).

NCCE respondent emphasized the importance of civic education, noting, “The significance of civic education and political participation is that civic education seeks to train the minds of the people on what is expected of them and what they are entitled to” (Field Interview, 2023).

Both CSO and academic experts concurred that civic education enhances public consciousness and political engagement, underscoring the NCCE’s vital role in promoting both electoral and extra-electoral participation (Field Interview, 2023).

### **5.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE 2: STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE NCCE**

The second objective explored the strategies adopted by the NCCE to deliver civic education for extra-electoral participation in the Greater Accra Region. Interviews revealed diverse strategies tailored to district contexts. NCCE respondent noted, “We have the same functions across districts but in some districts, they can undertake some programs that may be specifically designed for the districts because of their unique nature” (Field Interview, 2023).

#### **5.3.1 Identified Strategies**

**Media Campaigns:** Utilizing radio (e.g., Valley View Radio), TV (e.g., Obonu TV), and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp). NCCE stated, “We use Facebook, we are on Twitter, we are on Instagram and even WhatsApp” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Community Engagements:** Targeting mass gatherings in schools, markets, churches, and mosques. NCCE respondent explained, “We work with groups too, like landlords’ associations. When you go to the market, you know you will meet lots of people there” (Field Interview, 2023).

**One-on-One Education:** Engaging individuals in public spaces. NCCE respondent noted, “We go to the streets one on one, to the ‘Kooko sellers,’ washing bays, fitting shops” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Focus Group Discussions:** Used to elicit public views, contingent on funding (Field Interview, 2023).

**Collaborations:** Partnering with local assemblies and organizations like the Ghana Health Service. NCCE respondent stated, “We manage with the local assembly so that we will know exactly what they also want” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Educational Activities in Schools:** Employing quizzes and drama clubs. NCCE respondent recalled, “We get our club members to act in a language that everybody can understand” (Field Interview, 2023).

### 5.3.2 Public Awareness and Education Received

Survey data showed 66% of respondents were aware of the NCCE’s mandate, while 34% were not (Table 5.2). Exposure to extra-electoral education was low: 14% on civic rights, 18% on government policies, 33% on social issues, 12% on contacting officials, 10% on joining political parties, 18% on discussing policies, and 33% on demanding rights, compared to 52% on voting (Table 5.3).

**Table 5.2: Respondents’ Awareness of the Existence of the NCCE and Its Functions**

Awareness of the Existence of the NCCE and Its Functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Yes	131	66	1	1	1	0.477
No	69	34				
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>				

Source: Field Data, 2023

**Table 5.3: Areas of Education Received by the Respondents from the NCCE**

Areas of Education	Frequency (Yes)	Frequency (No)	Percentage (Yes)	Percentage (No)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Civic and Political Rights	27	173	14	86	2	2	2	0.385
Government Policies	36	164	18	82	2	2	2	0.471
Social Issues	66	134	33	67	2	2	2	0.238
Contacting Government Officials	12	188	6	94	2	2	2	0.501
Voting in Elections	103	97	52	48	1	1	1	0.301
Joining Political Parties and Participating in Campaigns	20	180	10	90	2	2	2	0.238
Commenting on Government Policies	35	165	18	82	2	2	2	0.381

Demanding Respect for One's Rights	66	134	33	67	2	2	2	0.471
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Source: Field Data, 2023

### 5.3.3 Discussion

These findings align with Bawa (2011), who identified similar strategies in Ghana's Central Region, including civic education clubs and media programs. The use of social media in Greater Accra represents an innovative expansion, broadening the NCCE's reach. Niworo et al. (2016) found that civic education enhances political participation in the Upper East Region, suggesting that the NCCE's strategies could be effective if adequately resourced. The CSO representative highlighted partnerships, for instance with the Center for Democratic Development, noting, "They provided some monetary support for them so that they can be able to go to the rural areas" (Field Interview, 2023). However, the low exposure to extra-electoral education topics indicates a gap in translating the NCCE's mandate into comprehensive civic engagement, particularly beyond voting.

## 5.4 FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE 3: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NCCE'S STRATEGIES

The third objective assessed the impact of the NCCE's strategies on extra-electoral political engagement. Survey data and interviews provided insights into public awareness, participation, and satisfaction.

### 5.4.1 Public Knowledge and Participation in Extra-Electoral Activities

Surveys indicated 58% awareness of extra-electoral participation methods, but actual participation was low: 14% contacted Members of Parliament, 17% contacted government officials, 26% attended community meetings, 19% participated in strikes, and 19% engaged in party activities (Table 5.4 and Table 5.5). Some expressed willingness to participate if given opportunities.

**Table 5.4: Respondents’ Awareness of Extra Political Participation**

Awareness of Extra Political Participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Yes	115	58	1	1	1	0.496
No	85	43				
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>				

Source: Field Data, 2023

**Table 5.5: Respondents’ Awareness of Extra Political Processes and Their Participation**

Means of Political Participation	Frequency (Yes)	Frequency (No)	Frequency (If I Get the Chance)	Percentage (Yes)	Percentage (No)	Percentage (If I Get the Chance)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Contacting Their Member of Parliament	28	126	46	14	63	23	2	2	2	0.603
Contacting Government Officials at the Ministry	34	141	25	17	71	13	2	2	2	0.543
Attending Community Meetings	51	128	21	26	64	10	2	2	2	0.582
Joining Others to Raise Issues	50	127	23	25	64	11	2	2	2	0.590
Attend Demonstrations and Protests	20	165	15	19	77	4	2	2	2	0.419
Joining Political Parties and Participating in Campaigns	37	154	9	19	77	4	2	2	2	0.460
Involvement in Political Discussions	84	100	16	42	50	8	2	2	2	0.622

Source: Field Data, 2023

#### 5.4.2 Public Satisfaction with NCCE’s Civic Education Efforts

Public satisfaction was low, with 89% indicating the NCCE should do more (Table 5.6), reflecting perceived inadequacy in fostering extra-electoral engagement.

