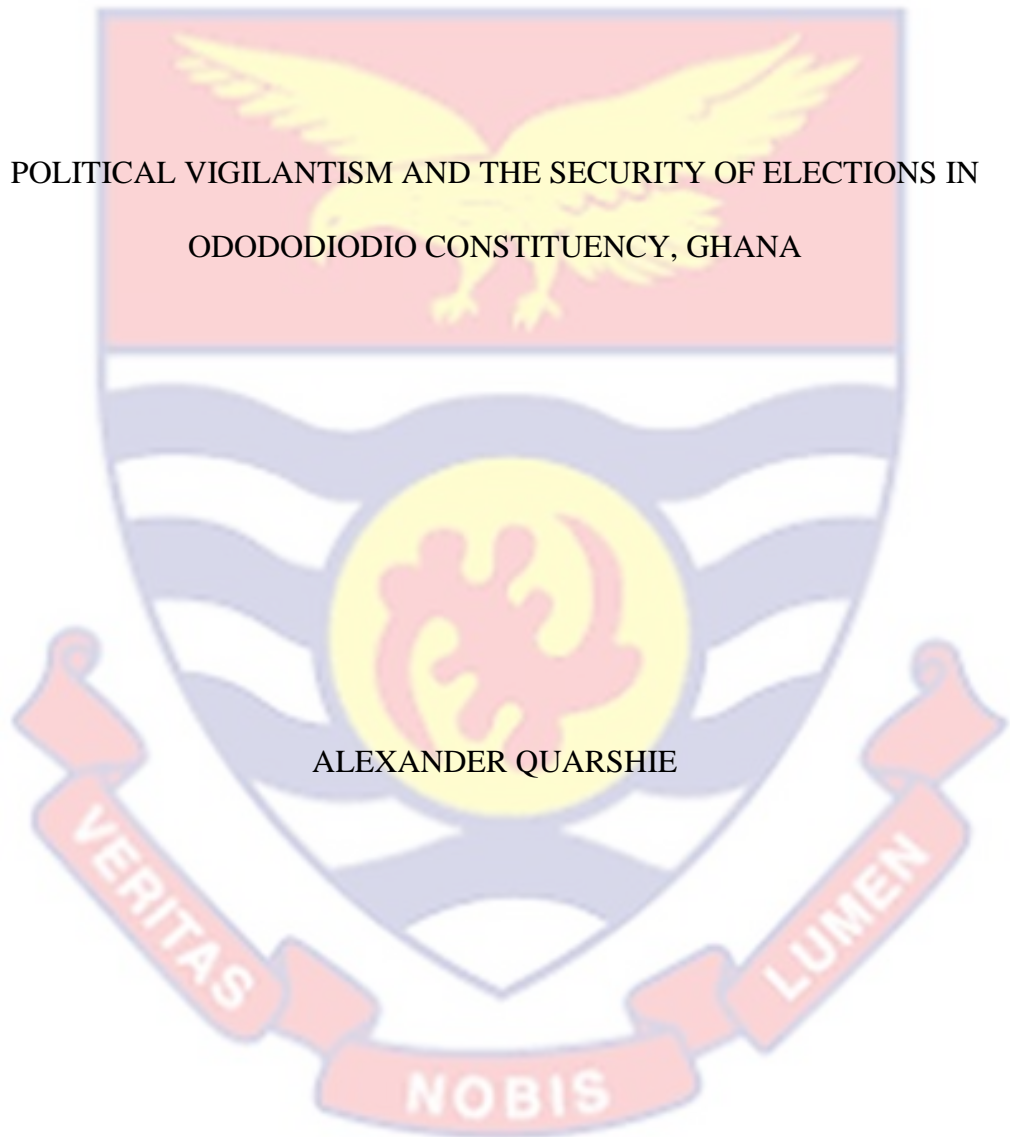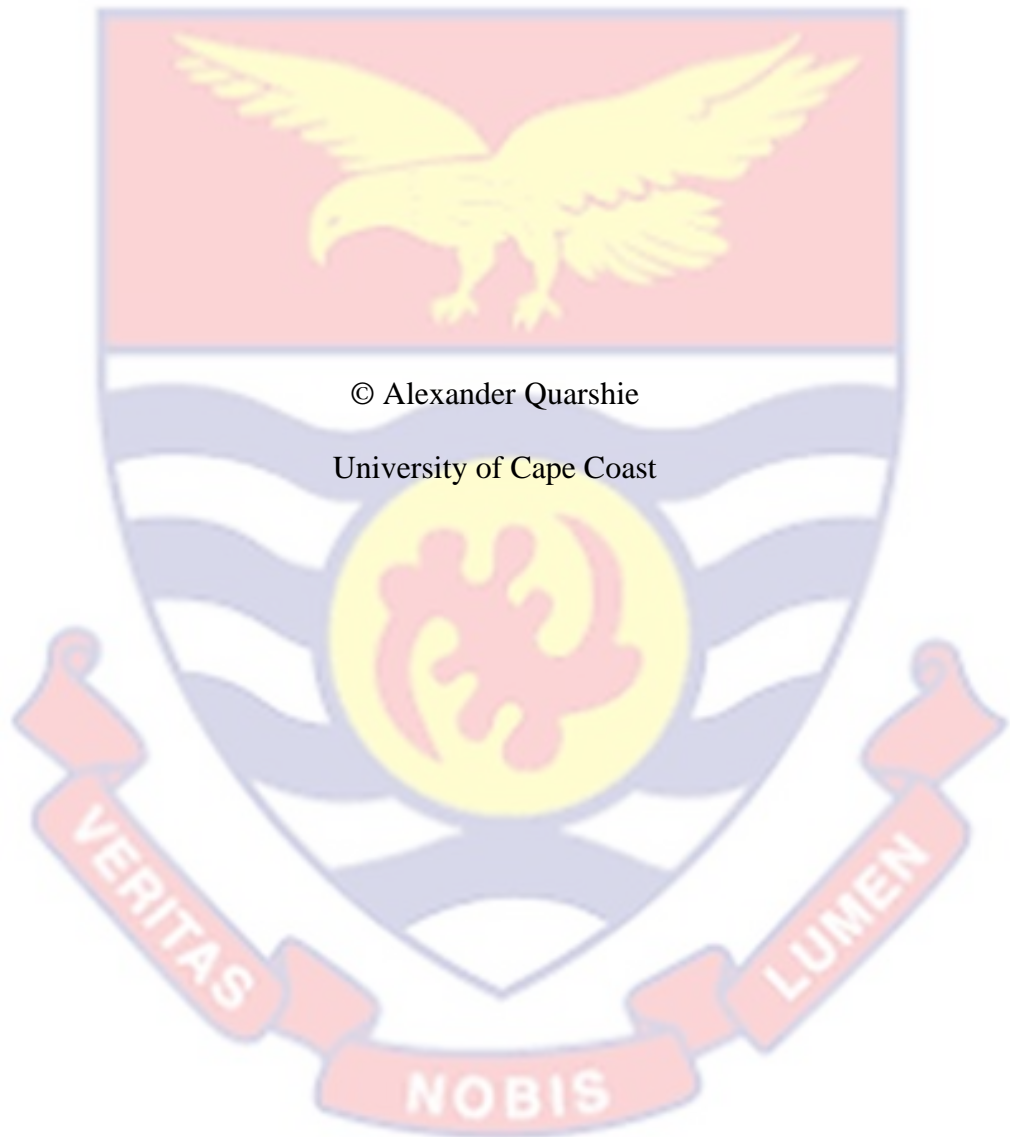UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

POLITICAL VIGILANTISM AND THE SECURITY OF ELECTIONS IN

ODODODIODIO CONSTITUENCY, GHANA

ALEXANDER QUARSHIE

2022

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POLITICAL VIGILANTISM AND THE SECURITY OF ELECTIONS IN

ODODODIODIO CONSTITUENCY, GHANA

BY

ALEXANDER QUARSHIE

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Peace Studies, School for

Development Studies, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of

Cape Coast, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master

of Philosophy Degree in Peace and Development Studies

OCTOBER 2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in the University of Cape Coast or elsewhere.
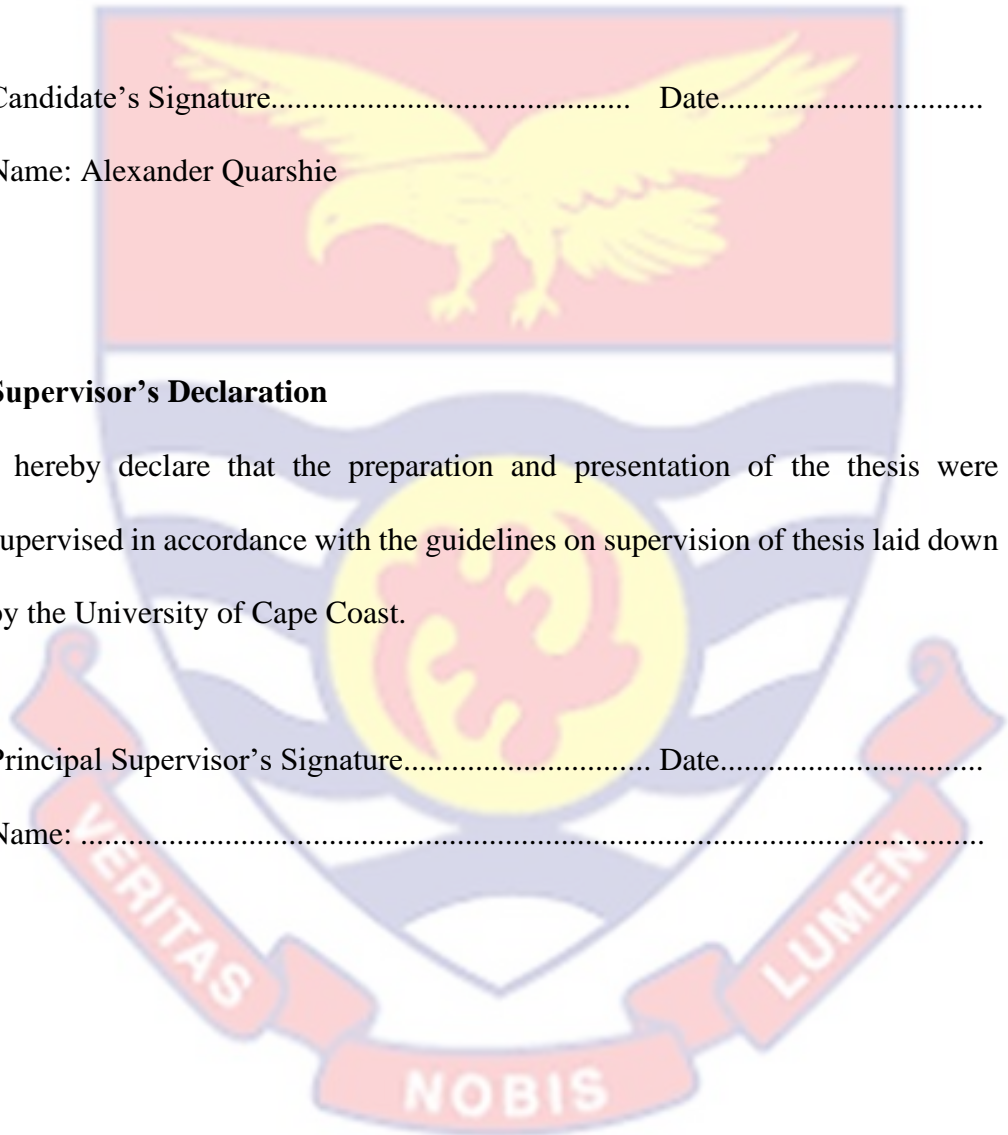
Candidate's Signature.. Date.................................

Name: Alexander Quarshie

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature............................. Date.................................

Name: ....

ABSTRACT

Elections in Ghana since 1992 have been associated with increasing features of political vigilantism which are driven by structural factors such as mistrust unemployment, and winner-takes-all (WTA) syndrome. This study therefore explores the drivers of political vigilantism, the motivations and the actions of vigilantes and the effects of the actions of vigilante groups on the security of elections in the Odododiodio Constituency of Ghana. Theories of structuration, horizontal inequality and clientelism underpin this study. Guided by the interpretivist philosophy, the study dwells on qualitative approaches, by using purposive and snowball sample techniques to solicit data from 18 respondents. Vigilantes and residents in Odododiodio Constituency, security personnel, officials of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Gh), a security expert and a politician constitute the stakeholders for this study. The data is analysed using narrative analysis. This study contends that political vigilantism is driven by structural issues coupled with people's response (individual motivation) to these structural factors. The outcomes are that vigilantes strategically adopt intimidation, violence and destruction of electoral materials to ensure they secure power for their political parties which consequently compromise the security of elections in the constituency. The study identified the potential of regulations to effectively curb vigilantism despite uncertainties as to its effectiveness. The study concludes that managing political vigilantism is critical to security, peace and development. Thus, it proposes that concerted efforts in the enforcement of state laws against vigilantism devoid of personal interests and guaranteed prosecution of offenders are necessary for the security of elections.

KEY WORDS

Election

Human Security

Political Vigilantism

Security of Elections

Social Media

Structuration

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DEDICATION

To my family: Samuel Quarshie, Rhodaline Pappoe, Joshua Abeka

Quarshie and Belinda Nana Oye Quarshie

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AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
CAI	Creative Associates International
CDD-Gh	Ghana Center for Democratic Development
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DSP	Deputy Suprintendent of Police
EC	Electoral Commission of Ghana
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EMB	Election Management Board
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GPS	Ghana Police Service
HDR	Human Development Report
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
NABCO	Nation Builders Corps
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPC	National Peace Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NYEP	National Youth Employment Program
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SITU	Statistics and Information Technology Unit
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WTA	Winner-takes-all

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the background of the study. Ghana as a model of African democracy continues to experience violence within its electoral processes. The electoral violence is mainly attributed to the activities of political vigilante groups. The causes of these vigilante acts associated with the electoral process are attributed to structural factors of social and economic marginalisation and poverty, and lack of opportunities (Bob-Milliar, 2014; Paalo, 2017). These explanations strip political vigilantes of the agency to act to pursue certain intentions. However, understanding political vigilantism through the theories of structuration, horizontal inequality, and clientelism provides a broader understanding of political vigilantism and how it shapes the security of elections in Ghana.

Most often, deficiencies in state infrastructures alongside social and economic inequalities become a conduit for individuals to deliberately draw on these factors to strategically perpetrate violence to pursue both the agendas of their political party and individual aspirations. These violent actions by political vigilantes affect the sanctity of elections with implications for human security. Fundamentally, though Ghana continues to be commended for her democratic maturity, the presence of an ever-increasing political vigilante group in size and types coupled with its associated violence, threaten the security of elections, which makes it more essential to research on political vigilantism and its implications on the security of elections.

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Background to the Study

The turn of the millennium has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of countries that have signed on to democratic rule. Available statistics indicate that, as at the end of 2019, a total of 165 independent states and two territories are under democratic rule globally (Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU], 2019). In Africa, about 50 out of the 53 countries are running democratic forms of government (EIU, 2019). The statistics confirm that democracy, as a form of political rule, has become a true global norm but with different character in terms of form and content. For many of these African countries, the acceptance of democracy marks a significant shift from an extended period of authoritarian rule witnessed before the 1990s (Cheeseman, 2019).

Democracy has received increasing attention due to the provision it makes for the selection of persons by the citizens in the representation of the citizens in government (Cheeseman, 2019). This is achieved through periodic, free and fair elections by which the general populace holds the government accountable and gets involved in the governance of the state directly or through representatives (Schumpeter, 1950). While elections alone are insufficient for democracy, they are nevertheless a prerequisite (Ijon, 2020; Omotola, 2010). This hinges on the integral role elections play in the peaceful and successful transfer of state powers from one individual to the next within stable democratic states (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015).

Considering the conditions for a stable democracy, competitive elections become the visible and supportive element that facilitates and further legitimizes the choice of leadership among conflicting interest groups over a political office (Omotola, 2010). Globally, peaceful competitive elections

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promote the contribution of "losers" to national development and their involvement in future competitions (Ijon, 2020; Omotola, 2010). Credible elections legitimize governments and ensure effective governance and development (Ijon, 2020). Yet, elections can be fraught with violence if the procedures accompanying the electoral process do not meet certain fundamental requirements (Paalo, 2017).

Globally, elections have been associated with some degree of violence due to tensions which arise from opposing factions, particularly groups identified in politics as illegal political youth security wings known as political vigilantes in Ghana who owe their allegiance to particular political parties (Impraim, 2020). African states such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria experienced intense violence which tends to compromise the peace and security of elections within states. As an election is meant to serve as the cornerstone in the protection of numerous fundamental human rights, it is basically at the protection of the state (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015).

Tranquil conditions surrounding election periods and voting sites facilitate credible, free and fair elections which reduce other issues that tend to compromise the integrity of records, vote confidence, election results or turnout (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [IDEA], 2015). Security of elections ensures that the aim of elections is achieved, while insecurity of elections destruct an election process and makes it difficult for entitled voters to freely express their rights due to the presence of fear, manipulative interference, and physical and mental harm, particularly during an election (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011).

One major means of securing/insecurity of election is the use of political vigilantes to protect the inalienable interest of political patrons. The structuration, horizontal inequality and clientelism theories provide clues to understanding the association between political vigilantism and the security of elections. The structuration theory is used to explain the motivation for the action of political vigilantes. As espoused by Giddens (1984), this study argues that the interaction between structural factors such as increasing unemployment and the agency (personal motivations) of the vigilantes drive political vigilantism which affects the security of elections in Ghana. Stewart's (2016) horizontal inequality theory explains how exclusion drives marginalised persons to consolidate into groups in defence of their interest which in the process cause these groups to develop an asymmetric relationship with powerful patrons from whom they exchange their services and loyalty for favours (Lemarchand, 1981).