**Table 5.6: Respondents’ Assessment of the Efforts of the NCCE in Promoting Civic Education**

Should NCCE Do More?	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Yes	179	89	1	1	1	0.559
No, I Have No Idea	5	3				
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>				

Source: Field Data, 2023

#### 5.4.3 NCCE’s Internal Evaluation of Strategy Effectiveness

The NCCE personnel noted challenges in quantifying internalization but cited positive feedback as an indicator of success. In reflecting on the impact of community engagement, one

NCCE respondent emphasized the value of positive reinforcement from beneficiaries: “We tap into the positive feedback... they will even come and tell you, ‘Madam yedaase’ (meaning thank you Madam)” (Field Interview, 2023). This expression of gratitude highlights the relational dynamics and cultural nuances that shape the success of grassroots initiatives.

#### **5.4.4 Perceived Impact of NCCE Activities**

The NCCE reported greater impact during elections, but the CSO noted a decline in electoral participation and limited qualitative engagement in rallies, stating, “When it comes to measuring the quality of their participation, it is rare” (Field Interview, 2023).

#### **5.4.5 Civil Society and Academia’s Perspectives on NCCE Effectiveness**

The academic praised initiatives like “Constitution Week,” stating, “They have done surveys on corruption, they’ve done surveys on participation” (Field Interview, 2023). The CSO respondent highlighted partnerships, noting, “I remember in 2015, the CDD had a Memorandum of Understanding with the NCCE” (Field Interview, 2023).

#### **5.4.6 Inter-Party Dialogues (IPD)**

The CSO respondent commended the IPD for fostering issue-based campaigns, stating, “This dialogue helps to try to move conversations or campaigns from personality attacks to try to deal with issues” (Field Interview, 2023).

#### **5.4.7 Discussion**

These findings align with Afrobarometer surveys (1999-2022), which report low extra-electoral participation, with 63-90% of Ghanaians rarely interacting with officials (Afrobarometer, 2022). The Cognitive Mobilization Theory (Dalton, 2002; Inglehart, 1997) posits that education enhances political engagement, yet the low exposure to extra-electoral education (86% reported none) explains the participation gap. Unlike Niworo et al. (2016), where education increased participation, this study suggests insufficient education limits engagement.

## **5.5 FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE 4: CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NCCE**

The fourth objective identified challenges inhibiting the NCCE's ability to promote civic education and extra-electoral participation.

### **5.5.1 Institutional Misidentity, Partisan Tag, and Public Apathy**

An NCCE respondent noted, "Especially when it is election, we go there to educate, they think we are the Electoral Commission" (Field Interview, 2023). Public apathy was also a barrier, with another NCCE respondent stating, "People tend to neglect us... they feel that you are coming from government office" (Field Interview, 2023).

### **5.5.2 Financial and Logistical Constraints**

One of the NCCE respondent highlighted, "At the NCCE, we do not have cars, and we do not have resources... Limited funding forces us to sometimes rely on our personal funds to work... we go out because of the love of the work" (Field Interview, 2023).

### **5.5.3 Non-Prioritization by Government**

The CSO expert argued, "Most of the governments that come in have not taken interest in civic education so much" (Field Interview, 2023), reflecting inadequate budget allocations.

### **5.5.4 Lack of Protection for Field Officers**

The NCCE respondents also noted that, "We in the NCCE need to have some protective gadgets and clothing when we go out, like the electoral commission" (Field Interview, 2023).

### **5.5.5 Discussion**

These challenges align with prior studies. Bawa (2011), Debrah et al. (2014), and Niworo et al. (2016) identified funding, logistics, and personnel shortages as major barriers. The CSO's observation that budget cuts result in receiving "less than 40% of what you're proposing for" (Field Interview, 2023) corroborates Debrah et al.'s (2014) call for a special civic education fund.

## 5.6 FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE 5: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The fifth objective proposed ways to enhance the NCCE’s effectiveness.

### 5.6.1 Public Recommendations

The survey respondents suggested increased training (29%), integration with other institutions (26%), closer monitoring (22%), and resource allocation (22%) (Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7: Respondents’ Recommendations on How NCCE Can Be More Effective**

Recommendations by the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Adequate Resource Allocation	44	22	2	2	2	0.496
Increase in Personnel and Staff Training	57	29				
Integration into Other Government Institutions	51	26				
Closer Monitoring and Evaluation of Work	43	22				
Others	5	2				
<b>Total</b>	200	100				

Source: Field Data, 2023

### 5.6.2 Key Recommendations from the Interviews

**Sufficient Budgetary Allocation:** The academic stated, “The NCCE needs to be well-resourced, and the budget needs to be increased” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Merit-Based Recruitment:** The academic additionally said “We also need to look at the personnel, how they are appointed, selected, recruited, and their expertise” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Collaborations:** The CSO suggested, “The NCCE could have partnerships that can help them to be able to do the work at the local level” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Restructuring the Mandate:** The academic argued, “I think that one of the things is to have a re-look at the constitutional mandate of the NCCE” (Field Interview, 2023).

**Retreats with Government:** This was suggested by the academic to promote strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of the NCCE’s image and work (Field Interview, 2023).

**Law Enforcement Support:** An NCCE respondent noted, “Law enforcement should be used as a reinforcement and a complement to education” (Field Interview, 2023).

### **5.6.3 Discussion**

Recommendations align with Debrah et al.’s (2014) call for a special fund and Bawa’s (2011) emphasis on resources and training. Partnerships and mandate restructuring address the NCCE’s resource constraints.

## **5.7 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN LIGHT OF PERTINENT LITERATURE.**

This section discusses the findings of this study. The study was guided by five research questions that sought to explore the strategies used by the NCCE in the promotion of civic education and extra political participation, unearth the effectiveness of the strategies, explore the challenges that have affected the ability of the NCCE to deliver on their mandate of civic education effectively and efficiently, and to recommend ways in which the NCCE can ensure the utmost effectiveness in the discharge of their constitutional mandate. The discussion is done by relating the major findings in this study to the relevant literature discussed in chapter two of this study.

### **5.7.1 Strategies used in the promotion of civic education by the NCCE**

The survey with the public in line with global trends and previous research done in Ghana showed that although there is indication of growing awareness among the public with respect to the other processes associated with political participation, as indicated by the 58% who affirmed so, there were lower levels of participation in these activities by the respondents (Ekman & Amna 2012; Agyemang-Duah, 2012; Awuni, 2020). A majority of the respondents representing 89% hardly engaged in extra political activities by contacting their members of parliament, contacting government officials, attending meetings in the community, participating in strikes and demonstrations, joining others to raise issues among other ways of political participation. These findings fall in line with the results of the Afrobarometer surveys

(1999-2022) which also sought to evaluate the levels of political participation among the electorates in Ghana.

The survey confirmed the Afrobarometer reports that since 2002, most Ghanaians (from 63 percent to 90 percent) never interfaced with their elected national and local representatives, an official of a political party or any ministry or institution of the government. A majority of the respondents never established contact with their elected national and local representatives, government officials, political party members or participated in strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of political action. Moreover, from 1999 many Ghanaians (averaging 66 percent) never attended community meetings, joined others to raise issues, and attended demonstrations or protest marches.

Dalton and Klingemann (2007) claim that political participation is an essential requirement for every democracy since it underpins the ways through which citizens become active in the political system and make their voices heard and influence the decisions that are made. Civic education has been posited to be central to this process.

In Ghana, civic education is mostly conducted through the constitutional body known as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). The findings from the qualitative interviews with the CSO representative and the academia expert indicated that there was a relationship of interdependence between the process of civic education and extra political participation. Central to this relationship are the roles and functions of the NCCE which is mostly seen in the activities that they develop to fulfil this constitutional mandate. The personnel from the NCCE that participated in this study also affirmed that their role involves educating Ghanaians on issues bothering on their civic and political life so they can aptly participate in governance beyond voting. The findings from the interviews with the personnel from the NCCE suggest that the commission delivers civic education on matters bothering on

the functions of the government (specifically the role of unit committees and local assemblies), the constitution, government policies, social issues, among others.

The strategies used by the NCCE in the study were found to be consistent with the findings of Bawa (2011) in his assessment of the role of the NCCE in the Central Region of Ghana, who indicated that the NCCE fulfilled their mandate of civic education through Civic Education Clubs, radio programs, television programs, public education. However, the findings of the study revealed that the operations of the NCCE in the Greater Accra Region also included the use of social media handles such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, which has helped broaden the scope of the commission as far as its reach is concerned. The NCCE in the Greater Accra Region also used quizzes and competitions to assess how students in schools understood the chapters in the constitution. They sometimes employed the use of private and public information services, and targeting areas of mass gatherings such as schools, markets, churches, mosques, among others.

The strategies used by the NCCE in the Greater Accra region also involved collaboration with identifiable associations within the target communities such as landlord associations, and other effective social groups to aid in their cause. In the schools, however, the personnel indicated that they used drama clubs and seminars to educate the students, as well as employ the use of durbars in targeting other demographics. The CSO and academic experts that were involved in the study also recounted some of the innovative ways in which they observed the NCCE going about their mandate including partnerships with some relevant institutions like the health service, CSOs like the CDD and others, depending on the nature and context of the education, and the use of surveys to assess how their target understand their mandate and how they can be efficient in their work.

Evidently, there appears to be some similarity in the strategies and activities of the NCCE in the Central and Greater Accra regions, as inferred from the findings of Bawa (2011) and same

can be said for the other regions (Niworo et al., 2016). But the difference here is that the findings are according to the personnel that participated in the study and dependent on the context and happenings within the districts in the Greater Accra Region.