These theories stipulate that structural issues within states interact with the personal motivations of individuals who are often marginalised and excluded from the social and political sphere, which consolidate as groups to establish and perpetuate a political system of violence. Mainly, the marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups from the political and social sphere of states cause such persons to align their interests and hopes with political parties and patrons who exchange favours and pecuniary benefits for the efforts of these vigilantes to secure political power during elections (Gyampo, Graham & Asare, 2018; Paalo, 2017). This leads to the perpetuation of political violence by vigilantes which tends to affect the security of elections.

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The use of political vigilantes could be linked to the apparatchiks of the Soviet Union's Communist Party who were full-time professional functionaries in Russia. They held positions of bureaucratic responsibility, except for those at higher ranks of management called nomenklatura who were referred to as men not of grand plans, but of a hundred carefully executed details (Tymiński, 2020). A similar setup is the political action committees that serve as a source of political party finances and education in the United States of America (USA) (Ban, 2018). Accordingly, political vigilantism has both positive and negative aspects, but the type that dominantly employs electoral violence as its main instrument seems to have a much domineering influence on the security of elections in Africa (Genyi, 2013; Ojo & Ademowo, 2015).

In Ghana, political vigilantism has historical roots in the colonial struggle for independence and the period immediately after independence (Tankebe, 2019). Further historical analysis of Ghana's democratic process reveals that elections have been associated with some intensity of violence. Since the inauguration of Ghana's Fourth Republic, there have been 31 by-elections (Impraim, 2020), and 8 parliamentary and presidential elections: 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020, many of which have experienced some form of vigilante related violent outbreaks. For instance, electoral violence which was seen during Odododiodio (2005) and Ayawaso Wuogon (2019) by-elections; and Atiwa West (2012) and Odododiodio (2005) parliamentary elections have resulted in low turnout of voters for elections (Impraim, 2020). Indeed, Gyampo et al. (2018) have argued that vigilante activities have permeated various stages of electoral processes and all general elections held within Ghana's Fourth Republic.

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Vigilante-related tensions and actions in Ghana tend to polarise politics, restrict freedom of assembly, suppress voter turnout, challenge the legitimacy of established governments and ultimately create insecurity of elections (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor & Boakye, 2014; UNDP, 2011). In the wake of intense tension and violence, developmental projects come to a halt, people are maimed and at times killed, and properties are destroyed, with losses in millions of dollars which then impede development and at times reverse development (UNDP, 2011). This is supported by the Emile Short Committee Report (2019) which observed that the strength of Ghana's constitutional democracy is under threat by the existence of vigilante groups as a result of the challenges that their actions pose to the State.

In Ghana, since the introduction of the multi-party system in 1992, political parties have strategically used party agents who are collectively mobilised under the label of "political vigilantes" to either mar or shape voting behaviour and elections through the adoption of intimidation and threat which largely revolve around the electoral cycle including the pre-election, election and post-election stages (Ijon, 2020; Impraim, 2020). The illegal actions committed principally by these groups are ballot box theft and other forms of electoral fraud; molestation, physical assault, or violent intimidation; seizure or occupancy of public property; protests or taking part in public disorder and the vandalisation or destruction of party property (Bob-Milliar, 2014).

Several authors depend on structural analysis to explain the evidence of political vigilantism in Ghana (Bob-Milliar, 2014; Gyampo et al., 2018). The argument has been that insufficient job opportunities, and economic, political and social marginalisation ensured that marginalised persons consolidate their

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efforts to create political vigilante groups, which then become justification for the actions of these vigilantes who ensure that their wishes are taken into account by the political leadership (Kyei & Berckmoes, 2020). As a result, these groups end up establishing client-patron relationships with political parties precipitated by underlying structural issues such as winner-takes-all (WTA) syndrome (Stewart, 2016).

The winner-takes-all (WTA) syndrome gives leeway for the exploitation of state resources as compensation for the actions of political vigilantes by political patrons (Gyampo, 2015). Paalo (2017) also supported the structural argument by acknowledging that issues of increasing unemployment push unemployed persons to patronage opportunities offered by parties. Bob-Milliar (2014) and Paalo (2017) maintained that the absence of meaningful employment intensifies poverty among Africa's non-elite youth group (who become vigilantes) which by extension strip these persons of their capability to be the masterminds of their actions –agency, due to prevailing structural factors. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that the rise and actions of vigilantes cannot be solely attributed to issues embedded in the structures of the state.

Vigilantes at times conceive and act based on the personal motivations they wield, thereby becoming the very masterminds of their actions. Indeed, the presence of structural pressures does not nullify the agency of the vigilante. This manifested in situations where vigilantes switch their loyalties from one political party to the other usually for self-benefit (Gyampo et al., 2018) or to impose their will on their former parties. For instance, in 2008, New Patriotic Party (NPP) supporters in Ablekuma Central switched support to the National

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Democratic Congress (NDC) due to neglect by the NPP party (Gyampo et al., 2018). Consequently, these motivations of vigilantes drive their perpetration of violence, particularly when they coincide with existing structural issues.

In the height of such political turmoil caused by vigilantes, both the state and other private agencies have prioritised the regulation of the phenomenon and aimed to resolve it. For instance, there has been a public call for the abolition of vigilantism by the Akuffo Addo government on 21 February 2019, and the passing of the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Law (Act 999) on September 2019 (Asamoah, 2019; Kyei, 2020). State efforts in this respect have been complemented by the Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism championed by some private organisations to regulate and maintain security and peace in Ghana. Regardless, the ongoing actions of vigilantes in the presence of Ghana's touted security infrastructure raise a question as to the effectiveness of these recent regulations in curbing political vigilantism in Ghana.

Over the years, in Ghana, Odododiodio constituency has seen a vibrant contestation between the NPP and the NDC in both presidential and parliamentary elections which have often resulted in outbreaks of violence (Fridy, 2007). The violent nature of electoral processes in Odododiodio constituency has seen the constituency being designated as a flashpoint for electoral violence within the Greater Accra region, thereby affecting the quality of elections held within the area (Impraim, 2020; Kendie et al., 2016). For instance, the intensity of violence precipitated by the activities of vigilante groups in Odododiodio constituency during the 2005 by-election led to a significant reduction in the voter turnout from 67,994 in 2004 to 46,991

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(Impraim, 2020). This goes to affect the security of elections and the broader operation of democracy.

Statement of the Problem

Though political party vigilantism occurs in almost every constituency in Ghana, the Odododiodio constituency has been noted as the hotspot for political party vigilantism violence in the country (Fiawoo, 2017). As observed by Paller (2017), the Constituency is constantly tormented by political party-based violence that undermines the harmony, security and soundness of the area and nation as a whole. Albeit these spates of violence are confined to the Odododiodio constituency, they are portrayed by dangers, scares, annihilations of electoral materials, and the utilisation of disdain discourse against political adversaries (Bentil, 2020). As revealed by (Amoah, 2022), the constituency leads other constituencies in election-related violence, which is often utilised by the political class as a functional procedure or counter technique to gain electoral advantage.

This election-related violence is said to be mainly perpetrated by adversaries of political parties who primarily are adolescents known as vigilantes during political rallies before elections, on the main election days, and after elections (Bentil, 2020). These have been characterised by a situation where political leaders utilised their well-built masculine bodyguards who are known as macho men to intimidate individuals who are seen to be their rivals during decisions (Impraim, 2020). Although all political parties mobilise their foot soldiers to garner support for the parties and candidates, the vigilantes of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the NDC have been identified as the major

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culprits of political vigilantism in the Odododiodio constituency (Impraim, 2020; Kendie, Osei-Kufuor, Imoro, Yahaya & Bukari, 2016).

When issues associated with the various stages of the electoral process go unresolved, coupled with the livelihood, communal or institutional interests of political youth groups, it instigates political vigilantism, which negatively affects the security of the election (Ijon, 2020; Kyei & Berckmoes, 2020). This is further worsened by the failure of formal regulations to restrict the actions of vigilantes in Ghana. Kyei (2020) notes that regardless of the acceptance of new regulations (Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act) against political vigilantism, there is a significant disorientation between official disbandment of vigilantes and pre-existing deficiencies in the attempt to curb the phenomenon within Ghana's political dispensation. Again, there is proclaimed absence of specific control measures (laws) targeting political vigilantism before the acceptance of recent vigilante regulations in the state.

Accordingly, it is imperative to research political vigilantism and the security of elections in Odododiodio constituency, because these unlawful activities of vigilantes largely tainted the hitherto election security in Ghana (Impraim, 2020). Election security is the maintenance and execution of elections based on the rule of law so citizens perceive the election process to be inclusive, participatory or competitive (Impraim, 2020). In this respect, election security deals with election actions that are devoid of intimidatory tactics for free voter turnout and participation in elections coupled with unrestricted free expression of political views (Bentil, 2020).

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Although there are studies on political vigilantism and security of elections in Ghana (Asamoah, 2019; Gyampo et al. 2018; Ijon, 2020; Impraim, 2020), most of them were desk reviews which focused on only structural issues as the sole reason for the perpetration of violence among the vigilante political youth wings of the political parties. Tankebe (2019) enlarged the scope to include criminologists, but, little attention has been paid to agency motivations for political vigilantism. As found by Kyei and Berckmoes (2020), vigilante activities have both positive and negative aspects, but the positive effects of political vigilantism were omitted in the aforementioned studies carried out in Ghana. Even so, political vigilantes were neglected as respondents in most of the studies conducted in Ghana. Again, none of the studies assessed the capacity of regulations, particularly the new law (Act 999) in curbing political vigilantism in Ghana. Thus, this study narrowed those gaps in the literature.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the effects of political vigilantism on the security of elections. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. explore the drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana

2. examine the motivations and the actions of individual vigilante group members.

3. examine the effects of the actions of political vigilante groups on the security of elections in Ghana.

4. assess the effectiveness of regulation in constraining political vigilantism in Ghana.

5. make recommendations for strengthening the security of elections in Ghana.

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Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana?

2. what are the actions and motivations of individual vigilante group members?

3. how did the actions of political vigilante groups influence the security of elections in Ghana?

4. how could regulation effectively control political vigilante acts?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be relevant in reorienting vigilantes in the direction of national development. Identification of lucrative yet positive ventures for former vigilantes, subject to national development would underpin suggestions for the study. These would focus on the incorporation of the efforts of vigilantes into national development. Specifically, it would focus on how such groups could be integrated into political roles, and governance structures and allocated some level of space within their political environments.

The findings of this research will serve as a basis for policymakers like the government and security agencies to identify any weaknesses in the existing security structures and design proactive programmes and measures to check vigilante activities and minimise their impact or eradicate them. Policy implications made would help boost development and ensure peace by effectively regulating the activities of vigilantes towards state agendas. This would help contribute to peace.

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The findings of this research will also contribute to empirical literature for knowledge creation and sharing. The study would broaden knowledge of the implications of political vigilantism. To this effect, the study would indicate the association between the activities of vigilantes and the security of elections based on ideas from theories of structuration, horizontal inequality and political clientelism.

Delimitations of the Study

Thematically, there are several effects associated with political vigilantism. This study however concentrates on the implications of political vigilantism on the security of elections, and its ripple effect on development and peace in Ghana. Geographically, though political vigilantism is at a national scale, the study focuses exclusively on Odododiodio constituency within the Accra metropolis. Although the use of mixed method might make this work more robust, due to the resource and expertise of the researcher, a qualitative approach was adopted. Other theories could equally underpin political vigilantism and the security of elections, but the theoretical scope is delimited to theories of structuration, horizontal inequality, and political clientelism.

Limitations of the Study

A challenge I faced after embarking on this research was in selecting the study design. The study employed an interpretative design to ascertain how political vigilantism affects the security of elections. The study is weak in its attempt to link the security of elections to peace and development.

Another limitation of this study was the interviews conducted. Since most of the political vigilantes I interviewed were armed, the researcher felt slightly intimidated. Most respondents were comfortable speaking in their local

dialect therefore, the research assistant had to translate the issues into Twi and Ga. There was the likelihood of diverse interpretations evolving from different researchers. However, adequate attempts were made to address such issues during the training sessions held before the fieldwork since they were envisaged. The possibility of misinterpretation of issues in the interview guide could affect the findings of the study. Regardless, the study was adequate in its attempt to explore and examine issues related to political vigilantism due to the study design and analysis process adopted for the study.

Definition of Terms

Political Vigilantism: Political vigilantism may be regarded as a sophisticated operation, organised by a group of people (usually the youth) who are driven by personal and structural motivations to act beyond legitimate channels to deprive other people of their existential rights to participate in self-government (vis-à-vis genuine, free and fair elections) in fulfilment of their personal and party agendas.

Political Vigilante: An individual (dominantly male youth) incorporated, indoctrinated and at times armed to serve as an instrument for political parties (and patrons) through the dominant illegitimate adoption of state powers (violence) to ensure their affiliated political parties secure power through all means necessary.

Political Agency: The capacity of the individual to articulate and assess social issues to knowledgeably or consciously construct decisions which inform their actions to either adhere or reject restrictive orders, institutions, norms and structures as practised by affiliated political groups and the broader society.

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Election Violence: The strategic adoption of violence, be it physical, psychological or structural, by political vigilantes to either delay or influence electoral processes in the promotion of personal or party goals which undermines the security of elections, thereby derailing peace and development.

Security of Elections: The routinised assured safety, sanctity and protection of election facilities, election information, events and existential rights of stakeholders (poll workers, candidates, voters, observers and media) from psychological, structural and physical violence to ensure both national and human security within day-to-day electoral practices.

Organisation of the Study

The thesis is structured into five chapters. The first chapter comprises the background information, problem statement, objectives of the study and research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation, definition of terms and organisation of the study.

The second chapter focus on reviewed literature which encompasses the theoretical underpinning and the conceptual bases of the work. Specifically, it reviews issues such as the structuration theory, horizontal inequalities and political clientelism theories, and some concepts such as political vigilantism and the contemporary understanding of security.

The third chapter focus on research methodology which outlines the sampling and data collection methods employed for the study area. The fourth chapter presents and discusses the results of the fieldwork. Chapter five primarily summarises the thesis, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter discusses the review of related literature for the study. The theoretical and conceptual literature are presented. The theories discussed are the structuration, horizontal inequality and political clientelism theories. The key concepts discussed include political agency, political vigilantism, security, security of elections and election violence. The empirical literature is further presented with emphasis on the structural and agency factors that drive electoral violence especially vigilante activities, the security of elections and the mechanism used to control such activities in other countries. The chapter ends with the conceptual framework for the study.

Structuration Theory

The main argument of the structuration theory is that structures and human agency are mutually reinforcing, and neither is exclusive in the production and reproduction of social structure (Giddens, 1984). Giddens notes that structure may take forms of signification, legitimation and domination. Signification considers the system's symbolic and discursive order which is the rules governing the predominating jargons, images and types of talk (Whittington, 2015). Signification is expressed through communication, mediated through interpretative schemes (Jones & Karsten, 2008). Legitimisation refers to normatively sanctioned institutions ranging from obligations embedded within specific cultures to formal legal constraints (Whittington, 2015). Legitimation is expressed through sanctions and mediated

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by norms. Domination refers to allocative and material resources which include economic and political institutions (Whittington, 2015).

Giddens (1984) defines structure as the organisation of resources and rules as properties of social systems that exist only as structural properties. Giddens (1979) makes an argument for the fact that social structures serve as the measure through which change is acquired and the result of such change. Structures in this regard prevent and at the same time promote human agency. In this case, agents employ resources and rules embedded in social systems to either amend or reproduce structural principles which have influenced their actions (Jones & Karsten, 2008).

Giddens (1979) asserts that structures both enable and constrain human agency. Jones and Karsten (2008) note that social structures are maintained and altered through continuous replication by social actors. This connotes that social structure though enforcing is subject to the agency (actions) of its perpetrators. Whittington (2015) explains agency to be the capacity to adhere to or reject a particular system of practice. Giddens (1989) further highlights that human agency is highly voluntaristic and only restricted in cases where the individual is manhandled or drugged by others. Giddens (1989) stated that even in the presence of structures, the human agency makes available other choices which could be exploited by the actor.

Jones and Karsten (2008) also argue that humans are knowledgeable agents with the choice to act in the perpetuation of the social structure or to change the social structure. Participation of an individual within society imbibes knowledge of the working of that society into the individual (Jones & Karsten, 2008). Giddens (1979) indicates that knowledge takes three shapes, the first of

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which is discursive consciousness. By this, an actor can articulate and explain actions. The second is practical consciousness which takes into consideration choices made and acted upon by the individual, yet devoid of articulation capability till when asked about such actions. Third is unconscious knowledgeability which involves the situation where the individual responds to the environment, yet cannot articulate his actions and therefore cannot explain. Whittington (2015) supports Giddens' (1979) argument by noting that a social actor's understanding and awareness of action goes beyond their ability to explain.

The idea of agency is that it highlights the individual's capacity to assess issues single-handedly despite existing institutional practices of society. Coole (2017) explained agency to be the expression of political power through the activity of people. Similarly, Rapport and Overing (2000) consider agency to be the underlying power to being the originator of an action. Rapport and Overing (2000), and Coole (2017) view power as an essential element of human agency. Whittington (2015) believed that agency is improved by structural control over resources which also improves the rules the individual could negotiate. To this extent, Wong (2007) advocates that to maximise benefits, humans consciously calculate likely outcomes and formulate strategies due to their individualistic nature which could be reshaped by their membership to a group supported by sanctions against those who flaunt such rules. This highlights what Wong (2007) considers to be the three assumptions of human intentionality: the strategic agency, the individualistic nature of agency and the linear transformation of the agency.

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Adherent scholars of the structuration theory highlight that the theory reduces existing dilemmas faced by researchers in selecting objective (structural) or subjective (agency) conceptions, rather than the interplay of the two conceptions. Therefore, Whittington (2015) supports structuration as a compromise between macro and micro, and structuralism and individualism. This creates a better understanding of how social structures influence the individual and how the individual influences social structures.

Various researchers (Gregson, 1989; Joseph, 2006; Kort & Gharbi, 2013; Layder, 2006) have critiqued the structuration theory. For example, structuration is highly abstract due to the relative absence of empirical guidelines thereby impairing the empirical application of the theory. This informs Gregson's (1989) view of structuration as a second-order theory with abstract and general focus as opposed to analytical clarity of specific events which first-order theory renders. The absence of clear laws and limited assumptions encourages Joseph (2006) to propose it as a complementary theory. Kort and Gharbi (2013) accept that agency and structure as embedded within the theory are nearly intertwined. This conflation limits its analytical perspective in assessing the relative impact of the agent or structure (Layder, 2006). This entrenches difficulty in analysing predominant structural features within certain periods or areas as the individual's creative activities may be highlighted (Layder, 2006).

In Ghana, political vigilantism comes about as a result of the interaction between structural issues embedded within states and the personal reasons of civilians to join vigilante groups and act the way they do. The nature of political vigilantism in Ghana and Odododiodio in particular is such that vigilantes draw

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upon structural issues as motivation to engage in the activities of their political parties to perpetuate their personal and party agendas to secure private gains. The interaction of vigilante motivation and economic, political, and social structures of society drive political vigilantism. This theory serves as a lens to explore the motivation for political vigilantism and why it continues to permeate the Ghanaian political system.

Horizontal Inequality

The inequalities or "horizontal inequalities" theory postulates that when existing cultural contradictions merge with political and economic differences among groups, it tends to culminate into deep antipathy and at times violent conflict (Stewart, 2011; Stewart & Brown, 2007). This theory maintains that inequalities among groups with a shared identity create violent conflict (Stewart, 2011). These inequalities may take a political dimension which considers inequalities embedded in political power and opportunity distribution. Economic horizontal inequalities view disparities in ownership and access to assets; social horizontal inequalities focus on disparities embedded in access to services; and cultural horizontal inequalities considers standing and recognition among diverse groups (Stewart, 2016; Stewart, 2011).

An assumption of the horizontal inequalities theory as Stewart (2016) propounds is that it ensures that poor groups are restricted from breaking the barriers of poverty due to its (poverty) cumulative nature which heightens the difficulty in bridging the gap. Stewart (2016) maintains that this ensures a trend of poverty and poor health among members of the poorer group. Horizontal inequalities stipulate that there is an existing asymmetric social capital which informs the existence of a strong relationship between members of the same

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group as opposed to intergroup contact (Blau, 1977). This connotes that these poor groups have limited access to goods, job opportunities and many others (Durlauf, 2006).

Stewart (2016) argues that the complementary nature of diverse forms of social capital ensures greater productivity on a single type (of social capital) as compared to the other. In this regard, the worse-off group (the poorer group) makes the lowest returns from social policies (such as on education) and financial capital among others (Figueroa, 2010). Stewart (2016) further observes that discrimination which may be private or governmental, informal or formal is constantly present which ensures an entrenched restriction over poorer groups from assessing good jobs and schools among others. Again, Posner (2005) and Nkurunziza (2012) identify political inequalities to reinforce other forms of inequality which ensure the privileged (richer) group dominates the government, awarding resources to its members.

The theory takes into consideration the collective grievances and actions of groups within societies. It views numerous forms of inequalities such as economic, social, cultural and political with respect to group interests. The theory highlights how deprivation, marginalisation and side-lining of groups and group interests culminate into violence. However, the authors of the theory fail to account for the fact that grievances of particular groups resorting from either social, political, cultural or economic inequalities tend to be transformed into positive activisms in society establishing benefits previously unknown by the group rather than culminating into violence. This takes into consideration the fact that the theory takes a unidirectional view.

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Political vigilantism which permeates the African political system takes the form of collective or group action. Particularly, political elites recruit individuals with social, political and economic restrictions to achieve inalienable political interests. In Ghana particularly, dominantly non-elites within the state who are politically, socially or economically marginalised and discriminated against, are usually contracted to serve as physical human protectors. Since these individuals are already vulnerable or worse off, they put in an endless effort to do the bidding of the politicians who engage them. Thus, this theory explains how socially and economically vulnerable individuals are recruited to consolidate their efforts in ensuring that politically desired interests are maintained, but it fails to explain the nature of the relationship between the political patrons and the vigilante groups. To overcome this weakness, the theory of political clientelism was integrated.

Political Clientelism

Political clientelism is explained as asymmetric relations involving less powerful clients and powerful patrons, by which clients bid loyalty and services in exchange for favours, be it material or otherwise (Kusche, 2014; Lemarchand 1981). Political clientelism as a form of political behaviour is based on the rational choices of actors engaged in electoral and interest politics (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). This is linked to the operations of welfare states (synonymous with democratic states), particularly in situations where regular general elections are conducted.

In these states, clientelistic relationships transform public sector employment, issuing of permits and licences, social policies, public contracts, fines, concessionary administrative decisions and numerous state activities into

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personal favours as opposed to operating on a universalistic criterion (Chubb 1981; Kusche, 2014). This is identified by Chubb (1981) as positive incentive for clients who display appropriate support. Such favours from patrons to client influence loyalty, deferential behaviour and votes of electorates in political elections (Kusche, 2014). Shefter (1994) points out that political programmes or concrete material benefits serve as means through which political parties win over voters or supporters.

However, the threat of negative sanctions such as violence, withholding of crucial information, or withdrawal of benefits motivates electorates to accept political propositions or policies which would have otherwise been rejected (Kusche, 2014; Luhmann, 1990). To van de Walle (2007), the expensive nature of vote-buying ensures politicians adopt clientelism, particularly in situations in which minimum incentive is sufficient to secure votes. Through this, political parties gain informal power over the electorates though it is the latter that judges the competence and the credibility of political parties (Kusche, 2014).

Through regular elections, citizens hold formal power over political candidates (patrons) while politicians through power differentials wield control over the public which culminates in perverse accountability (Stokes, 2007). Albright (2010) notes that the domineering search for policy proposals and promises made to voters by political parties is to attract large groups to the party.

Clientelism as an important electoral strategy ensures part advantage at the ballot box, particularly opposition parties which make attractive promises more than they could offer (Holzner, 2010). According to Kusche (2014), although clients have the formal power to punish politicians, clientelistic promises by patrons counteract such public powers. Another assumption as

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highlighted by scholars including Shefner (2012) is that clients who offer their vote, and additional blocs of votes gain higher informal influence over administrative decision-making, whilst citizens who avoid clientelistic ties have the least influence (and are worse-off).

Political clientelism highlights the contemporary reciprocity, patronage and exchange relationship as entrenched within democratic states and dominantly African democratic states. Clientelism ensures to a limited extent the redistribution of social welfare and state goods. This is supported by Hicken's (2011) argument that such a system (political) is preferable to an alternative state which provides lesser benefits to citizens (dominantly the poor) which alleviates the dominant perception of clientelism as a bad bargain. Apart from Hicken's (2011) argument, Roniger (2004) also informs that clientelism is plausible to the extent that it eliminates concerning economies of scale and loss of efficiency, as it sees the improvement in the calibrated outcomes more suitable to local conditions and needs such as cash and foodstuffs for clients. To Roniger (2004), political clientelism improves specialisation.

However, Kusche's (2014) view that clientelistic promises by patrons counteract the formal public power of clients to punish politicians (patrons) is only partially true. Perhaps such an assertion has overlooked the vibrant agency of political vigilante groups to switch loyalty to the opposition party, a feature Gyampo et al. (2018) classify as "crossing the carpet". This argument is based on the fact that when such groups switch loyalty from one party to the other, they take along extra supporters recruited through their very own effort, to join their new party.

The theory is critiqued on the fact that there is an underpinning assumption dominated by negativity, corruption and restriction to democratic consolidation. This is supported by Hicken's (2011) argument that clientelism should not be approached from a uni-directional viewpoint as being an exploitative or predatory system. Hicken's (2011) argument is based on the fact that despite the dominant view of clientelism as a cause for impaired democratic consolidation and its potential to reverse standard accountability of patrons, clientelism at times ensures redistribution of social welfare, and improves calibration to local (constituency) needs.

An example is the apparatchiks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Russia who held positions of political responsibility, except for the higher ranks of management called nomenklatura (Tymiński, 2020). The political action committees which serve as a source of political party finances in the USA have a similar setup (Ban, 2018). Accordingly, political vigilantism has both positive and negative aspects, but the type that dominantly employs electoral violence as its main instrument seems to have a much domineering influence on the security of elections in Africa (Genyi, 2013; Ojo & Ademowo, 2015).

The clientelism theory is used to explain the existing relationship between non-elites who mainly constitute political vigilante groups and elites who constitute political patrons. On this note, vigilantes (clients) apportion their votes, and loyalty and influence other voters to support their affiliated political parties/patrons to secure (informal) influence through the electoral success of their patrons. This is to say that the youth, many of whom are discriminated against from the political sphere, attach themselves to powerful elites within the

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Ghanaian body politics to gain access to resources and benefits in exchange for their loyalty and votes. Therefore, to gain unfettered access to state resources, youth wings affiliated with political parties adopt all means necessary including the use of violence to ensure they secure power for their patrons through periodic elections.

Conceptual Review

Election

Election as a concept has been diversely defined by scholars depending on the perception of the author. Within the liberal democratic discourse, Schumpeter (1947) argues election creates room for people to either reject or accept persons expected to rule them. To Dahl (1973), election is a strategy to exert pressure on leaders for quality response (from leaders) regarding the needs of citizens. Specifically, Dahl (1973) aims to assert election to relatively improve the assumption of responsibility by governments to citizens, and the entrenchment of legitimacy among the populace.

Afolabi (2018) refers to an election as a process by which decisions made by voters (citizens) determine who or which group assumes formal office to exercise state powers. This definition considers existing alternatives from which voters express their ability to decide, and certify election as a process for the attainment of goals and the existence of a population. Genyi (2013) similarly considers elections as being principal to democratic order. An election is a critical means for the concretisation of philosophical fiction focusing on expression and sovereignty embedded in rights to participation and political choices (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015).

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An election is the institutionalised means through which registered state electorates elect political office representatives into different positions of governance at periodic times, free from all forms of violence, which is emblematic of the democratic development of that particular state. To vote is to make a "choice" between two (or more) things. Thereby should an individual's choice be physically, structurally or psychologically (directly or indirectly) impaired, restricted or influenced as to which particular candidate to either vote or not vote for, deny the voter's existential right to partake in self-government.

International principles expected of all democratic elections include universal suffrage, equal suffrage, secret ballot and free suffrage (IDEA, 2019). These principles make elections credible. Electoral actors have always contributed to the persistence of electoral security or insecurity. These actors include voters (citizens), observers, candidates, poll workers, the media, and the Election Management Board (EMB) of the state (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015; Tumin & Encheva, 2009).

For credible elections, the security of elections needs to be upheld. The security of elections and the credibility of elections are intertwined. Credible elections need to take into consideration entrenched election principles, and protection of electoral stakeholders, with an absence of fear and uncertainty or the destruction of registration data, campaign material, vote results, facilities and events during pre-elections, election and post-election periods. Contemporary challenges include electoral violence, inadequate funding, weak electoral systems, ineffective electoral procedures, inadequate electoral equipment and ballot papers, corruption and ultimately political vigilantism. Over the years, states have made reforms and improved the degree of inclusion

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of the security service in election matters. Moreover, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have made significant contributions through direct involvement, and financial and other forms of assistance to promote secure elections.

Security

An election is inevitably bound to the concept of security. Security as a concept is central to a wide range of issues around the globe (Hall, Timothy & Duval, 2004). Broadly, security is explained as diverse means devised to protect property and individuals from attacks, sabotage, arson, theft, and abuse of human rights. This connotes that the concept of security has diverse dimensions embedded within the fields of psychology, military matters and public safety (Afolabi, 2016). The scope of security is expanding and continuously conceptualised to fit evolving issues worldwide (Paris, 2001).

Security is conceptualised in both traditional (national security) and non-traditional (human security) sense within peace studies. Traditionally, Buzan (1991) describes security as a multidimensional and ambiguous concept that centres on a state's ability to preserve its position and independent identity against threats. In Haftendorn's (1991) view, security is the protection of the state against external attack or an absence of military forms of threat. This form of security focuses on the control, threat and use of military force (Miller; 2001). This is because the goal of this period was to defend and entrench national sovereignty.

On the contrary, the non-traditional perspective on security conceptualise security to encompass economic, social, environmental, personal, community, political, food and health security of the individual and property

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against such threats (Afolabi, 2016; Paris, 2001). Scholars who identify with human security take inspiration from the 1994 Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which made a major argument for human security (Paris, 2001). Security from the non-traditional perspective focuses on the human as the object of security, as opposed to the state being the object of security. Human security takes into consideration safety against habitual threats such as repression, hunger and diseases including protection from hurtful and sudden disruptions (Miller, 2001; Paris; 2001). Subsequently, contemporary definitions of security have seen a transcendence from traditional or human security restriction to the incorporation of both forms of security.

To that extent, Afolabi (2016) conceptualises security to be the presence of safety, peace and protection of physical and human resources with an absence of threats to human dignity with the express aim to facilitate progress and development. Crawford and Hutchinson (2015) in explaining security note that it is the routinised human and national security issues embedded within everyday practice. This explanation considers both national and human security. Security may therefore be explained as the routinised assured sanctity, integrity and safety practices embedded within day-to-day practices to entrench national and human security.

Security of elections

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2015) identify electoral security to encompass two distinct yet fundamental dimensions. IDEA (2015) conceptualise electoral security to be the ensuring of safety and protection of the integrity of electoral process and the

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security of individuals, in the promotion of political legitimacy. Electoral integrity draws on global norms of liberal democracy to establish values of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability within electoral procedures through the entire electoral cycle (Norris, 2014).

To IDEA (2015), the integrity and security of the electoral process encompass a restriction of interference in counting, polling, ballot material and results compilation. Security of elections entrenches electoral integrity and domestic electoral laws against fraudulent malpractice which compromises the integrity of elections (Norris, 2014). The second component (personal security) of electoral security by IDEA (2015) focuses on the protection of the property and physical safety of all stakeholders involved in campaign processes, political party officials and activists and electoral officials. Electoral security by definition is freedom from threat and danger which promote a safe environment for individual rights to freely thrive.

Creative Associates International [CAI] (2010) posit electoral security to be the process of guiding electoral information such as registration data, vote results and campaign material; electoral stakeholders such as poll worker, candidates, voters, observers and media; electoral events such as campaign rallies; and electoral facilities such as counting centres and polling stations against damage, disruption or death. CAI (2010) notes further that there are four main kinds of electoral security which include physical security encompassing protection material and facilities; personal security of electoral stakeholders; information security encompassing sensitive election materials, communication systems and computers; and electoral events. These kinds of electoral elements have to be protected, with safety assured.

On this note, electoral security aims to ensure the safety of the electoral process influenced by elections being a cornerstone of dynamic social interaction and peace-building process (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015). The establishment of elections as an institution rather than an event affirms election to be a year-round process consisting of pre-election, election and post-election periods, which can be impacted at any point in time (Ojo & Ademowo, 2015). The election process has thereby become more accepted as routinised within day-to-day practices.

Political Vigilantism

Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) define vigilante politics as coordinated efforts beyond legal channels used to eradicate or suppress threats to the existing status quo. This informs vigilantes to unlawfully execute powers rightfully owned by another. Undeniably, Rosenbaum and Sederberg's (1974) opinion is depicted by Tankebe's (2019) definition of vigilantism as the personal assumption of law (power) by groups and individuals through the use of violence for the protection of a version of social order against threats emanating from others.

Kyei (2020) conceptualises it to be the actions sympathisers or members of political parties engage in to contribute to the total development of the nation through contributions made to their political parties either through the use of violence, force or otherwise. Kyei (2020) based his definition on the argument that political vigilantes contribute to democratic peace and stability. Tankebe (2019) explains political vigilantism as the self-adoption of law by people in furtherance of partisan political agenda. This ropes in Tankebe's (2019) opinion of vigilantism to involve the ever-present adoption of power against others in

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pursuit of interests, suggesting that political vigilantism affect voters and influence politics during the pre-election, election and post-election periods.

In this regard, a political vigilante group is synonymous with groups designated as political militias across many parts of Africa. A political militia is defined as a young man deployed after recruitment, and training and is armed by politicians to render systematically organised and planned violence in periodic elections (Genyi, 2013). Thus, members of the public who seem dissatisfied with the government or how the state is being operated constitute political vigilante groups. Some vigilantes view their actions as the most important civic duty which is to protect a voter's right to vote. Political vigilantism either positively or negatively affects the security of elections. Often, however, political vigilantism tends to be flagrantly undemocratic yet so pernicious and insidious is the fact that this operation pretends to preserve the democratic government it undermines - a facade of democracy. Political vigilantism determines the rate at which some citizens perform their civic duty thus exercising their right to vote.

Drivers of Political Vigilantism

The drivers of political vigilantism are numerous. Scholars have argued and listed diverse drivers for political vigilantism. Scholars (Genyi, 2013; Impraim, 2020; Paalo, 2017) have made claims that structural factors are entirely responsible for the formation of political vigilante groups and the subsequent adoption of violence by such groups. These factors include a high unemployment rate, the compromised neutrality of the Electoral Commission (EC), illegitimate electoral systems, weak institutions, lack of trust in the security agencies, inadequate provision of security personnel to political parties

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and selective judgement by other independent organisations about electoral processes instigate the formation of political party vigilante groups (Coalition of Domestic Election Observers [CODEO agency], 2017; Genyi, 2013). Paalo (2017) assert that structural arrangements (some of which are deliberate) restrict the manifestation of agency and the ability of the youth to attain visible strategic positions in the state.

However, it is becoming increasingly apparent to investigate the agency influences (personal motivations) for the formation and use of violence by political vigilantes to determine the role of the interaction of structure and agency in the ongoing execution of political vigilantism. This is because agency (personal motivations) seems ever-present in the actions of political vigilantes. Through their actions, these vigilantes express their capacity to assess issues and respond consciously beyond the restrictive orders, norms and structures of their political environment. This often sees vigilantes strategically using violence to impose their will on electorates and tame the choices of these electorates. At times, vigilante agency is depicted by the "crossing the carpet" feature in politics where political vigilantes switch loyalties from one political party to the other usually for self-benefit (Gyampo et al., 2018). On this note, political vigilantism has both structural and agency influences.