### **5.7.2 Effectiveness of the Strategies Employed by the NCCE in the Promotion of Civic Education and Political Participation.**

The study, as a way of assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and activities developed by the NCCE in the furtherance of its constitutional mandate included areas where the public may have received any form of education from the NCCE. The findings of the survey show that 66% of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the existence of the NCCE as well as its functions. In this sense it can be argued that despite its positive contribution in building good behaviour and creating active and informed citizens, the changes brought by civic education are not satisfactory globally and in the Ghanaian context to be specific, due to the lack of adequate and continual exposure to civic education on good governance and participatory democracy (Bawa, 2011; Leigh, 2018).

There was low exposure to practical education received in the specific areas such as civil and political rights, government policies, social issues, contacting elected representatives, joining political parties, and participating in political campaigns. This consensus regarding the non-exposure to any form of education and consequent low political participation rates in the above instances is buttressed by existing literature. In a related study by Abudu and Fuseni (2014), there were low levels of awareness and participation in civic issues among Ghanaians who have not received any form of education on civic issues, underscoring the importance of civic education to the process of extra political participation and participation in the democratic process in general. Just like the findings of this study, Bawa (2011) also concluded that people in the Central region were aware of the NCCE, its functions and activities. This study also

shows that the majority of residents in Greater Accra (66%) are aware of the NCCE and its mandate.

The respondents from the NCCE although resolute about the success of their strategies indicated that there were some misconceptions with regards to their roles and identity with most people always seeing them as appendages of political parties (the respondent from Academia rehashed this challenge), and people's unwillingness to engage them, among other factors. In the survey of respondent's assessment of the efforts put in by the NCCE in promoting civic education in Ghana, 89% indicated that there was the need for more strategic efforts by the NCCE in the realization of its organizational objective and improving the level of extra political participation in Ghana. Unlike this study, other studies like Niworo et al. (2016) conducted in the Upper East region of Ghana to assess the impact of civic education on political participation revealed that the individuals that were exposed to civic education indicated high tendencies to participate politically. In this study, however, the respondents indicated that they are likely to engage in other forms of political participation should they receive the exposure and education needed.

The findings of this study give credence to the cognitive mobilization theory by Inglehart (1997) where it is argued that access to information and education are at the core of political participation. The cognitive theory of political literacy and participation espoused by Dalton (2002) estimates that education is a crucial indicator in measuring the political knowledge and participation of citizens, and the guaranteed access to political education increases the engagement of citizens in politics and defines the level of their participation. This explains the findings of this study because although the citizens were aware of the NCCE and its roles, since majority (86%) indicated they had not received any form of education from the NCCE, it affected their awareness of these extra political participation activities and their subsequent apathy towards the whole process. The core tenets of Dalton's theory of political literacy and

participation were empirically evaluated to be true in this study and gave insight into the reasons why people did not engage in extra-electoral forms of political participation in GAR.

### **5.7.3 Challenges Affecting the Ability of the NCCE to Promote Civic Education in the Greater Accra Region**

Several studies have examined the inhibiting factors of the NCCE (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al, 2014; Niworo et al., 2016). Some of these challenges include inability to upgrade skills of NCCE personnel, logistics, inadequate personnel as well as poor remuneration. According to the previous research (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al, 2014; Niworo et al., 2016), a major challenge of the NCCE is the lack of financial resources, and this affects their ability to provide funding for their activities. The findings of this study affirm this as all the eight respondents that participated in the interviews unanimously indicated that funding was the biggest challenge of the NCCE (Field Interview, 2023). This affected their ability to organize their educational activities as the needed tools and equipment were not available.

For instance, the NCCE respondents reported that they sometimes must depend on their personal funds to fuel the only vehicle available for use, because their offices had inadequate resources to do so. In other instances, they needed to transport themselves or even walk, affecting their ability to deliver. As a result, they have had to adopt the use of one-on-one discussions and focused group discussions since their other activities are dependent on the availability of resources such as logistics, finance, and personnel. Similarly, the experts from CSO and academia engaged in this study intimate that funding is the most important factor and accounts for the low level of awareness of the educational activities of the NCCE since it affects the ability of the field officers to cover more areas and interact with more people.

Bawa (2011) and Niworo et al. (2016) recount that the challenges of the NCCE are very contextual and could include logistics, personnel, remuneration, and inadequate funding from the government. Debrah et al. (2014) also argued that the performance of the NCCE is

hampered due to inadequate funding, gleaned from their survey of officials who indicated that this was the reason for the low performance of the NCCE. This study also revealed other factors such as the partisan perceptions that the public have about the commission, lack of protective clothing, lack of effective collaboration with other stakeholder institutions and the overwhelming nature of the work of the NCCE in conducting civic education.

#### **5.7.4 Recommendations to make the NCCE more effective and efficient**

The citizens surveyed, as well as representatives from CSOs and Academia, made some recommendations that will help the NCCE to surmount the challenges it faces in the discharge of its duties as identified in the preceding section. The findings of this research corroborate the recommendations of previous studies (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al., 2014; Niworo et al., 2016). The detailed responses are discussed below. Instructively, the common solution that was most pronounced through the recommendations of this study and confirms earlier studies is the proposition for adequate funding for the NCCE (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al., 2014; Niworo et al., 2016).

This is in line with the suggestion to set up a special fund for civic education as proposed by Debrah et al. (2014). Respondents surveyed opined that increase in the training and number of their personnel (29%) and staff, an integration of the NCCE with other government institutions (26%), adequate resource allocation (22%) and a closer monitoring and evaluation of the NCCE (22%) can make it more effective and efficient in the performance of their constitutional duties. Moreover, the representative from Academia suggested that the budgetary allocation of the NCCE had to be adjusted upward and released to them without fail.