Political Vigilantism and Election Violence

Electoral violence as connected to electoral security can derail democratic consolidation (CAI, 2010). Straus and Taylor (2009) equate electoral violence to coercive intimidation and physical violence performed with the intent to impede the announcement of electoral results or competitive the electoral contests. This incorporates the idea that the main aim of electoral

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violence is to influence electorates and restrict the ruling pattern of electoral process. This classifies election violence as adopted by vigilantes, to be a deliberate and strategic act executed to attain some form of objective, many of which are of personal benefit to the persons who perpetrate such acts.

Fisher's (2002) definition though broad, specifies election violence entail any organised or random act which aims to delay, determine or influence the processes of an election through hate speeches, threat, blackmail, verbal intimidation, physical assault, disinformation, blackmail, destruction of property, forced protection or assassination. It is interesting to note that the desire and timing of violence in elections is the exceptional differentiating feature for election violence (Genyi, 2013) yet, the aim of the perpetrators which is often to influence election outcomes cannot be underplayed. This is because though the period in which the violence occurs is key, the institutionalisation of election has seen elections transcending pre-election, election and post-election periods and therefore the aim of those perpetrating the violence becomes an essential element in determining election violence. This is a feature critical to this research.

Political vigilantism has been a contentious issue in Ghanaian politics since Nkrumah and his "Veranda Boys" fought for and helped secure Ghanaian independence (Gyampo, 2010). Since then, numerous acts of violence have repeated themselves within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and in contemporary Ghanaian politics. Electoral violence in contemporary Ghanaian politics dominantly emanates from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) caucuses. These groups designated as political vigilante groups perpetuate vile acts including unlawful and forceful seizure of public

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and private property among others. These acts which are often executed by vigilantes to shape the outcome of elections as they wish it (to their benefit), mostly take violent forms which tend to promote fear, culminate into the destruction of properties and at times lead to deaths thereby negatively affecting human and national security.

Specifically, this views the situation where vigilante groups resort to illegal acts ranging from the forceful ejection of state officials from their apartments, confiscation of state property, physical assault, destruction of voting materials, snatching of ballot boxes, vandalisation of state properties, constant protests and public disturbance which tends to become recipes for not just democratic relapse but also a recipe for the reciprocity of violence (Bob-Milliar, 2014; Gyampo et al., 2018) between political parties and innocent citizens. For instance, some constituencies including New Edubiase in the Ashanti Region, and Mion and Tolon in the Northern Region have witnessed the stealing and burning of ballot boxes by NPP and the NDC vigilantes (Gyampo, 2010).

The illegal acts of vigilantes which could mainly be achieved through the adoption of violence indicate the intertwined nature of vigilantes and election violence (Bob-Milliar, 2014). This is amply supported by Bob-Milliar (2014) who asserts that the use of party foot soldiers has led to high-intensity electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Kenya. This usually comes about as a result of clashes between dominant political parties. The frequency of these clashes tends to destabilise the country (Gyampo et al., 2018). Indeed, political vigilantism as known in Ghana is a major cause of

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election violence and therefore the phenomenon is inseparable from election violence (Impraim, 2020).

Regulating Political Vigilantism

A number of states (Zimbabwe, Kenya and Nigeria) have adopted diverse mechanisms including a reformation of electoral processes, electoral reform panels, provision and use of election petition tribunals, formulation and implementation of formal laws, and the adoption of systems of power brokerage among parties (Asamoah, 2019; Kyei, 2020; Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009). Regardless, Omotola (2010) has indicated the inefficiency of some of these measures to achieve their purpose by eradicating political vigilantism.

The attempt to regulate political vigilantism or end it has been a long yet unsuccessful one. The Election Management Board (EMB) since 1996 has tried to mitigate election violence, a known element promoted by political vigilantes, by ensuring the observance of the election laws of 1996 which guide elections. The Public elections regulations (C.I. 15) make provisions against the use of violence, abductions, force and undue influences on electoral proceedings through its prescription of adjournment of election processes by presiding election officers, and the imprisonment of not more than two years or a fine of not more than one million cedis to be charged to offenders (Public Elections Regulations, C.I.15, 1996).

In an attempt to directly tackle political vigilantism in recent years, the Emile Short Commission conducted an inquiry into the violence which happened during the Ayawaso by-elections in 2019. Though some of the recommendations made by the Commission were rejected by the NPP government, it nevertheless formed the bases for the enactment of the

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Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act. The Act formally prohibited all forms of vigilantism and made provision for non-compliance (Amoh, 2020; Republic of Ghana, August, 2019). Since the enactment of the Act 999, its implementation and enforcement have been relatively less efficient.

Security agencies have attempted to enforce laws including the Criminal Codes of Ghana, electoral regulations and the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act (Act 999) yet due to issues of lack of trust in security institutions and political interferences among others, the realisation of the capacity of recent regulations in curbing political vigilantism is yet to be seen.

It is important to note that there have been concerted efforts by CSOs in Ghana such as CODEO agency, Christian Council, allied groups and Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Gh) to prevent and end election violence through various activities such as observer missions and direct engagements, education and sensitisation of the masses against violence. This protects and disabuses the minds of voters from assumptions and accusations drawn by political parties on alleged covert attempts of state institutions such as the EMB to align with particular political parties.

Furthermore, the National Peace Council (NPC) has engaged political parties in an attempt to end political vigilantism in Ghana. The implementation of the National Peace Council (NPC) Act 818 in 2011 has aimed to ensure commitment to peace goals between the two main political parties (the NPP and NDC) through its facilitation of stakeholder dialogues among other attempts to end political vigilantism (Amoh, 2020). This culminated in the signing of the Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism to maintain security and peace in Ghana.

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This roadmap includes principles and norms aimed at eliminating political vigilantism in Ghana (Amoh, 2020). This brought on board relevant stakeholders including the major political parties, security agencies, religious bodies and CSOs in an attempt to end the phenomenon (Amoh, 2020). Major parties accepted to disband vigilante groups, desist from engaging the services these groups render and ensure the complete eradication of the phenomenon through consolidated efforts with other formal (such as the Police Service) and informal organisations. Regardless, many of these attempts to make adjustments to deviant political behaviours and hopefully end political vigilantism have proved relatively inefficient and ineffective against their designated tasks. Most importantly, the failure of regulations to effectively curb political vigilantism due to certain issues (such as the state ceding grounds for such action) creates a thriving environment for the phenomenon and renders some form of informal support to the venture thereby affecting the state's electoral processes and security of elections.

Empirical Review

Political vigilantism is becoming an entrenched feature within African politics. Political vigilantism affects the vital role of credible elections, and the broader democratic process since it tends to dominantly employ electoral violence which ensures the annihilation of the legitimacy of the election or its declared results. Liberal democratic states dominantly on the African continent experience political vigilantism which can either entrench or derail peace and development. The subsequent paragraph reviews the empirical literature on the phenomenon.

Paalo (2017) explored political party youth wings and political violence within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) using a qualitative approach to confirm the potential of political youth wings to penetrate the main political system. The author affirmed the agency (breakthrough and exploitation of structural deficiencies) and structure juxtaposition of political youth groups vis-à-vis political vigilante groups. The study showed that patronage systems, winner-takes-all syndrome, when complemented by non-transparent electoral processes culminate into violent clashes among the youth. This affirms the structural beliefs of the researcher however downplays the agency influences of these youth groups.

Most of these structural issues align with the assertions of scholars including Attuquayefio and Darkwa (2017) and Ojo and Ademowo's (2015) who in their contribution to the structural argument highlight issues of elite manipulation of political violence and rancour behind the scene, weak institutional framework, the complicity of law enforcement agencies and inadequate punitive measures which ensure electoral insecurity thrives.

A review of the article, "I Didn't Want to Die So I Joined Them'': Structuration and the Process of Becoming Boy Soldiers in Sierra Leone", by Maclure and Denov (2006) depicts the rise of child soldiers as resulting from the juxtaposition between structural forces and individual agency. Maclure and Denov (2006) research employed a qualitative approach that examined the circumstances and implications of life histories with a purposive sample of thirty-six boys who were members of an armed group. They conducted a series of semi-structured interviews which were phenomenologically analysed.

This research identified the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) as an extension of the politically opportunistic and violent structures that it opposed through its (RUFs) militarised and absolutist patron-client social system. The system was also influenced by inherent ethos through which they (RUFs) dominate or destroy everything that stood in their way. Maclure and Denov (2006) recognise the domineering existing structures of society, particularly "structures of predatory commerce" including hallucinatory drugs. Consequently, they note that regardless of the awareness of RUF child soldiers on their infliction of misery, there was a feeling of pride, power and satisfaction expressed among some (RUFs) during maiming and killings. The study agrees with Machel's (2006) caution against ignoring the agency of the youth who exercise a degree of personal autonomy. This informs the presence of vibrant agency of the RUF child soldiers and by extension, political vigilante groups. Though Maclure and Denov's (2006) research focused on child militia in Sierra Leone, it is undoubtedly relevant to the current research that focuses on political vigilante groups and the structure and agency influences for their formation and adoption of violence. This is due to the similarity in the organisation and use of violence by both political vigilantes and RUF child militia.

Kyei and Berckmoes (2020) explore the role of political vigilantes in democratic state-building using a qualitative approach particularly focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews. They viewed vigilantes more as political sympathisers who aimed to improve access to resources through negotiation and at times force. They found that per the various group formations, these groups have structures, sanctions, closely-knitted ties and hierarchies to which members must adhere or risk dismissal. They conclude that

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vigilante groups contribute to democratic governance though they occasionally resort to violence. Similarly, Kyei (2020) holds that existing literature appear to have not paid attention to the constructive roles of vigilantes in society. He unequivocally posits political vigilantism to contribute to democratic peace and stability in Ghana, which goes contrary to popular findings of numerous researchers in the field including Asamoah (2019), Bob-Milliar (2014) and Gyampo et al. (2018) who attest to the fact that political vigilantism is a canker which needs to be eradicated from Ghanaian politics.

Asamoah (2019) explore Ghana's political vigilantism with focuses on myriad drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana's Fourth Republic. This research employed a qualitative approach to argue that the literature fails to explore the contemporary drivers of political vigilantism, and further makes an argument for structural drivers of political vigilantism. He concludes that though efforts have been made by the government to end political vigilantism in recent years (such as Act 999), it remains inadequate.

Similar to studies conducted on political vigilantism including that of CODEO agency (2017) and Olaiya (2014), the drivers of political vigilantism as indicated by Asamoah (2019) has immense negative connotations and effects on states despite its constructive roles.

Bob-Milliar (2014) compiled data on party youth activists and low-intensity electoral violence in Ghana. This research adopted ethnographic observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Fifty party activists, ten executives of main political parties, and ten Members of Parliament were purposively sampled. This research adopted the theory of political violence to argue that the clientelistic environment of Ghana ensures political parties

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mobilise the youth to commit electoral fraud to secure or maintain control over state resources. Bob-Milliar (2014) specifically reveals that the winner-takes-all system, partisan politics and structural reasons contribute to low-intensity electoral violence.

Gyampo et al. (2018) in examining political vigilantism and democratic governance identify the patronage element to be a mediating factor between political patrons and political violence by the youth. He used a qualitative approach to emphasise the feature – "crossing the carpet" whereby political vigilantes switch loyalties to either join the opposition party or restrict the efforts of opposition political parties to secure power through elections. The failure of political parties (including incumbent governments) to fulfil the needs and promises made to political vigilantes consequently informs the agency of political vigilantes to adopt violence against their affiliated parties. They further contend that vigilantes contribute to electoral victory and defeat of their parties.

This however contradicts the qualitative study conducted by Olaiya (2014) who asserted that the agency feature is an upcoming feature within the African political context due to the highly restricted nature of youth agency by the domineering structures of society. In his paper, Olaiya (2014) notes that the marginalised youth population are predisposed to unscrupulous roles as foot soldiers of political parties which indicates some level of agency embedded within their operations.

While the current research accepts the existing agency of the youth in the perpetuation of violence, the research diverts from the consideration of youth agency as weak or insignificant, especially within the Ghanaian context. Further, Gyampo et al. (2018) focus on the broader democratic processes,

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however, the current research focuses on the security of elections - a specific element of the broader democratic process and its capacity to derail or entrench security, peace and development.

Using desktop review and content analysis Ijon (2020) provides a comprehensive analysis of Talensi and Ayawaso by-elections. Ijon (2020) noted that the use of violence ensures that the incumbent government secures power through elections. He implies that violence as used by the vigilante breeds an atmosphere of insecurity, weakens democratic foundation, culminate in low voter turnout and ultimately disrupts democratic maturity. Impraim's (2020) study establishes that such actions influence the margin of victory between the winning political party and opposition parties, affect voter turnout and significantly influence the outcome of by-elections. However, like other scholars (Impraim, 2020; Ojo & Ademowo, 2015), Ijon (2020) does not make a nuanced analysis or explain the association between election and election security as the current research aims to do.

Genyi's (2013) desktop analysis of relevant cases in Nigeria reveals that electoral violence ensures the impossibility of free and fair elections which concurs with CODEO agency's (2017) assertion that both large and small political parties have their political vigilante groups. Regardless, literature (Asamoah, 2019; Gyampo et al., 2018; Paalo, 2017) on political vigilantism fails to list any particular political vigilante group(s) affiliated to any other political party aside those affiliated to the dominant political parties (the NDC and NPP) in Ghana. Genyi's (2013) research partially deviates from the current research since it draws attention to the intertwined nature of militia gangs and electoral violence, absent the relationship between political militias on the

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security of elections. Genyi's (2013) assertion that electoral violence is used as a mechanism by political parties through political youth wings to secure political victory supports similar views made by other scholars (Attuquayefio & Darkwa, 2017; Tankebe, 2019).

How vigilantes adopt violence in their operations creates an atmosphere of insecurity vis-à-vis the insecurity of elections. Amongst the recommendations made by Genyi (2013), he advises members of youth militia to ask themselves some important questions about the dominant reliance of patrons on the offspring of downtrodden citizens absent recruitment of their (political elites) own children into militia groups. A major underlying fact for such a recommendation would be the consideration of the vibrant agency of militia group members.

The United States Agency for International Development [USAID] (2013) provides a global overview of the best practices for electoral security. The USAID (2013) recognises that electoral security could be affected during the pre-election, election and post-election phases. The USAID (2013) indicates the tendency for conflict to compromise the integrity of elections. Particularly they highlight voter turn-out, candidate selection, the accuracy in the announcement of results and electoral violence, both direct and indirect, as elements which threaten the security of elections.

Further, arguments drawn by the USAID (2013) about the critical nature of security in elections is supported by Root, Kennedy, Sozan and Parshall (2018) who concur that the security of elections, in general, strengthens the faith in electoral outcomes as genuine and ensure the proper functioning of democracy. Again, though not highlighted by the USAID (2013), it however,

draws on the fact that electoral security encompasses personal and physical security, electoral events and information security, as earlier noted by the USAID (2010).

However, studies by USAID (2013) fails to consider the influences of political vigilantes on the security of elections. More importantly, election security as viewed by USAID (2013), fail to specifically focus on the implications of electoral violence on the security of elections.

The National Peace Council's (NPC) (2019) Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana aimed to use informal regulations in ending political vigilantism by facilitating the use of dialogue and making recommendations to political parties and national institutions. The Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana recognises the existence of political vigilantes and recommends for joint effort towards the disbandment of vigilante groups, a prohibition on the reliance of vigilante groups by political parties, and ensuring the total eradication of vigilantism through stakeholder and state agency cooperation. Similar to the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act (Act 999) by the Republic of Ghana (August, 2019), the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana also viewed vigilantism as a canker within Ghanaian politics yet does not consider the efforts of the ordinary citizens in the resolution and eradication process. Again, though the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act, and the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana targeted vigilantism, the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act is a formal state regulation which prescribed severe sanctions such as imprisonment while the latter is more of an informal regulation against vigilantism.

The Emile Short Commission Report (2019) inquired into the Ayawaso by-election shootout and made recommendations based on its findings. Specifically, the recommendations of the Commission influenced government policy in drafting the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act which is a formal regulation and the Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism by the informal sector, both of which targeted political vigilantism. The inquisition by the Short Commission focused on state security agents, ministers of state and other state officials with less focus on the residents of the area.

The findings depicted that state institutions are inherently dysfunctional with inter-agency functions intertwined and unclearly defined thereby creating issues of ineffective control. However, the state and the ruling government debunked and contradicted a significant number of findings of the Short Commission which was meant to investigate the violence which took place at Ayawaso. Critical to this issue is the assertion of the Government White Paper (Republic of Ghana, September, 2019) that the report lacked bases for some conclusions, the allegation that some evidence was given low consideration (see section 2.10 of the Government's White Paper) and the identification of the general state security architecture to be devoid of inconsistencies, rendering a restructure irrelevant. Again, the Government of Ghana (2019) rejected the word "militia", a term adopted by the Short Commission to highlight the intense illegal and disastrous nature of political vigilantism. To a degree, the refusal of the incumbent NPP government to consider the designation "militia" downplays the disastrous capacities of the vigilante and therefore the implementation of laws and policies against such persons. The entrenched positions taken between

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state institutions lead to distrust of state structures and policies. This has led to persisting suspicion against the implementation of Act 999 by the incumbent NPP government.

In a similar vein, the Government of Ghana (2019) rejected assertions that the operations of masked state officials negatively affect national security and for that matter influenced the policy against the phenomenon. This however contradicts reports by CODEO agency (2019) and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) (2019) which supports foul play during the by-election. This study, contrary to the Emile Short Commission Report (2019), Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act (Republic of Ghana, August, 2019) and the Government White Paper (Republic of Ghana, September, 2019) attempts to assess the capacity of these regulations to control political vigilantism which the above-listed report, Act and paper do not assess.

The summary constitutes the findings, author, data collection instrument, year of publication, sampling procedure, issue of study, study population, research approach and study location. The review highlight gaps in the literature pertaining to political vigilantism and the security of election.