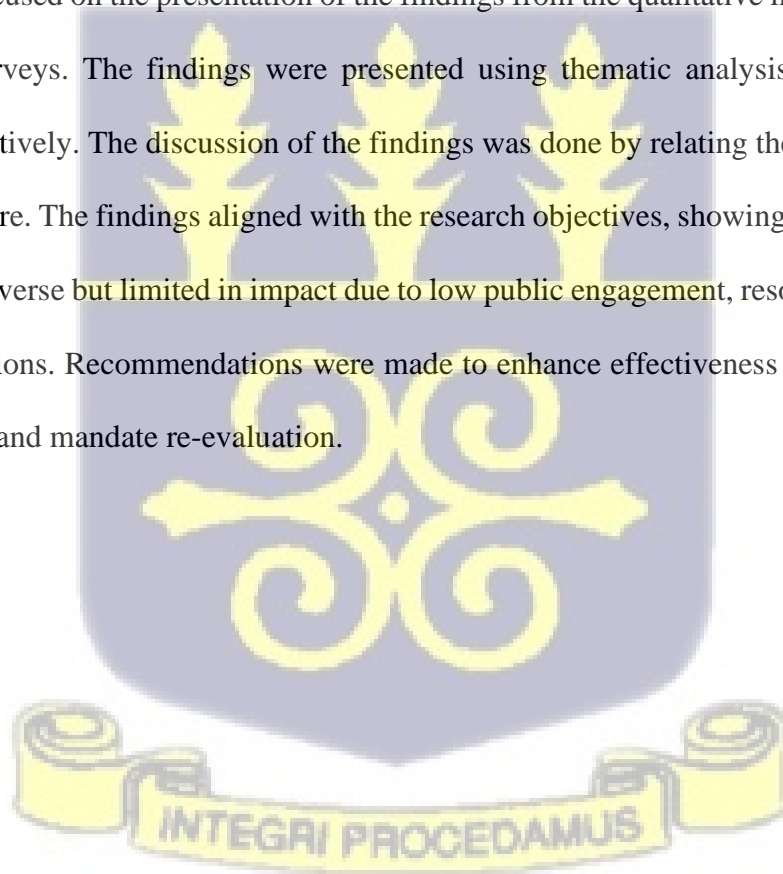
Again, he recommended that appointments of the members of the NCCE should be based solely on merit and qualifications. Furthermore, he advocated for a strategic collaboration between the NCCE and other stakeholder institutions in the promotion of public education as well as

taking a second look at the constitutional work of the NCCE with the aim of making it more feasible to undertake (Field Interview, 2023).

Additionally, the CSO respondent, proffered that the issue of resource inadequacy could be resolved to some extent if the NCCE formed deeper networking relationships with development partners such as the district assemblies, Media houses, donor organizations and NGOs since their work usually centered around empowering citizens in all aspects of social and public life where the tools of civic education and participation were indispensable (Field Interview, 2023).

## **5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on the presentation of the findings from the qualitative interviews and the quantitative surveys. The findings were presented using thematic analysis and descriptive analysis, respectively. The discussion of the findings was done by relating the core findings to relevant literature. The findings aligned with the research objectives, showing that the NCCE's strategies are diverse but limited in impact due to low public engagement, resource constraints, and misperceptions. Recommendations were made to enhance effectiveness through funding, collaborations, and mandate re-evaluation.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the summary of the study findings, major conclusions of the study, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for future research as well as practical recommendations to help make the functions of the NCCE in Greater Accra more effective.

#### 6.1 Summary of Major Research Findings

This study had the overarching objective of assessing the role of the NCCE in promoting extra-electoral political participation in Ghana, with a focus on the Greater Accra Region. The study was guided by five research objectives: specifically, the researcher wanted to explore the constitutional mandate and strategies used by the NCCE in its duties, assess the effectiveness of the strategies employed by the NCCE, unearth the challenges that affect their ability to function effectively and efficiently, and provide recommendations that will aid the NCCE to become more effective and efficient. The mixed-methods approach was adopted, where data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively. Data was obtained from a survey of 200 respondents, semi-structured interviews with eight (8) key experts and resource persons, and secondary sources relating to civic education and extra-electoral political participation. Moreover, the Cognitive Mobilization Theory of political literacy and participation as propounded by Dalton (2002) enabled the researcher to conduct a thorough investigation of the NCCE's civic education and its corresponding influence on extra-electoral political participation. SPSS was used to generate a crosstab analysis of civic education activities and extra-electoral political activities. The findings were then analyzed using a blend of descriptive and inferential analysis, with the findings presented with statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, charts, and tables. Also, qualitative thematic analysis was utilized in analyzing the

data collected through the interviews. The main findings are summarized below based on the research objectives that guided the study.

### **6.1.1 Strategies Employed by the NCCE in Educating and Encouraging Citizens**

One of the key objectives that underpinned this study was to examine the constitutional mandate and various strategies and activities that the NCCE uses to deliver civic education to encourage extra-electoral political participation in Greater Accra. Data collected from both the survey and the interview respectively were analyzed with respect to this research objective.

The study revealed that although residents in the Greater Accra Region were generally aware of other ways to participate in the political system, there was a low level of actual participation in such extra-electoral political activities, including contacting elected representatives and government officials, participating in political conversations, joining political parties, participating in strikes and demonstrations, and contesting elections, among others, due to a lack of education and training. The survey indicated that most residents in the Greater Accra Region were aware of the constitutional mandate of the NCCE. According to the NCCE personnel who participated in the study, the Commission adopted several ways of ensuring they fulfill their obligation to educate the public on civic and political rights. They, along with representatives from CSOs and academia, highlighted the centrality of civic education and, by extension, the NCCE, in encouraging political participation in its various forms among the electorates. The NCCE utilizes both traditional media (radio and television) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp) to advance education on civic and political issues. They also target organizations with a high probability of mass gatherings, such as churches, schools, mosques, as well as relevant associations and groupings within the community. Durbars, civic clubs, focused group discussions, and public announcement systems (like the use of vans) are additional methods employed by the NCCE in Greater Accra to educate the public. Furthermore, they partner with relevant institutions like the Ghana Health Service, Center for

Democratic Development, the Ghana Police Service, and other outfits to advance their civic education cause.

### **6.1.2 Effectiveness of the Activities and Programs of the NCCE in Engendering Extra-Electoral Political Participation**

Moreover, this study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the strategies, activities, and programs of the NCCE in engendering extra-electoral political participation among the citizens in the Greater Accra Region. The data from the surveys and the interviews provided insights into whether the various strategies adopted by the NCCE had yielded any results in encouraging constituents of Greater Accra to engage in extra-electoral activities. The views from the public, the NCCE, CSO, and Academia respectively are presented below.

The NCCE personnel indicated that they measured the impact of their education programs through the demeanor of the target audiences and took into consideration the language used, the time used for education, the feedback, and the issue that the education is hinged on. In that regard, they undergo extensive in-service training on the issue before advancing to the field. However, a majority of the public surveyed indicated that although they were aware of the NCCE's existence, they had not received any education from the NCCE through the various strategies and on the various forms of political participation explored in this research. Civil society and academic experts also indicated that the NCCE needs to be applauded for employing innovative and creative approaches through the few partnerships and strategies employed, considering their meager resources. Based on the tenets of the Cognitive Mobilization Theory for political literacy and participation, there indeed exists a relationship between education and political participation, since the decreased participation of the public in extra-electoral processes stemmed from their indication of not receiving any form of education from the NCCE.

### **6.1.3 Challenges the NCCE Encounters in its Functions**

Another study objective was to uncover the challenges that inhibit the actualization of the goals and objectives of the NCCE, especially in the promotion of civic education and promoting extra-electoral political participation among the citizens in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The data gleaned from the interviews with the NCCE, the Civil Society, and Academia are outlined below.

The study revealed some contextual challenges that affect the ability of the NCCE to perform its role in Greater Accra. Taken together, some of the challenges included financial constraints, which have been known to be a characteristic challenge of state institutions. Insufficient remuneration affects the ability of the NCCE to advance their strategies in line with promoting civic education. Another challenge was inadequate resources and logistics. The personnel indicated that the NCCE district office had only one van, which they all depended on for their duties, and they had to fuel it themselves or transport themselves through personal funds on several occasions. In most cases, field officers are seen around the office due to their inability to move around, affecting the performance of their roles. They have had to focus more on one-on-one methods of education. Coupled with the above are issues of limited media access due to insufficient funds, apart from platforms like Obonu FM and Obonu TV that have given the commission free airtime to educate the public on topical issues bothering on civic life. Another crucial challenge is the disregard that the personnel indicated the public had for them, and their constant tag or association with the ruling political party.

### **6.1.4 Measures to Address the Challenges**

Lastly, the study sought to propose solutions to address the hurdles faced by the NCCE in the discharge of its civic education functions. The survey responses and interviews with civil society and academia were analyzed and presented. More importantly, the interviews with Civil Society and Academia were crucial because of their deep knowledge and experience on

governance issues such as civic education and extra-electoral political participation and how it can be improved to strengthen democracy.

The citizens surveyed, as well as representatives from CSOs and Academia, made some recommendations that will help the NCCE to surmount the challenges it faces in the discharge of its duties as identified in the preceding section. The findings of this research corroborate the recommendations of previous studies (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al., 2014; Niworo et al., 2016). Instructively, the common solution that was most definite through the recommendations of this study and confirms earlier studies is the proposition for adequate funding for the NCCE (Bawa, 2011; Debrah et al., 2014; Niworo et al., 2016). This is in line with the suggestion to set up a special fund for civic education as proposed by Debrah et al. (2014). Respondents surveyed opined that an increase in the training and number of their personnel and staff, an integration of the NCCE with other government institutions, adequate resource allocation, and a closer monitoring and evaluation of the NCCE can make it more effective and efficient in the performance of their constitutional duties.

Moreover, the representative from Academia suggested that the budgetary allocation of the NCCE had to be adjusted upward and released to them on time and regularly. Again, he recommended that appointments of the members of the NCCE should be based solely on merit and qualifications. Furthermore, he advocated for a strategic collaboration between the NCCE and other stakeholder institutions in the promotion of public education as well as having a national dialogue in an attempt to review the constitutional work of the NCCE with the aim of making their work more feasible to undertake (Field Interview, 2023).