The review revealed that there are numerous factors which become motivations for the formation and actions of political vigilante groups. Such factors are broadly categorised into structural and individual motivations. Again, a grey area in earlier studies on political vigilantism focused solely on structural drivers for the formation of political vigilante groups, absent focus on individual motivations. Further, fewer empirics (if any) have centred on political vigilantism and the security of elections; in most cases, studies have

focused on political vigilantism and democratic consolidation, rule of law or election violence.

Regulations including the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act and Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism are tailored in an attempt to mitigate political vigilantism however, studies are yet to be conducted on its capacity to curb vigilantism in Ghana. In addition, perceived inequalities in the application of rule of law as asserted by Dumenu and Armah-Attoh (2018) makes uncertain the realisation of the full capacity of these regulations in curtailing political vigilantism in Ghana.

In effect, Asamoah (2019) notes that recent efforts of the Ghanaian government remain inadequate. On this note, contradictions and opposing interests of incumbent political parties and opposition parties render it susceptible to failure. There are many contradictions as to what the incumbent NPP government considers political vigilantism and those outlined by the Emile Short Commission Report (2019) which served as the bases for the regulations. Furthermore, the agency for political vigilantes is a grey area yet to be clarified. Except for Maclure and Denov (2006) whose study focused on agency and structural motivations (among the RUF), the dominant literature entirely declares structures as solely responsible for the perpetration of violence among political youth wings vis-à-vis political vigilante groups. This emphasises that little attention has been paid to agency motivations for political vigilantism.

In Ghana, studies reviewed revealed that a dominant number of studies conducted on political vigilantism neglected political vigilantes as respondents. Most studies reviewed focused on desktop reviews (analysis). Studies on Ghanaian political vigilantism are rooted in the works of political scientists like

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Asamoah (2019), Bob-Milliar (2014), Gyampo et al. (2018), Ijon (2020), Impraim (2020) and criminologists including Tankebe (2019). Thus, none have assessed the capacity of regulations, particularly the new law (Act 999) in curbing political vigilantism in Ghana.

Lessons Learnt

From the various empirical studies that were reviewed, qualitative research approaches and desktop reviews were used. Desktop reviews (secondary data) were mostly used particularly in cases where documentary sources were readily available on the issues being researched. These extensive reviews are partially influenced by the fact that political vigilantes are not readily accessible (are hidden). Some researchers have adopted participant observation in the collection of data. Others adopt ethnographic observation and (semi-structured) in-depth interviews. However, few have adopted primary data collection methods.

The review made it clear that a dominant number of studies employed a qualitative research approach. This is mainly due to the phenomenon being an upcoming feature in African politics and literature, and the attempt to gain in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon. A further review depicted that respondents were purposefully selected among the dominant number of primary studies conducted on political vigilantism. Purposive sampling method was often adopted and applied in selecting the dominant perpetrators of electoral violence (political vigilantes), executives of major parties, and Members of Parliament.

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The major data collection instrument employed for the studies include a (semi-structured) interview guide and focus group interview. This aided in the collection of data from non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries. Narrative analysis was used to analyse studies which adopted a qualitative research approach. These analytical procedures were used to establish links between political vigilantism and other variables including rule of law, democratic consolidation and election among others.

Conceptual Framework for Political Vigilantism and the Security of Election

The conceptual framework synthesises major variables that underpin the study (Figure 1). It can be established from the figure that political vigilantism is linked to the security of elections. The nexuses suggest that the interaction between structural and agency motivations drives political vigilantism. Structural factors influence motivation and action and vice versa. Political vigilantism is driven by the much broader societal structures and the personal motivations of the individual to assess issues, make informed decisions and act.

The section indicates the interaction between agency and structural motivations of political vigilantism. The structural issues include the winner-takes-all, inadequate provision of security personnel, high rate of unemployment and political influence among others. These pressures from social structures interact with the individual's motivations to culminate in the formation of political vigilante groups and their use of violence.

Peaceful Elections
- Right to life
- Guaranteed freedom to vote
- Freedom from fear
- Secured electoral materials and events
- Ensured security for electoral stakeholders

Formal and Informal Regulations against Political Vigilantism
- Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act (Act 999)
- Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana
- Action by Civil Society, Academia, Press, NCCE

Outcomes of Political Vigilante Groups
- Violence outcomes
  - ✓ Destruction of Electoral materials/Events
  - ✓ Attack on electoral stakeholders
- Non-violent outcomes
  - ✓ Prevention of individuals from electoral violence

Formation of Political Vigilante Groups
- Recruitment of Vulnerable youths
- Patron vs client relation
- Illegal security agency

Structural Motivations
- High unemployment
- Winner-takes-all syndrome (WTA)
- Mistrust and suspicion
- Poor state institutions
- Greedy politicians

Agency Motivations
- Self-interest
- Prestige, power, influence and personal control
- Love for Party
- Support mobilization
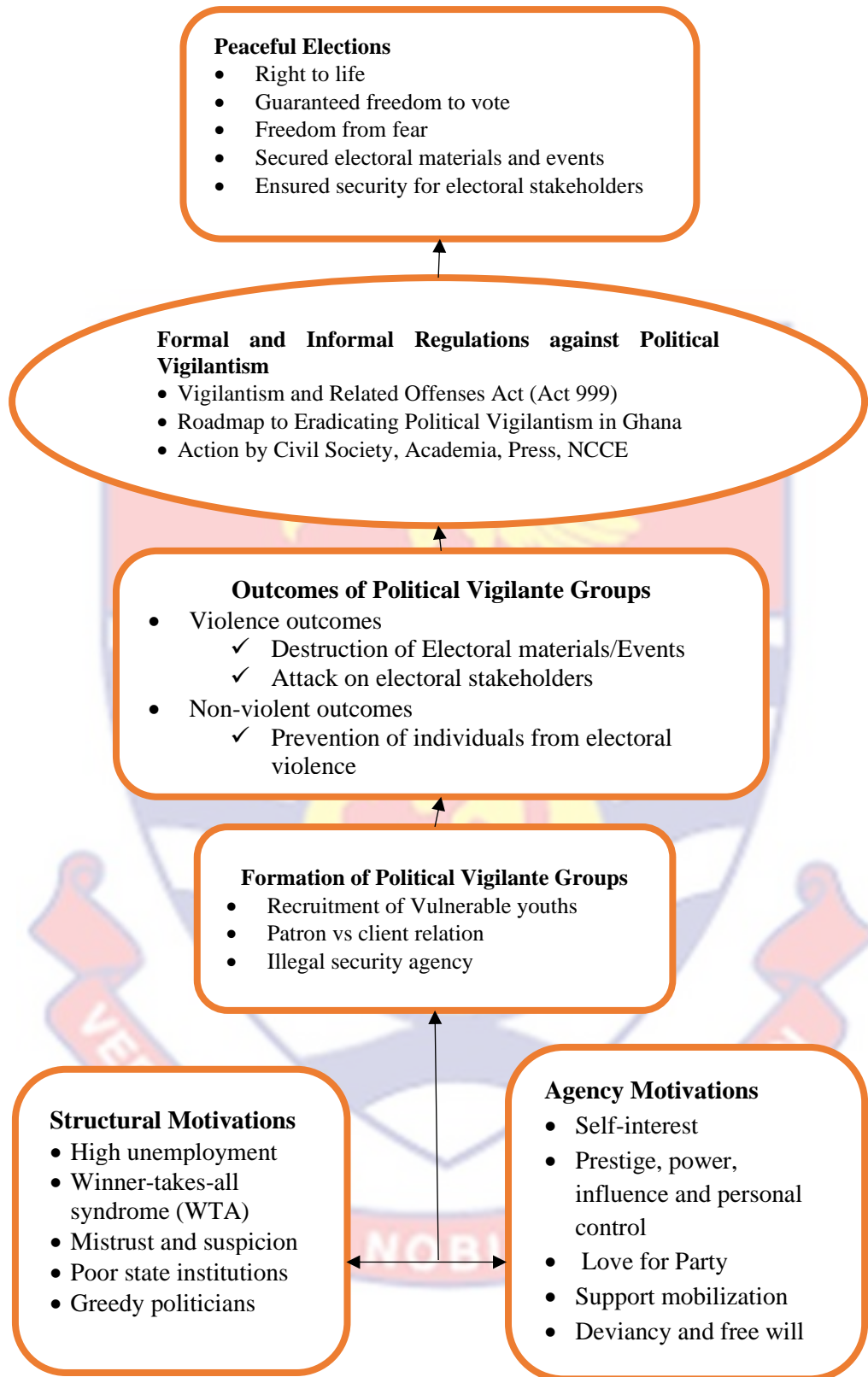- Deviancy and free will

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Political Vigilantism and the Security of Election

Source: Author's Construct based on Literature Reviewed (2020)

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Motivations such as the deviant behaviour and personal agendas of these individuals interact with structural pressures to determine the susceptibility of the individual to the formation or recruitment into political vigilante groups. Subsequently, this influences the use of violence by these individuals. Regarding violence by political vigilantes, it is inferred that structural influences interact with the agency drivers of vigilantes to instigate violence. Structural issues influence the voluntary perpetration of violence by vigilantes as much as their (vigilante) deviant behaviours influence structures. It is as a result of the formation of political vigilante groups that these groups perpetuate violence. Political vigilantism however is mediated by regulations (both formal and informal).

The formation of political vigilante groups and the subsequent adoption of violence are influenced by formal and informal regulations with the tendency to control the phenomenon. Failure of existing regulations to serve as an effective control mechanism in curbing electoral violence, intimidation and political vigilantism creates an informal gap within state structures for vigilantes to easily adopt violence as a viable operation strategy. This ensures that vigilantes capable of assessing their political environment and with prior knowledge of existing deficiencies in state structures are emboldened to perpetuate vigilantism. On the contrary, prior knowledge and understanding of the effective enforcement of existing regulations by the state could sensitise vigilantes to desist from such acts. The effectiveness of existing regulations against political vigilantism determines the extent to which security, peace and development are affected.

This affects the security of election which inevitably affect peace and development, through either entrenchment or derailment. Particularly, political vigilantism which is marked by intimidation and violence obstructs some voters from freely participating in the democratic government of the day through elections conducted. This affects the security of elections which is tied to the individual's freedom to vote, have confidence in election results and express their free will in periodic and fair elections. Insecure elections could instigate violent protests and mass violence which eradicates peace, ensure the destruction of offices and properties and result in loss of human and financial capital, both by the state and the individual within the state.

Summary

The chapter gives an overview of the theoretical results in subsequent chapters. Merging the study into conceptual and theoretical discussions creates a better understanding of previous studies through the identification of gaps in the literature and the objectives issued in the study. Literature on political vigilantism is mainly skewed towards structural renditions with inadequate attention to the role of agency in political vigilantism. This creates gaps in unique issues and highlights an urgency for further in-depth analysis (particularly on the individual motivations) and study of the phenomenon. The immediate subsequent chapter examines the methodologies adopted in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology, with a focus on the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques and procedures, sources of data, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as ethical considerations employed for the study. Accordingly, the chapter elaborates on the research methods adopted, and the tools and approach employed to analyse data for the research questions.

Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. This study aligns itself with the interpretative paradigm that tends to articulate choices, and focus on meaning-making and conceptuality within the social context (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2011). The research focused on the experiences of political vigilantes before and after their incorporation into such groups into gain insights on the drivers of political vigilantism, particularly the agency and the structural factors. The researcher adopts a qualitative approach to understand the susceptibility of persons who later became vigilantes to later perpetrate violence. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of how political vigilantism affects the security of elections and further establish the effective capabilities of existing regulations in curbing the phenomenon.

Ultimately, the essence of the use of qualitative study aimed to discern why individuals, mostly vigilantes, behave the way they do and the influences social structures have on them. This research method highlights the perspectives of the participants including security personnel among others while describing

the worldviews of the vigilantes. This aimed to ensure that the subjective experiences of the participants are factored into the conclusions drawn from the study.

The research further uses an interpretative study design specifically to ensure a nuanced understanding and knowledge of the topic (Kothari, 2004; Sarantakos, 1997). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) maintain that interpretative research is flexible and adaptable to change. The interpretative study is undertaken to advance problems from a preliminary stage of study for better understanding and determining the best methods for future studies (Creswell, 1994). The interpretative research design was used to explain the association between political vigilantism and the security of elections. This aims to ensure a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon despite the dearth of studies to that effect.

Study Area

Odododiodio constituency

Geographically, Odododiodio constituency is located within the Greater Accra Region with its administrative and political affairs overseen by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). Odododiodio constituency stretches from James Town through Ring Road then to Graphic Road, sharing boundaries with Ablekuma Central, Korle Klottey and Ablekuma South constituencies (Figure 2). Main communities within the constituency comprised James Town (British Accra), Old Fadama, Arena, Timber Market, Bukom, Palladium and Adedenkpo, with its district being Ashiedu Keteke which houses seven electoral areas consisting of Mudor, Ngleshie, Kinka, Korle Didon, Nmlitsagonno, Amamomo and Kika (AMA, 2020).

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Within the Accra metropolis, Odododiodio constituency has a population of 165,282 (projected using AMA growth rate of 3.1) (AMA, 2021). The population comprises mainly Gas, and houses major markets such as agbogbloshie which has made it an attractive centre for the migration of numerous non-Ga speakers to the area (Fridy, 2007). The area attracts diverse people, particularly to its coastal areas which serve as a hub for tourism.

There are 33,367 certified polling stations in Ghana out of which Odododiodio constituency has 258. Odododiodio Constituency has a voter population of 99,726 within the Greater Accra region (Electoral Commission of Ghana [EC], 2016). Voters within the constituency have often strongly expressed support for the NDC and its candidates (Agyemang, 2013; Fridy, 2007). This is evident from the performance of the NDC against the NPP within Odododiodio constituency (Impraim, 2020). From 1992 to 2020, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has won the by-election, parliamentary and presidential elections within the area (Impraim, 2020).

The area has experienced numerous electoral violence during by-election, parliamentary elections, and presidential electoral processes (Friday, 2020; Kendie et al., 2016). This has culminated in Odododiodio constituency being designated as a flashpoint for electoral violence within the Greater Accra region and has therefore seen its by-election and presidential election being violent (Kendie et al., 2016). This has culminated in the area being designated as a hotspot for electoral violence by the Ghana Police Service (GPS) and the Electoral Commission of Ghana. The people within the area express a strong interest in politics which has often ended in violence (Kendie et al., 2016) including the recent 2020 general election.
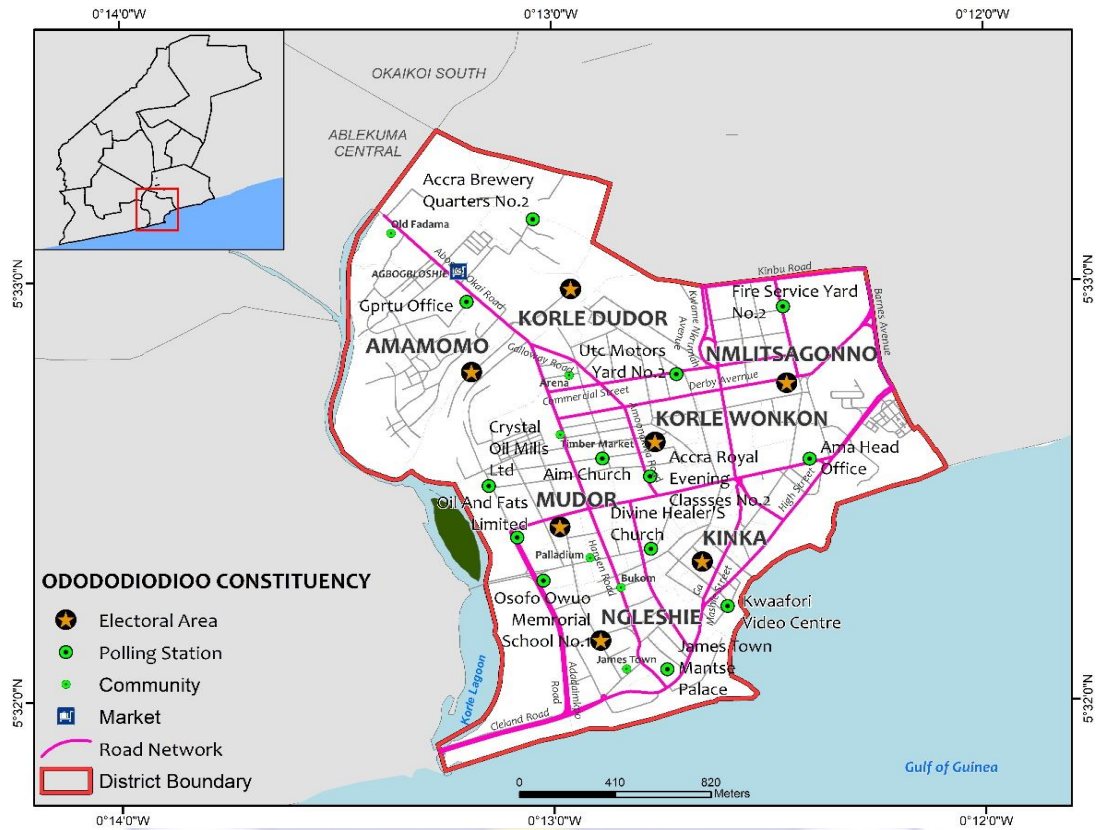
Figure 2: Map of Odododiodio Constituency

Source: Accra Metropolitan Assembly (2017)

These have been characterised by a situation where political leaders utilised their well-built masculine bodyguards who are known as macho men to intimidate individuals who are seen to be their rivals during decisions (Impraim, 2020). As observed by Paller (2017), the constituency is constantly tormented by political party-based violence that undermines the harmony, security and soundness of the area and the nation as a whole. Albeit these spates of violence are confined to the Odododiodio constituency, they are portrayed by dangers, scares, annihilations of electoral materials, and the utilisation of disdain discourse against political adversaries (Bentil, 2020). As revealed by Amoah (2022), the Constituency leads other constituencies in election-related violence, which is often utilised by the political class as a functional procedure or counter technique to get an electoral advantage.

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Target Population

Specifically, the target population consisted of the members of vigilante groups, the general voting public and political parties, officials of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Gh), both the police service and the military, a politician, an academic expert, citizens and political vigilantes. Political vigilantes include all individuals incorporated as members of a political vigilante group.

Sampling Procedures

This research targeted polling stations namely James Town Methodist Primary School No. 1 and No. 2, the James Town Mantse Palace and Bukom Park Sackeyfio within the Odododiodio constituency of the Accra Metropolis. Out of the 258 polling stations in the Odododiodio constituency, these 4 polling stations were selected because they constituted the areas noted for intense outbreaks of violence during electoral processes in the constituency (Okyere, personal communication, May 25, 2020). Evidence shows that tension and the outbreak of violence within these polling stations during the recent 2020 elections, led to state security agencies focusing a significant number of the state security force meant for the (Odododiodio) Constituency within these 4 polling stations (Okyere, personal communication, May 25, 2020).

The presence of a joint security task force such as the Ghana Police Service (GPS), Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), Ghana Fire Service and the Ghana Immigration Service which are mandated to maintain peace and security within these areas during election processes, continue to fail in their effort to effectively deter electoral violence within these polling stations. It is intriguing to see that despite all efforts of these security agencies to curb election violence

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and malpractices within these polling stations, violence continues to recur; a reason for selecting these 4 polling stations within the constituency. This study selected eighteen (18) respondents in total based on the saturation of information. The study employed the snowball and purposive sampling methods. The snowball technique was used to select five (5) members of vigilant groups for the study. To select the vigilantes, a key informant mediated access and contacted two (2) of these vigilantes, set a date and time, and later organised them for the interview.

The researcher informed the vigilantes of the aim of the research, informed them of their rights and asked if they could be interviewed. The interview followed right after they agreed. After these interviews, the interviewees (vigilantes) were asked if they could refer the researcher to other vigilantes which they did. Three (3) other vigilantes and another who had for some time switched support from NPP to NDC were contacted and interviewed through this (snowball) referral process. This catered for hidden participants (sceptic persons who were excessively difficult to contact) in the research. The difficulty of locating political vigilantes contributed to the adoption of the snowball sampling technique.

Again, the key informant contacted one citizen from the Odododiodio Constituency who had been in contact with vigilantes. This respondent further referred the researcher to 3 residents (citizens) who were present during that particular ordeal. Using the purposive method, an official from the Electoral Commission and a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) who had been in their respective offices for not less than five (5) years and had in-depth knowledge of the subject matter was selected. Likewise, a military officer (at

the rank of a major) who had once worked in helping the Electoral Commission to ensure the security of election was also selected.

Purposive sampling was used to select six (6) respondents who occupied particular positions and exhibited particular knowledge within their various clusters, which were considered essential for the study. This includes a politician, an academic security expert, an official of the CDD-Gh, two (2) officers of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), and an official of the Electoral Commission of Ghana. Specifically, purposive sampling was used to select two Heads of Department from the Operations and Intelligence Units of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the GPS; the Deputy for Electoral Services at the Electoral Commission; the team leader for Local and Urban Governance as well as Security Sector Governance at the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Gh); the acting General Secretary affiliated to the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) which, unlike the NDC and NPP, is yet to be noted for vigilante notoriety; and a senior lecturer from the Department for History and Political Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology who wield in-depth knowledge and numerous published articles on the subject matter.

Table 1: Sample, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures for the Study

RESPONDENT	STATUS	SAMPLING PROCEDURE	NO.
Ghana Police Service (CID)	Operations Officer (DSP)	Purposive	2
	Intelligence Officer (DSP)		
	Officer (DSP)	Purposive	1
Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)	Former member of EC Security Team (Army)	Purposive	1
Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC)	Deputy for Electoral Services at the Electoral Commission	Purposive	1
	Field Official of EC	Purposive	1
Academic Expert (KNUST)	Senior Lecturer from the Department for History and Political Studies	Purposive	1
Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Gh)	Team leader for Local and Urban Governance as well as Security Sector Governance	Purposive	1
Politician (Convention People's Party (CPP))	Acting General Secretary	Purposive	1
Political Vigilantes	Vigilantes	Snowball	5
Citizens	Residents of Odododiodio Constituency	Snowball	4
TOTAL			18

Source: Researcher's Construct, 2020

Sources of Data

The study used mainly primary data which were solicited from the respondents consisting of officials from the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), security personnel, an official from the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, members of political vigilante groups, academic security expert, a politician and some citizens.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used an interview guide as the data collection instrument. Separate in-depth interview guides were used to solicit data from members of political vigilante groups, security officials including officers from the Ghana Police Service (GPS) and the military service, officials of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), an official from the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, an academic security expert, a politician and some citizens who availed themselves for the research to be conducted. The format and structure of the interview guides were based on and arranged corresponding to the different themes which aligned themselves to the research objectives of the study except for the background portion of the interview which was not linked to the research objectives.

This projected the researcher to seek answers on questions relevant to the study. These objectives were put under four main themes which included: drivers of political vigilantism, political vigilantism and security of elections, regulating political vigilantism and measures to curb political vigilantism. The interview guide provided the opportunity for the respondents to freely express their thoughts and feelings about the issues under study. Further, this ensured that the researcher solicited the independent views of respondents devoid of any

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form of influence from other actors. Some interview sessions were conducted in local dialects including Ga and Twi languages to cater for respondents (particularly vigilantes and citizens) who could not freely express themselves using the English language.

Data Collection Procedures

With respect to the members of the vigilantism groups, the key informant was first contacted who in turn led the researcher to the other members. For purposively selected respondents, prior notices were issued and appointments were booked for the interviews at the earliest convenience of the respondents. Both night and day became periods for which data was solicited by the researcher. Permission was sought from the respondents and they allowed for the responses to be recorded for onward transcription.

Data Processing and Analysis

As the data collected were qualitative in nature, narrative analysis was used to draw conclusions as it found meanings in the lived experiences of participants (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative analysis is a way of understanding human experience through stories that respondents tell, which in turn help the researcher better understand the link between human phenomena and human existence. Narrative meaning concerns diverse aspects of experiences that involve human actions or events that affect human beings.

In this type of qualitative analysis, particular pieces of evidence are identified to form general concepts and categories. The underlying idea is to identify common themes or conceptual manifestations in the data. Through this process, the categories of particular themes in the data were described while paying attention to relationships among categories of respondents.

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Further, responses from interviews were transcribed, edited, analysed and grouped based on objectives and key themes for easy analyses. Recorded data was supplemented and compared to field notes. Interviews were recorded to retrieve information which the interviewer might not have captured. Some thematic issues included increasing unemployment, dissatisfaction with the operations of some state agencies and deviancy amongst some individuals in society. To improve data quality, the transcribed data was continuously edited and scrutinised to mitigate misclassifications and possible errors from participants (Kumar, 1999).

After this, I analysed the responses from categories of participants to uncover the commonalities that existed across the multiple sources of data. This approach permitted an understanding of the violent behavioural patterns of political vigilantes through stories told by participants. This helped construct meanings from the life experiences that characterise the recruitment and predisposition of political vigilantes to the perpetration of electoral violence and its association with the security of elections.

Ethical Considerations

There was a strict observation of ethics including confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent (discussed at the onset of interviews) as a result of the sensitive nature of the topic. Election violence perpetrated by political vigilantes demands that voluntary participants and their identities are protected and concealed. Subsequently, the respondents were asked about their willingness to be part of the study by explaining the rationale for the research. The reason for seeking their informed consent was to minimise the possibility of coercion or undue influence and to allow the respondent sufficient time to

consider participation. Constant reiteration of uncompromised anonymity was always given to respondents before the interview sessions began. Respondents who refused to be recorded had their requests accepted and strictly observed.

Again, in order not to impose, influence or discomfort any respondent, all respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any point in time. Participants were guaranteed their right to disengage from the interview without being coerced or pressured as it was their right to do so. Further, participants were informed of the research being conducted to avoid deceptive practices since, unlike observation studies which are meant to be covert, this research involves direct contact with the respondents. Also, to minimise the possibility of violating the privacy of respondents, additional care was taken to construct questions in a manner that does not target the privacy of the participants. I declare that my potentiality influenced the choice of qualitative study approach, while the intensity of vigilante activities related to elections in Odododiodio was the interest of the study and I do not have any conflict of interest in the study.

Chapter Summary

The research adopted a qualitative research approach with an interpretative research design. This aimed to clarify issues, particularly to the motivations of political vigilantism as most studies draw conclusions based on secondary data. The design permits an in-depth understanding of a newer dimension of political vigilantism. An in-depth interview guide was used to gather data. However, data were solicited from a single point in time. A total number of 18 respondents were sampled.

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Ultimately, this chapter issues in-depth information and examination of data collection methods adopted for the study as well as profiles on the study area. This permits the reader to better grasp the socio-political, economic and geographical environment of the study. Again, it contributes to an understanding and contextualisation of the issues under study. Subsequent chapters including the study analysis is undertaken by applying the methods above.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

There are numerous causes of political conflicts which affect security of elections in Africa, but seemingly the ultimate cause is political vigilantism. This phenomenon is driven by individual motivations and the most argued cause, distortions and gaps within state structures. Evidence suggest that the causes of political vigilantism is beyond deficient systems with an appearance of significant agency influences. Insofar as the system fails to effectively rectify its deficiencies and individual motivations towards political vigilantism, then political vigilantism would most likely continue to aggravate. Ultimately, my focus in this chapter is to examine the association between political vigilantism and security of elections.

The chapter is partitioned into three sections. First, I explore the drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana, while the second section examine how the interaction between structural issues and personal motivations drive political vigilantism in Ghana. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the influence of political vigilantes on the security of elections in Ghana. The final section discusses the extent to which both formal and informal regulations could effectively constrain political vigilantism in Ghana.

Drivers of Political Vigilantism in Ghana

Some of the respondents suggested an overwhelming influence of structural drivers or institutional deficiencies as causes for political vigilantism. These drivers differed among the various groups of respondents interviewed. Yet, the responses go to reinforce the argument that an interaction between

agency and structural drivers instigate and influence political vigilantism in Ghana.

Among the structural factors mentioned are: unemployment and underemployment, the winner-takes-all syndrome, issues with security agencies among others. Admittedly, this finding reinforces the views of some scholars (Gyampo et al., 2018; Paalo, 2017) that political vigilantism is caused by deficiencies within the various structures of the state.

It was evident that the increasing rate of unemployment among the youth is a key factor in the growth of political vigilantism in Ghana. In fact, unemployment was an issue which was not only mentioned by the vigilantes, but also by other state actors' inferences. All the respondents recognised unemployment as a critical driver of political vigilantism.

The representative of the Center for Democratic Development-Ghana (CDD-Gh) who is the Team leader for Local and Urban Governance as well as Security Sector Governance explained the issue in this way:

> *There is the situation where a group of people may not be willing to involve themselves but because of the high unemployment rate in the country, because they struggle to feed themselves, they indulge in it. If such a person who feels economically marginalized is there and somebody manipulates their minds and promise them, what do you think that person would do? It begins like "my boys, my affiliates" then when they start feeding them, these vigilantes become grouped and then defend as well as discharged duties given to them by their leaders. (May 26, 2020).*

The narrative above supports the claim that unemployment among the populace creates an opportunity for such persons to avail themselves to politicians to secure income for themselves and family since persons who become vigilantes also have obligations of their own, and therefore view vigilantism to be a means for their survival (Bob-Milliar, 2014; Paalo, 2017). This response shows that unemployment pushes deprived persons who have very few opportunities for meaningful survival, to be manipulated by politicians all in the name of surviving. To this extent, an academic expert state,

> *Economically, many of the members these youth group are jobless. They want to make it. And they know that when they attach their fortunes to the course of the incumbent or the opposition party, if power is being shared in case of the incumbent, they receive their share. (June 3, 2020).*

As indicated from this statement, unemployment has been a critical driver of political vigilantism. This causes persons who later become vigilantes to align their political and economic interests to that of political parties. Unemployment, according to the academic expert, exerts an amount of pressure on these persons to join and perpetuate political vigilantism. In support of this, Caldeira and Holston (1999) had argued the fact that the marginalisation of particular persons (mostly non-elites) in the sharing of endowed state resources provoke political vigilantism within states.

Unemployment, therefore is a security issue for any state. This is because over the years, the failure of incumbent governments to create permanent jobs to absorb the state's vibrant youth population has culminated in situations where these youths have consolidated as a group due to shared grievances underpinned by issues of exclusion and marginalisation which has

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influenced them to tie their fortunes to that of political patrons. The fact that these people are unemployed makes it easier for such persons to avail themselves to the whims of political parties, particularly when there are pecuniary benefits attached which in turn could (even if temporarily) alleviate their predicament. Gyampo et al. (2018) draw on the clientelism theory to establish that unemployed persons designated as vigilante render support to political patrons for a share of party and state resources. In reference to this, a politician affiliated to the CPP states,

> *Triggers of insecurity include youth and adult unemployment and their consequential ramifications are all contributors to these acts of impunity and lawlessness. Now if young people who have completed university and have constituted themselves as "graduate unemployed", and they have got muscles to display and someone goes to them and says look, let me contract you to "protect" me so I pay you 50ghc a day which even if they were gainfully employed they would not get, then that venture is attractive. (May 25, 2020).*

The consensus from the respondents indicate that many of these political vigilantes were unemployed. However, in contrast, this respondent further cautioned that not all vigilantes are unemployed but at times the issue had to do with the kind of jobs these vigilantes wanted, or wished for. As hinted by a respondent,

> *In 2006, the introduction of the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) was to temporarily employ young graduates whiles making room for some permanent jobs. Unfortunately, from 2006 to date, for more than 10years, its temporariness has now manifested into different*

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names and different guises without a committed effort to eliminate the incidence of having graduates from higher institutions of learning employed. So, we have had the name Nation Builders Corps (NABCO), all different names but the same thing. (May 25, 2020).

The view that being underemployed cause some civilians to assume roles as vigilantes is further strengthened by the comment of a political vigilante (political vigilante 5) who indicated that he is gainfully employed yet had to engage in vigilantism for the numerous other benefits it rendered. This is how this respondent goes by it in his narration,

I was then into aluminium fabrication business but then you could get contracts continuously but before you know, these contracts seize. It can happen that you may not get any major contract for some time so when it gets to election year, business at times becomes very bad and it is those things [political vigilantism] that when you get yourself involved in, that you could get to put something into your pocket. They told us that they will get us better jobs when we are done and they secure power (June 7, 2020).

One CDD-Gh official had this to say on the issue,

Nothing suggest that some of them are not working. Just like the Ayawaso West Wuogon where the guy in the National Security used to deal phones at Circle. In fact, our research shows that some of them have their own shops and are welders, and taxi drivers. So, the question would be, what kind of employment are they seeking? (May 26, 2020).

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This exposition indicates that not all vigilantes are unemployed. Indeed, some of the vigilantes interviewed were in one way or another either employed by someone or self-employed. Though unemployment is a major factor, these vigilantes at times seek permanent jobs from which they could gainfully earn, and survive on. Many of these persons who become vigilantes are influenced by the insignificant purchasing power they wield as indicated in the narration of respondents particularly the vigilante (political vigilante 5).

This coincides with Abbink's (2005) view that the absence of meaningful gainful employment among the youth culminates into situations where the youth mainly engage in what Bob-Milliar (2014) identifies as "by-day" (p.132) jobs. The increasing interest for gainful meaningful employment among individuals who later become vigilantes explains the involvement of such persons in political vigilantism beyond simple notions of unemployment. Therefore, the vigilante's narration informs that it was as a result of underemployment that made him perpetrate vigilantism. Comments from the politician, the CDD-Gh official and the vigilante summarises that unemployment as a driver for political vigilantism goes beyond issues of increasing unemployment, or the failure of state policies to rectify unemployment, to the terrain where these persons who later become political vigilantes are dissatisfied with the kinds of jobs available to them.

This supports existing literature (CODEO agency, 2017; Paalo, 2017) on political vigilantism that a resolution of the unemployment situation within African states would be a key contributor to the eradication of political vigilantism. However, this deviates from other literature (including Asamoah, 2019; Gyampo et al., 2018) which appear to have not acknowledged the fact

that at times, it is not a matter of being employed but rather, the permanent nature of the job and the type of jobs these persons who consolidate as political vigilantes aim to attain. These persons, many of whom are excluded and marginalised from gainful employment of permanent nature, or more so unemployed within society, join and promote the agendas of powerful patrons (Lemarchand, 1981; Stewart, 2016) and in the process sell their services to powerful politicians of particular political parties (Gyampo et al., 2018). Yet, political vigilantism was seen as a broader issue which transcends issues of unemployment. Interestingly, though Paalo (2017) highlights unemployment as a key driver for political vigilantism, he made mention of other drivers of the phenomenon.

In fact, political vigilantism is driven by numerous factors. Other respondents noted that the failure of state institutions to implement, discharge and enforce state laws and regulation in the interest of maintaining security, ensuring protection of life and properties, and the security of elections was another driver for political vigilantism. This cause mainly hinges on the presence of poorly institutionalised state agencies. The presence of poor state institutions which fail to curb electoral violence, electoral fraud or to protect individual rights creates and at times facilitates the transformation of civilians to vigilantes, and in turn ensure they illegally assume roles designated to state institutions.

In reference to this, a politician affiliated to the CPP states,

"the community taking up arms to do what the state through law enforcement bodies such as the police, the military and other security agencies have failed to do, and in the absence of the provision of such

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services by the mandated state institutions, the citizens are invited to intervene…The failure of the state to satisfy the needs of protecting the citizen has often led to the citizen taking the law into their hands." (May 25, 2020).