Additionally, the CSO respondent suggested that the issue of resource inadequacy could be resolved to some extent if the NCCE formed deeper networking relationships with development partners such as the district assemblies, media houses, donor organizations, and NGOs, since their work usually centered around empowering citizens in all aspects of social

and public life where the tools of civic education and participation were indispensable (Field interview, 2023).

The NCCE staff, in agreement with all the points above, suggested that the laws in this country need to be enforced properly for civic education to be meaningful and effective.

## 6.2 CONCLUSIONS

From the discussions above, the study draws the following conclusions.

Scholars have become increasingly concerned with the rising rate of political apathy and disengagement even during civic education campaigns in many democracies (Leigh, 2018; Eten, 2015). In Ghana, despite more than six decades of statehood and eight successful general elections with satisfactory turnouts ranging from 50.16% to 85.12%, the essential foundations of democracy, such as civic education, public engagement, and public accountability involving the entire population, have largely remained infantile under Ghana's Fourth Republic (Awuni, 2020; Unit, 2022; Afrobarometer, 2022).

This research, therefore, critically examined the role of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in nurturing and raising extra-electoral forms of political participation, such as collective action and contact activities, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The findings of the study showed that, although the NCCE had strategies in place for advancing civic education, the impact of these strategies was not widely perceived by the public, who indicated that they had not received such education on extra-electoral activities. This lack of perceived education justified the non-involvement of the public in activities that underscore extra-electoral political participation. However, the NCCE was inhibited by several challenges, most notably funding. The other barriers include partisan perceptions that the public have about the commission, lack of protective clothing, lack of effective collaboration with other stakeholder institutions, and the overwhelming nature of the NCCE's mandate in conducting civic education.

In conclusion, while the NCCE employs diverse strategies for civic education, their effectiveness in fostering extra-electoral participation is significantly hampered by resource constraints, public misperceptions, and a fragmented institutional landscape. The study affirms the Cognitive Mobilization Theory by demonstrating that a lack of perceived civic education directly correlates with low citizen engagement in non-electoral political activities. This highlights a critical gap between the NCCE's constitutional mandate and its practical impact on deepening democratic participation beyond voting. The findings underscore the need for a strategic re-evaluation of the NCCE's operational capacity and inter-institutional coordination to effectively cultivate an informed and actively engaged citizenry.

### **6.3 Practical Recommendations to Make the NCCE More Effective in the Promotion of Civic Education**

One of the key objectives that guided the navigation of this study was the provision of recommendations that would aid the NCCE in becoming more effective and efficient in the performance of their constitutional obligation. This section brings together recommendations from the public as evident in the survey, as well as the expert opinions of CSOs and academia.

**Adequate Financial Resources:** There should be adequate financial resources allocated to the NCCE to help them provide the appropriate incentives, remuneration, and logistics that will increase their capabilities to perform. This includes the provision of necessary logistics such as vans, motorcycles, and other resources needed for the proper functioning of the commission.

**Merit-Based Recruitment and Depoliticization:** There is a growing distrust for the NCCE personnel, since they are sometimes tagged to the governing political party. This can be reduced if personnel are recruited based on their skills and knowledge rather than on a partisan basis. This is crucial because the appointment of leaders of state institutions is often tied to changes in government, which, according to the experts involved in this study, affects the public's perception of their roles and mandate.

**Enhanced Inter-Institutional Collaboration:** The constitutional mandate of the NCCE should be re-evaluated, as it appears overwhelmed with the responsibility of providing and promoting civic education. Moreover, the NCCE should be integrated with other state institutions to make them more efficient. The NCCE should, as a matter of urgency, partner and develop formalized relationships with other relevant development organizations and media institutions. This would help them secure alternative sources of funding for their activities, as well as media access to promote education, thereby building a critical mass of civically engaged citizens.

**Strategic Engagement with Government Arms:** Efforts should be channeled towards ensuring that the image of the Commission is well protected and promoted. This could involve activities like retreats between the NCCE and various arms of Government (e.g., the president, ministers, parliamentarians, and the judiciary) where discussions would help sustain the idea of the NCCE as an important democratic institution and a bedrock of political participation.

**Support from Law Enforcement:** Law enforcement should be used as a reinforcement and a complement to education, which would help sustain the effectiveness of the NCCE's activities.

#### **6.4 Areas for Further Studies**

Future studies should focus on a comparative study of the various district offices of the NCCE in Greater Accra to properly tease out the issues related to their ability to provide the needed civic education to promote extra-electoral political participation.

Future studies that seek to assess the effectiveness of the roles of the NCCE focusing on the public should consider increasing the sample size to make the conclusions and findings of such studies more generalizable.

In future, studies contingent on the direct observation of the activities of the NCCE can be potential sources of information regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the NCCE in promoting civic education and extra-electoral political participation.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NCCE STAFF

This interview will be organized under four main themes. The first section of the interview is an ice breaker that comprises of four questions that seek to understand the NCCE in your district. The second section comprises of three questions that are geared towards appreciating the strategies that your district office uses in the civic education process. The third section will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of your methods used in civic education. And the last section will discuss the challenges that affect your branch's ability to effectively function.

#### Section A.

1. How long have you worked in your district branch of the NCCE?
2. What is the nature of your job at the NCCE?
3. In your estimation, what does the NCCE do?
4. Are there any specific duties of the NCCE in your district that makes it different from other districts? Please explain.