From the response it could be deduced that the failure of state and its institutions to effectively accomplish or discharge its roles culminates into situations where citizens who feel insecure or unprotected form social groups in protection of their vision of society regardless of the intense nature of the measure they feel would suffice. Civilians, many of whom are economically and politically marginalised (in Africa) and feel their interest and rights are unguaranteed or unprotected by state institutions (such as Electoral Commission and the Police), constitute political groups so as to protect their vested interests. In the political space, one Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) within the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) noted briefly, *"These groups are formed to support or protect the ballots of their affiliated political parties".*

The response by the Police officer alluded to the fact that political vigilantism is driven by the inadequacies of state institutions to guarantee the security of residents within the state as well as the sanctity of its elections. The failure of state institutions and agents to ensure the protection of electoral integrity promotes political vigilantism. This is due to weak state institutions which fail to effectively discharge their mandates. As one citizen informed me, *"they are also formed to protect Members of Parliament in the society."* This response coincided with that of the CDD official who noted that,

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...other people also use some of these vigilantes for the protection of their property, to beat somebody up or handle particular issues. (May 26, 2020).

To some of these respondents, political vigilantes fill gaps within state infrastructure through the diverse constructive roles they perform. This is supported by Kyei and Berckmoes (2020) who note that the roles vigilantes perform is essential, and could be integral to modern democracies. Yet, the claimed roles of political vigilantes by these respondents comes up particularly as a result of the failure of the state in the discharge or performance of its integral roles such as protection, ensuring law and order, protecting life and property, and ensuring the security of state elections. From the respondents, it is as a result of the failure of state agencies at its designated mandate(s) that push the populace to rely on, and call vigilantes into action. Ultimately, this is what a vigilante had to say on the issue:

Even the police are politicians. The police take money [from politicians]... and then they cannot do their jobs well (June 7, 2020).

Respondents state that the acceptance of gifts or bribes by officers of the security services (particularly the police service) which is meant to be autonomous and impartial in the enforcement of state laws has the tendency to inhibit the effective discharge of its mandates. The respondents allude that political vigilantes perform mandates designated to state institutions due to the failure of these state agencies to effectively perform its duties of providing security or ensuring sanctity of the state and her elections. State failure at its law enforcement mandate among other failures promote political vigilantism.

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Other respondents hinted that mistrust and suspicion leads to the rise of political vigilantism in Ghana. Intense suspicion around state institutions is at times linked to the failure of the state in the discharge of its mandates. Therefore, an official of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) identified a major issue for political vigilantism to be due to "mistrust and suspicion", and this is what he had to say:

> All the violence in the elections we have is due to suspicion and mistrust. Politicians mistrust the Electoral Commission because they feel that the Electoral Commission would connive with party A or party B to cheat. So in the quest to prevent that or secure political power, other politicians try to stop the party or person they suspect, or try to attack the Commission with these groups they form, thinking that the Commission may try to connive with another party to do same. (May 27, 2020).

As indicated by this statement, mistrust and suspicion of state institutions (particularly the Electoral Commission which is charged to hold elections), and among political elites drive political elites to manipulate marginalised persons to constitute violent groups in protection of their very own interests (interests of political elites and vigilante interest). CODEO agency (2017) emphatically asserts that political vigilantism is driven by lack of trust surrounding state institutions. In light of this argument, another respondent of the Electoral Commission gave a variation on the issue. According to this respondent,

> Suspicion that incumbent governments aim to rig elections so as to win power ensure these politicians use these youth groups to protect their interest (May 31, 2020).

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The suspicion political parties hold over opposition parties pertaining to elections being rigged through electoral fraud among others ensure that political elites use whatever means necessary to secure power. Particularly, this respondent indicates that due to an absence of trust for incumbent political parties which tend to exploit state power and finances to their benefit due to their access to them, opposition political parties also adopt any means necessary regardless of how violent and unpatriotic it may be, with hopes of balancing their chances of securing power in the political field.

To entrench this discovery, a political vigilante had this to say on the issue,

Usually, we [political vigilantes] are invited when there are accusations or suspicion that the opposition party is printing and stamping additional ballot papers or that they are about to steal a ballot box within our constituency. (June 4, 2020).

Suspicion and mistrust which is at times viewed through accusations goes beyond ordinary squabbles among politicians, creating and promoting political vigilantism. Impraim (2020) in this vein has argued that increasing mistrust of residents, politicians and citizens against state institutions such as the Police Service and the Electoral Commission, and among the politicians themselves becomes a reason for the mobilisation of political vigilantes within states. Indeed, Parku (2014) indicates that only a woeful 18% of Ghanaians trust and have confidence in the police which is charged with the internal security of the state and its elections, be it national or otherwise. This inevitably goes to influence private persons to wield and exploit powers dedicated to state institutions and personnel by constituting political vigilante groups. The

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mistrust for state agencies causes these patrons to protect their own interests through these vigilantes, an assertion supported by Impraim (2020) who informs that mistrust among political parties is also key to the ongoing political vigilantism within African states.

Some respondents made mention of the winner-takes-all syndrome as a cause for political vigilantism. Many a time, this has been linked to the winner-takes-all electoral system practiced in African states including Ghana. In support of the distortion which arise as a result of the winner-takes-all system, though mentioned in passing, this is what one CDD-Gh official had to say when asked about the causes of political vigilantism:

> *People want to gain power so people tie their fortunes to that of their parties. If my political party loses, I lose everything. If my political party wins, I win everything. At Nima, as soon as their party loses, they pack their things and leave. It is like an unwritten agreement for which reason these vigilantes do whatever they can for their party to come to power. (May 26, 2020).*

Drawn from the respondent's statement is that the means through which politicians and their political parties achieve their aim is of little or no importance to these elites and some section of their supporters (mostly vigilantes). This is due to the winner-takes-all electoral formula adopted by numerous African states which sees the winner of election wielding and controlling all and any essential resource and state powers. The nature of this phenomenon makes power very attractive. At this point, the attractive nature of power comes into play. This grant marginalised persons the chance to gain access to better jobs, resources and unrestricted access to political elites which

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ensures that these disadvantaged persons join political parties to secure power. This intensifies the quest for power which worsens the struggle for power by political elites and supporters who perpetuate political vigilantism. In support of this, one DSP sums it up:

> *In Africa if you want to become rich, join politics. That is the easiest way to gain money and power. How can you kill and beat people to come and serve me? I know one MP who said if we want power, you say security or the police. One means of getting to that power is forming their so-called political vigilante groups. (May 22, 2020).*

From the exposition, it could be seen that power in Africa becomes essentially attractive because of the freedom, control and influence it offers to incumbent political parties. Political vigilantes become a viable option for the realisation of the political interests of elites. As literature (Gyampo, 2015; Impraim, 2020) would have it, Gyampo (2015) considered the winner-takes-all formula to metaphase into opposition group (including individuals and political parties) marginalisation and perceived exclusion from government process which perhaps informs his view that the phenomenon leads to a zero-sum tendency in politics. This to Gyampo (2015) entrenches the sale of services by marginalised persons to political parties. In support of Gyampo's (2015) view, Impraim (2020) has argued that the winner-takes-all phenomenon has intensified contention between political parties transforming such states into conflict zones.

This winner-takes-all syndrome appears to intensify competition, further complicate politics, deepen clientelistic practices in politics and metamorphose elections into a do-or-die affair in Ghana. This makes politicians

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more inclined to rely on the youth to ensure they secure power since they do not wish to loose "everything". In a similar frame of mind, these deviants (political vigilantes) who have tied their survival to the success of their political parties constitute political vigilante groups to protect personal and party interests.

The alluded causes and discussion made so far constitute the structural causes of political vigilantism. Various structural causes account for the rise of political vigilantism in Ghana. Major structural issues which crystalise into political vigilantism include increasing unemployment or underemployment which creates dissatisfaction among the youth as it widens the poverty gap between the rich and the poor; the failure of state institutions to effectively discharge its mandates; mistrust and suspicion among opposition parties and of state institutions; and the winner-takes-all syndrome.

Literature has focused on structural drivers. Yet, inasmuch as these structural causes persists, people draw on these issues to perpetuate acts in order to advance their own interests. To elaborate, pressures from social structures makes vibrant the agency of political vigilantes through the distribution of deviance. Politicians rely on existing structural issues, and the agency of these persons to achieve their political aims. The interaction of the agency and structural issues drives political vigilantism. These motivations lead to the consolidation of people as political vigilantes to perpetrate political vigilantism.

Having noted the structural drivers of political vigilantism, the subsequent sub-section focus on the agency causes of political vigilantism, i.e., the individual motivations for political vigilantism. Here, the (in-group) experiences of political vigilantes remain the prime focus despite the out-group (all other respondents with the exception of political vigilantes) responses of

respondents being taken into consideration. Specifically, the perspectives of other categories of respondents including citizens and security agencies among others were considered where necessary. The thought was to show traces of individual motivations for political vigilantism.

Motivations and Actions of Individual Vigilante Group Members

What Makes People to go into Vigilantism

The process in which political vigilantes are recruited and incorporated into political vigilante groups exhibit significant traces of agency and structure. It was an interesting sight to behold the expressions on the faces of respondents (particularly the perspectives of in-group persons), which suggested their obvious acceptance to the issue of agency embedded in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), since many of their responses suggested that it is rather the vigilante's own decisions and actions, influenced by deficiencies in state structures that drive political vigilantism. The experiences and narrations of political vigilantes became critical in ascertaining the degree of consciousness of vigilantes in perpetuating the phenomenon.

In fact, a few respondents highlight the predisposition of vigilantes to act and join these groups only because they wish it. On that note, I prevailed on some members of political vigilante groups to give an account of their experiences. According to the vigilantes, some of them were "forced" to join, mainly by the pressures of social structures. Other members suggested that even though structural drivers persist, they become inadequate causes for vigilantes to act the way they do. Ironically, the accounts of the vigilantes, informed that vigilantes made conscious decisions to perpetuate political vigilantism. When one vigilante (political vigilante 5) was asked of the motivations for political

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vigilantism, he responded: *"there are many reasons to our actions, many of which we decide to freely partake in" (June 7, 2020).*

Another vigilante (political vigilante 1) who was enthusiastic to comment on the process of his initiation into the vigilante group, which highlighted their (vigilante) involution and self-interest, had this to say:

> *I started as an NDC member. I really worked for the NDC as a vigilante while supporting the party with my very own resources. I was a business man before joining the NDC task force [vigilante group], I still am a business man. We were told to organise the youth into task force so the party could help us [support us financially and allocate opportunities], and that is what we did. (June 4, 2020).*

The drive for political vigilantism has always been linked to increasing unemployment and other deficiencies within the state. Responses from some vigilantes indicate that they were (self) employed. Perhaps the focus should be on the kind of jobs these political vigilantes want. Clear from this vigilante's interview is the fact that he had enough personal resources to promote the agendas of his political party. Regardless, he saw an opportunity to exploit the deficiencies in the operations of state institutions by attempting to use clientelistic relationship for self-aggrandisement. This was supported by Paalo's (2017) argument which noted that though considered hapless, political youth wings are at the same time at the centre with individualistic potentials which enable them to pursue political agendas for self-interest. In this instance, civilians who become vigilantes performed party duties as a strategic attempt to alleviate personal woes through benefit maximisation which Wong (2007) classifies as strategic agency. These actions were done for self-interest. From

the exposition, this respondent was motivated to establish and organise people willing to serve as vigilantes for their affiliated political party within their community. A brief comment from one DSP coincides with the allegations of vigilantes as individuals steered solely by their self-interested agendas, and this is how he notes it:

> *These thugs wish for aggrandisement built on promises which when unrealised, they explode. (May 27, 2020).*

It could be deduced that these vigilantes were not forced to join such groups but consolidated after performing an analysis and realising the ways by which they could maximise their benefits, which was to consolidate for party purposes. The actions of these vigilantes are geared towards their personal interests which cause them to act violently when party elites fail to fulfil promises. These vigilantes know what they want, understand what it takes to get it and they almost always go for it contrary to the traditional argument of structural factors being the sole cause for vigilantism.

In support of this, another vigilante (political vigilante 2) had this to say,

> *I am a very clever guy. So, a well-known politician invited us [some of my friends and I] and said he needed us to do something illegal for another politician. He promised to get us jobs if he won. So, we [the youth] organised, they came for us and sent us to the place. (June 4, 2020).*

Similar to the previous respondent, this vigilante maintained the intentionality of his actions. More so, this vigilante consciously decided to perpetuate political vigilantism for his own interest through maximisation of his benefit by securing the contract regardless of its illegal nature. Though this

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respondent had a need for being employed, structural causes alone seemed to be an insufficient reason for these persons to perpetuate political vigilantism.

Another issue which came up had to do with the prestige, power, influence and fame that comes along with such adventures. Even the recruitment process of these vigilantes feeds off or focus on individuals with reputation of being violent or do not shy from adopting illegal behaviours to ensure the success of their aim. One vigilante explained,

> *I have always been cause-trouble [stubborn and hardcore] which most politicians prefer to work with. So, they [one Member of Parliament and his followers] came to see us so we [the vigilantes] could help them secure power. I agreed to do it. (June 7, 2020).*

According to this vigilante, his reputation within his community preceded him and for that matter he was visited by important members of the political community. Based on the ill reputation political vigilantism relies on and later confers, this vigilante despite other persisting influences decided to join the group effort (political vigilantism) of a political party.

Therefore, political vigilantes have a reputation for being dangerous and rowdy which is why they are feared within their various communities. This view was shared by a citizen who identified that there is some form of prestige and reputation gained from such deviant behaviour which becomes the currency for which some persons join these political caucuses. In her (citizen's) own words this is what she had to say,

> *They do this because of the name they get, as in people think we [the vigilante] are stubborn so they let it get to their heads, and when*

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> *someone wants people who could engage in such illegal ventures, they*
>
> *avail themselves. (June 10, 2020).*

The attractive nature of the power these persons wield after assuming their roles as vigilantes makes these persons perpetuate Ghana's violent political system. Seemingly, the mere notion of the presence of political vigilantes within an area instigates and intensifies fear among residents within the area. To advance this point, the response of the military officer contradicted the conclusions of CODEO agency (2017) which had affirmed that political vigilantes rise as a result of structures such as distrust of security agencies and unemployment, without any regard for agency. Unlike CODEO agency (2017), this respondent acknowledges that political vigilantism renders some benefits to individuals who directly engage in it though at times devoid of pecuniary value. These benefits could be referred to take the forms of contracts, control of toll booths, at times monetary benefits, influence with their community members and power. This coincides with assertions made by Gyampo et al. (2018) that the patron-client relationship between political parties and vigilantes respectively, ensures political parties give financial assistance, and control over some state resources and services to their affiliated political vigilantes.

Another reason for the agency motivation in political vigilantism was the love for the party. A vigilante (political vigilante 3) had this to say on the issue,

> *I was born and bred in NDC. My parents are NDC and by 1985 when I*
>
> *was around 16years, I already knew the person called Rawlings. The*
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> *respect and love the man showed for the nation, made me more eager to*
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> *serve the NDC party. (June 4, 2020).*

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Though there seem to be traces of "love for party" in the stories some vigilantes told, their decision to join political vigilante groups or form these groups were deliberate and often autonomous which Wong (2007) tagged to be the individualistic nature of agency. In support of this assertion, another vigilante (political vigilante 4) had this to say,

We are the "boo dee" guys. We were part of the Jerry John Rawlings' team during Rawlings' struggle for power. We fought boldly with him and he won. Everybody loved him. Nobody forced me to like him. It is not like somebody can force you or beat you to like someone, to join that person to fight. (June 4, 2020).

Worthy of note is the fact that though no other category of respondent aside from vigilantes collaborated this point, it was important to consider if that served as a personal reason for vigilantism. As it stands, love for party as embedded in Kyei and Berckmoes' (2020) institutional motivation for political vigilantism centre on the protection of political party goals even at the expense of political elites in order to ensure their affiliated party secures power. The respondent's motivation to perpetrate violence is due to long standing respect and love for a particular political figure which later transcends into love for the affiliated political party itself. This, according to some of the vigilantes riles some of them up to adopt whatever means necessary to protect party interests devoid of any use of force (being manhandled), forced ingestion of hallucinatory drugs or pressure from political elites which goes to highlight Giddens' (1989) argument that agency is highly voluntaristic. This is an indication of the autonomy vigilantes wield and their intentionality for action.

Actions Vigilantes Take

Political vigilantes are action-oriented. Many a time, these vigilantes aim to ensure that their parties chalk success by winning political power through periodic elections. Political vigilantes perform a number of actions, some of which inure to the success of their political parties in elections and at times unfortunately negatively affect the parties' chance of securing power. Particularly, some of these vigilantes play the strategic role of taking the initiative to garner support or recruit people to side with their affiliated political parties or vigilante groups. To this extent, one vigilante acknowledges his contribution to the party through his initiative by noting,

> *I started convincing and recruiting lots of area guys for the Invincible Forces so the NPP party came to gain grounds within the Constituency. The Invincible Forces guys have always been afraid of Odododiodio Constituency. It was through me that the NPP Invincible Forces got a foothold within the Constituency. If not for me, they would never have been able to enter Odododiodio. They [NPP vigilantes] fear this place because they know this place is an NDC stronghold. (June 4, 2020).*

A citizen had this to say,

> *They tell political leaders how much they will take, and if they [leaders] agree, they mobilise their people for their party. (June 10, 2020).*

Despite the trending negative reputation which surrounds vigilantes, vigilantes have been found to perform constructive roles such as garnering support for their political parties in the interest of increasing democratic participation and improving accountability within African democracies. The response of these respondents shows that they at times draw on their personal

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finances to cater for party expenditures in order to support the efforts of their various parties. Findings from Kyei (2020) and Kyei and Berckmoes's (2020) study prove that the lobbying and advocacy efforts of political vigilantes contribute to democratic peace, enhances democratic governance and stability which coincides with the support-garnering initiative of vigilante action.

When vigilantes love their parties, wish to protect party goals, or wish to advance their own interests over that of their political parties among others, they act by mainly using force, violence and any other means they may deem a necessary evil. This is how one vigilante (political vigilante 2) narrates their action which destructs election process and cause mayhem,

> *During the election [in Odododiodio], we wore huge rubber boots and we removed the entire fuse boxes [main electricity power fuses] from the power transformer, and the lights went out for about 2 minutes. During that election, the police officers were themselves Invincible Force members who started to beat people, creating confusion at the polling station which was used to switch the legitimate ballot box for the one we had already stamped [box with fake ballot papers we stamped]. That evening, we won all round. (June 4, 2020).*

From this, it could be viewed that the actions of these vigilantes were to cause mayhem by creating a superficial power crisis so as to deliberately disrupt election processes at polling stations with the ultimate aim of singlehandedly shaping the outcome of elections in the favour of their affiliated political parties.