#### Section B.

1. What do you understand by the terms
  - a. Civic education
  - b. Political Participation
2. What is the significance of Civic Education and Political Participation to a developing democracy like Ghana? What is the relationship between the NCCE and both concepts?
3. Which of these civic issues do you educate people on and how do you go about it? Give details where necessary:
  - a. Functions of local government (i.e., The role of the Unit Committees in the communities, the role of the Assembly Member in the community, functions of the District Assembly)
  - b. The Constitution (i.e., rights and responsibilities of citizens)

- c. Government policies (i.e., NHIS registration, electoral process, National Identification registration, Sim Re-registration)
- d. Social issues (i.e., Community service, etc.)

**Section C.**

1. Have the people internalized the civic issues they have been educated on? Kindly explain your position
2. How have your activities contributed to increasing participation in political domains in terms of the following?
  - a. Voting in elections
  - b. Joining a political party and contributing to campaigns
  - c. Confidence to contest elections
  - d. Participation in community service
  - e. Contacting government officials
  - f. Joining a protest or demonstration
  - g. Demanding respect of one's rights
  - h. Commenting on government policies

**Section D.**

1. What challenges do you face in your attempt to discharge your duties as a commission?
2. What measures have you put in place to tackle the problems you face as you perform your duties?
3. What are some of the recommendations you will make to ensure the effective execution of your roles in this district?

**APPENDIX B - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE CSOs AND ACADEMIA**

This interview is part of other interviews geared towards the examination of the role of the NCCE in the promotion of civic education especially in political participation in Ghana. I crave

your indulgence to kindly answer these questions in your capacity as an Academic or CSO staff who contributes to nationally important discourses of this nature.

1. What is your take on political participation among the public or electorates in Ghana?
2. The findings of the Afrobarometer surveys as well as this study indicates that there is a lack of awareness of the various ways that people can participate politically beyond elections. In your opinion, what do you think accounts for this?
3. Is there a relationship between civic education and political participation?
4. How central is the NCCE to the process of civic education and political participation?
5. What are the things that the NCCE is doing right in fulfilling their constitutional mandate of promoting civic education?
6. What are some of the factors that inhibit the ability of the NCCE to realize its civic education aspirations?
7. What recommendations will you suggest to help improve the power, capacity, and influence of the NCCE in promoting civic education and how will this impact on citizen's awareness and adoption of extra political processes beyond voting?

#### **APPENDIX C – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **PROMOTING EXTRA-ELECTORAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION (NCCE) IN THE GREATER ACCRA REGION OF GHANA**

*My name is Henry Augustine Mawutor Attivor, a student at the University of Ghana pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Political Science. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am undertaking a study that seeks to evaluate the role of civic education by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in promoting extra-electoral political participation among electorates in Ghana. I would be honored to have you participate in this survey which seeks to assess your level of awareness of the various processes of political*

participation as well as your awareness of the activities of the NCCE. You are assured that your participation is for academic purposes only and under no circumstances will this research be used for other ulterior motives. Your anonymity is assured.

Please select **only one** alternative that best answers each of the questions.

**SECTION A - Demographic Details**

- |           |             |                        |                   |
|-----------|-------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sex    | 2. Age      | 3. Level of education  | 4. Marital Status |
| a. Male   | a. 18-23    | a. Basic education     | a. Single         |
| b. Female | b. 24-28    | b. Secondary education | b. Married        |
|           | c. 29-33    | c. HND                 | c. Widowed        |
|           | d. 34-38    | d. Bachelor's degree   | d. Separated      |
|           | e. 39-43    | e. Master's degree     |                   |
|           | f. Above 43 | f. PhD                 |                   |
|           |             | g. None                |                   |

**SECTION 2 - Participation in Extra Political Processes.**

5. Are you aware of other means of political participation besides voting?
- a. Yes
- b. No
6. The table below shows a range of other means of political participation. Kindly indicate which ones you have engaged in by ticking the relevant boxes.

Processes of political participation	Yes	No	I would if I get the chance
Contacted Member of Parliament			
Contacted Political Party Official			
Contacted Govt. Official at a Ministry			
Attending community meetings			
Joining others to raise issues			
Attend demonstration/protest march			
Joining political parties and participating in political campaigns			
Involvement in political discussions			

**SECTION 3 - Awareness of the activities of the NCCE in promoting civic education**

**and political participation.**

7. Are you aware that the NCCE is constitutionally mandated to educate you on issues of political participation?

- a. Yes, I am
- b. No, I am not

8. Have you participated in any activity organized by the NCCE in your community aimed at educating you on your civic and political rights?

- a. Yes, I have
- b. No, I have not

9. Have you received any form of education from the NCCE on the following issues?

Kindly tick the box that applies.

Areas of education	Yes, I have	No, I have not
The Constitution		
Government policies		
Social Issues		
Contacting government officials		
Voting in elections		
Joining political parties and contributing to campaigns		
Joining protests and demonstrations		
Commenting on government policies		
Demanding respect for one's right		

10. In your estimation, do you think the NCCE should do more in educating the public about their civic and political rights?

- a. Yes, I think there should be more efforts
- b. No, I think they are doing enough
- c. I have no idea

11. What measure can be taken to make the NCCE more effective in their work?

- a. Adequate resource allocation
- b. Increase in personnel and staff training
- c. Integration into other government institutions
- d. Closer monitoring and evaluation of work
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- f. None