From his story, this vigilante in particular was not manhandled or under any form of threat to perpetuate this system of party fraud or violence. This respondent, among other vigilantes had discursive knowledge of their actions.

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In fact, these vigilantes expressed themselves clearly and showed that they understood the value their decisions and actions (which could determine the outcome of elections) within the broader political context. Therefore, in order to delineate the expression of agency from the structural drivers for the actions of political vigilantes and their use of violence, I sought to compare the narrations of these vigilantes and those of other respondents. I again contrasted the responses among respondents who have had similar experiences to identify the similarities and differences in their responses as suggested by Thorne (2000). On that note, I prevailed on the other category of respondents (out-group persons) to give an account of their thoughts and experiences on the issue.

This is what another respondent, the CDD-Gh official had to say,

By destroying polling stations which is often strongholds of opponents, they [vigilantes by their actions] affect the outcome of the election which is what they sometimes want to achieve. (May 27, 2020).

This coincides with vigilante action to disrupt election processes to ensure they secure power for their parties. Bekoe, Delgado and Djak (2012) endorse that tensions, harassments and violence during the 2012 Odododiodio biometric voter registration aimed to undermine the security of the polls in the interest of the political parties these vigilantes affiliate with, by disrupting the fair registration of supporters of opposition political parties in electoral processes.

From earlier narratives, the agency of the vigilante cannot be questioned. Examining the responses of vigilantes together with other out-group responses, there were indications that these vigilantes saw themselves as critical determinants to their political parties' securing power, through the decisions,

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sacrifices and actions they (vigilantes) take such as violence with the aim to cause harm, and at times destroy both private and public properties. This was what one DSP had to say on the issue,

> In Ghana, whether internally or externally, political vigilantism occurs even in the same party. You [the researcher] can even recall the Kumasi NDC incident where vigilantes shot one of their own. (May 22, 2020).

Through the strategic agency vigilantes wield, they intentionally use violence and destroy properties (both private and public) to ensure their view of what state politics should be like, and that the interest of their parties is fulfilled and secured. To briefly explain this link between the use of violence in political vigilantism and the agency of vigilantes, an academic expert had this to say,

> Example, in Old Tafo, they tried beating up the Minister for Monitoring an Evaluation, Dr. Osei Akoto, where they destroyed properties and threatened him so his bodyguards had to take him away. (June 3, 2020).

The story of these respondents goes to show that vigilante roles go beyond soliciting support for their political parties, or the destruction of election processes, through to the destruction of public and private properties by a deliberate adoption of violence. These actions, many of which are willingly undertaken by political vigilantes indicate the consciousness of these vigilantes.

What Informs these Decisions

Contrary to literature which has supported that structural influences promote political vigilantism in Ghana, vigilantes are conscious agents who assess issues and act based on which outcome favours them most. Diverse reasons influence and inform vigilantes to behave the way they do. A point

which came up for the decisions of vigilantes was the failure of party executives to assist party members in their time of need. One vigilante had this to say,

> *I was a member of the Supreme Task Force for the NDC of Odododiodio Constituency. I used to organise guys and put them in my car, buy fuel and everything just to advance the interest of my party. Later, I needed assistance and we [a member of the party and a friend] went to see some of the "big men" [political elites] we had helped win power. To my surprise, my own party refused to assist so I resigned from the party. [Now,] whom I work for depends on what their party offers. If you wish to win you have to pay me first because if and when you win power I will be side-lined (June 4, 2020).*

From the narration of this vigilante (political vigilante 1), he decided to switch support from the NDC to the NPP political party due to the failure of party elites to support him financially during his time of need. This influenced his decision to side with the opposition party against the political party he had once pledged loyalty to, due to his capacity to make conscious and rational decisions which inured to his advantage. This is what an academic expert had to say on the issue,

> *They feel they put their lives on the line for their party and when the party does not recognise that, they feel very cheated and they then punish the party (June 3, 2020).*

This indicates that when political parties fail to recognise the efforts of their party affiliates (and at times vigilantes) and for that matter fail to reward these persons, they become disgruntled and express their disappointments by consolidating efforts (at times as vigilantes) through violence or by switching support to another party. Particularly, the structuration theory by Giddens

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(1984) asserts that the individual (even vigilantes) articulate their social experiences and find coping mechanisms (such as clientelism) to survive even the most extreme cases in life. According to Gyampo et al. (2018), clientelism becomes a mediatory element which ensures the day-to-day hardships experienced by the vigilante are insured against by their political elites in the person of party patrons. In other words, the failure of these elites to assist these vigilantes in their time of need despite their ("many") sacrifices to the political party cause their switch from one political party to the other.

Another issue that came up was the fact that these vigilantes are power conscious and for that matter, knowing the level of fear they command per their activities, they act in the manner they wish so as to mould the political environment in a manner they deem fit. These political vigilantes were conscious and made the autonomous decision to perpetrate vigilantism. This is how he (political vigilante 2) narrates his recruitment process which highlights his level of deviancy and free will to condone illegal activities:

> *Back then I was very stubborn and wild [clever] guy. So, a renowned politician said he needed some guys to do something illegal, so I joined (June 4, 2020).*

As established from the narrative of this vigilante, from the initial stages of recruitment he was a deviant but clever, conscious and too intelligent to be exploited by political elites without reaping any form of benefit. In the absence of any physical force to influence the decision of these persons who perpetuate political vigilantism, one politician bemoaned,

> *Forced by who? See, it has never been proven that persons without mental capacity engage in these acts so why then should anybody*

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suggest that someone has been coerced or manipulated into embarking

on this venture of law-breaking? (May 25, 2020).

This finding diverges from earlier studies conducted by Maclure and Denov (2006) which found that the youth who constitute child soldiers within African countries are often forced through violence and beatings among others to join such groups to perpetrate violence. Contrary to the findings of Maclure and Denov (2006) which found that child soldiers were at times under the influence of predatory structures, the current study identifies that vigilantes are conscious of their action and are often unexploited through structures of predatory commerce such as hallucinatory drugs except for one vigilante (political vigilante 5) who suggested that though some (insignificant in number) of their members used drugs such as weed, it was never forcibly ingested into them. In the vigilante's own words when asked if they (political vigilantes) were issued drugs, he responded:

"Oh, for that, some of our people use drugs and our politicians

provide them. But my people are not forced by anyone to ingest

it." (June 7, 2020).

Even then when given these drugs, these vigilantes were not forced to ingest them (drugs). In an attempt to determine the level of consciousness of vigilantes in the actions they take in order to identify what influences their decisions, the CDD official had this to say on the issue,

Vigilantes know exactly what they are doing. If they do not know, why

then do they strategise to fight? (May 26, 2020).

Vigilantes have always been conscious actors in politics. For that matter and the fact that they are not in any way manhandled by political elites to establish or join such groups, the agency of the vigilante remains vibrant. These vigilantes are strategic agents with autonomous decision-making qualities which has the capacity to structure their political environments in the manner they deem fit.

This assertion was also taken up by a DSP who drew a line between political vigilantism and crime rate. Many a time, political vigilantism become a new revenue stream for landguards and criminals within society to exploit due to the clientelistic nature of Ghanaian politics. He however further notes that criminals in the various communities are the same ones that double as landguards and political vigilantes depending on the period in which they find themselves. According to him:

> These vigilantes are land guards. These same armed robbers serve as political vigilantes and land guards. (May 22, 2020).

Drawn from this respondent's exposition is the fact that these vigilantes have a predisposition to violence and were already deviants of the law, switching between one illegal activity to the next. In my interview with vigilantes, it was clear that they willingly joined and used violence to accomplish their designated tasks. At this point, it becomes clearer that a reasonable number of political vigilantes were most likely deviants involved in violent activities and criminal acts before being recruited to perpetuate the cycle of political violence.

Surprisingly, the use of expressions such as (I was) "wild", "hardcore" and "stubborn" (notorious) as noted by some political vigilantes supported the view that many a time, vigilantes were already deviants of norms and laws. Drawn from the responses is the fact that though political vigilantism is driven by structural drivers, the agency of vigilantes continues to remain vibrant. This is supported by Genyi (2013) who had advocated that many a time, persons who perpetrate political violence were formerly deviants within their local communities who are stubborn to the core. They exercised significant degree of personal autonomy over their decisions, be it to establish, join vigilante groups or perpetrate violence. Knowing their capability, they at times channel their efforts into ensuring their ideal view of politics becomes reality. These vigilantes actively shape the politics of the day through their predisposition to violent acts, and the fact that they wish it even though there are times where there is an urgency for them to be gainfully employed.

Another respondent, a citizen, makes it clear that vigilantes are sometimes beyond the control of their very own patrons,

> *Politicians cannot even tell whether their own people (vigilantes) are going to explode [act violently]. This is clearly why they at times attack their own political parties without the parties implementing proactive prevention strategies (June 10, 2020).*

Perhaps the most revealing feature of the consciousness of vigilantes in driving political vigilantism could be viewed when vigilantes switch their support from one political party to another, or attack their own political parties due to the autonomy vigilantes wield in their actions as a result of their vibrant agency which at times go beyond the capacity of their political parties to control

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them or manipulate their actions. This has often seen vigilantes join opposition parties against their former political party. Therefore, another issue that came up had to do with the reputation of politicians among their own party supporters who even tag them as liars. With this in mind, one vigilante (political vigilante 5) briefly notes,

> *Politicians can lie. So, it got to a point that we realised they [politicians] just wanted to use us, so we also had to relax [strategise] for them. So after you are done working for the person [politician] who pays you to work for him, you move on because they will lie to you and after elections, you do not hear from them till the next election. (June 7, 2020).*

Clearly, these vigilantes are not hapless. This usually occurs when patrons make promises, many of which are extreme, and then fail to fulfil their promises to these vigilantes. This complicates the issue as noted by the DSP:

> *At times, when the allegations and concerns of political vigilantes go unanswered, they attack [their] parties particularly when patrons fail to fulfil promises. They simply at times want to conquer their patrons from their high horse to show them who is who. (May 27, 2020).*

Perhaps the unique thing about this respondent's exposition is his use of the phrase "show who is who". This was an indication that vigilantes felt powerful, autonomous but never as hapless as many thought. This however contradicts Kyei and Berckmoes' (2020) assertion that vigilantes never aim to exact their autonomy or impose their political will on others (especially electorates) but rather they are political agents who aim to carve out a political space for themselves.

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Often, these vigilantes act based on promises made by political patrons. This serves as a great incentive for persons with stifled opportunities to form political groups to insure the protection of party and personal interests through extreme violence. This feature is worsened by the failure of political parties to fulfil promises. Vigilantes express advanced knowledge of their political environment and therefore strategise and act based on their self-interest. Particularly, the failure of political patrons to fulfil promises which are meant to be immune to changing circumstances causes such persons to defect, and in worse case scenarios, attack their political parties. Though none of the vigilantes interviewed could collaborate ever having such an experience (i.e. attacking their affiliated parties or party leaders), studies by Kyei and Berckmoes (2020), Bob-Milliar (2014) and Gyampo et al. (2018) have supported this line of argument. For instance, in 2011, NDC foot soldiers attacked Tamale major and burnt Tamale NDC party offices, with the explanation that, the court had acquitted some alleged local chief killer (Bob-Milliar, 2014). It could be concluded that the agency of political vigilantes is vibrant since vigilantes strategically act as a result of a misalignment of their interests to their (former) political patrons, or parties.

The interviews support the agency-structure argument pertaining to political vigilantism. This emphasises that though structural issues such as unemployment exists, people strategically engage in political vigilantism to alleviate their personal woes. Evidence from Kyei and Berckmoes (2020) which categorise the motivation for political vigilantism into institutional, communal and livelihood show that vigilantes maintain rationality even in the presence of structural issues.

Particularly, though there are traces of structural issues (such as livelihood motivations), political vigilantism occurs at times as a result of the failure of political affiliates of these vigilantes to heed to the demands of members (i.e. communal motivation) or after vigilantes realise the tendency of the actions of their party elites negatively affect their chances of securing power in subsequent elections (i.e. institutional motivation) (Kyei & Berckmoes, 2020). Institutional and communal motivations of political vigilantism as classified by Kyei and Berckmoes (2020) seem to be laced with agency motivations of vigilantes. To better collaborate the interaction of the personal and structural motivations of political vigilantism, the experiences of vigilantes and numerous other respondents were taken into consideration. To add voice to this, I sought the understanding of the academic expert who noted that,

They are not forced but manipulated by political forces. None of the vigilantes tell you they plan and go to fight but when their interest which is the power they want to get is at stake, then it becomes violent. This is because the patron of a party has told them that if you create violence and the president appoints me, I will take care of you. (June 3, 2020).

This response exhibits traces of a limited degree of politics of survival as suggested by Paalo (2017) who argued that at times these persons became vigilantes in order to provide for themselves and their families. However, the respondent brings to bare the fact that vigilantes rationalise and act based on the persisting issues within society. Civilians strategically draw on structural issues such as unemployment which sees such persons forming together as vigilantes, with the aim to benefit from the quid pro quo relationship with political party

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leaders. In support of this assertion an official of the Electoral Commission notes,

> *I believe they know what they are doing but they do not have full knowledge about it. This is because they are unemployed so with the least enticement, they do what they are told. But no one forces them to do it after all, we do not always do what we are told. (May 31, 2020).*

This respondent believes that though structural issues persist which tends to rob vigilantes of some level of autonomy in their decisions and actions, vigilantes nevertheless maintain significant level of autonomy in their actions, and therefore they are not hapless victims. To better understand the issues, a political vigilante narrates his experience:

> *After our NPP vigilante patron assumed power, he betrayed us. He did not mind us. Because of this I moved from the NPP to join the NDC party. When the NDC assumed power, they got me a job with the Electoral Commission. So, prior to the commencement of the 2008 elections when Joe Appiah [an aspirant for Ablekuma North] gave me 5,000ghc to assist him to win power, I allowed him to win using the EC voting devises. (June 4, 2020).*

It could be seen that this vigilante initially drew on his issue of being unemployed in order to join and perpetrate violence for personal benefits. Yet, after securing a job and accumulating significant funds, this vigilante willingly continued to work in the interest of his political party. This is an indication of the vibrant consciousness of vigilantes who rationalise and see the opportunity this venture wields and for that matter exploit their relationship with political

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patrons. Another official of the Electoral Commission view the issue from a similar perspective. This is what she had to say,

> *Political vigilantism comes about because many of the people who form its membership are poor, unemployed and willing to skew the law for their parties. (May 31, 2020).*

To this effect, I prevailed on a DSP within the Criminal Investigations Department of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) who had earlier challenged the notion on the inefficiencies of security agencies to be an element which drives political vigilantism.

(I: So the formation of political vigilante groups is not entirely due to the inefficiencies of the state security agencies)

> *No, for I dare say that the devil finds work for the idle hand. Yet, these vigilantes have the will, understand their situation and therefore, do what they feel necessary or what they can to further their own interests. (May 22, 2020).*

Respondents from the Ghana Police Service (GPS) had suggested that persons who become political vigilantes were already used to some level of deviant behaviour in society, a feature which had been mentioned by Genyi (2013) in Nigeria. In contrast to the perception that persons who become vigilantes were once law-abiding citizens though deficiencies persisted within states, political vigilantes before being recruited had often been used to a deviant way of life. Throughout their life activities and adventures, persons who become vigilantes have always had their consciousness intact. Their way of life usually deviates from the established norms and state laws. From formal discussions with citizens and vigilantes, I had the impression that these vigilantes have had

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a diabolical relationship with social norms and rules out of their free will despite existing structural issues. This is how a politician put it:

> *Each one of us possess the potential to be deviants. So yes, the state would have failed in offering that service but the absence of that service alone would not be enough reason for some young man to take it upon himself or herself to forcibly attempt to take a ballot box or stop people from voting. (May 25, 2020).*

The most interesting thing about this respondent was his clarity on the subject matter and the conviction with which he spoke. This politician explained to me that though political vigilantes have been pushed by the failure of state institutions to successfully discharge its mandates and services to society, vigilantes are no saints who are brainwashed by affiliated political vigilante groups or political parties rather, their personal inclinations to perform such illegal acts interact with incentive packages and promises from political elites.

These vigilantes who are aware of their predicament (such as unemployment, underemployment or the inadequacies of state institutions in guaranteeing their rights) exploit structural deformities by identifying together as a social group and further consolidating in order to eliminate their woes and agitate for their individual benefits through clientelistic relationship created with their political parties. In the presence of structural issues, vigilantes nevertheless become culprits in the perpetuation of the cycle of political violence which exists in African politics. From the stories and interviews, it could be identified that every single decision made by these political vigilantes was taken absent any use of force against these vigilantes. Therefore, structural deficiencies and inefficiencies are strategically drawn upon by conscious

civilians who exhibit substantial autonomy over their actions so as to attain group and personal aims. A synthesis of these drivers (structural issues and personal agency) become motivations through which these vigilantes act to disrupt elections, thereby affecting the security of elections.

The literature (Asamoah, 2019; Bob-Milliar, 2014; Gyampo et al., 2018; Impraim, 2020; Paalo, 2017) demonstrate an overconcentration on the structural drivers. But beyond that, the agency drivers for political vigilantism are prevalent and crucial. The findings from respondents emphasise the interaction of agency and structural motivations as key in ascertaining the drivers of political vigilantism. It de-emphasised assertions made by scholars (Asamoah, 2019; Gyampo et al, 2018; Paalo, 2017) who agreed that deficiencies in the operation of state security agencies as well as issues of trust among others, form core reasons for the formation and violence by vigilantes. This is because agency drivers react with structural drivers to create political vigilantes. Maclure and Denov (2006) have suggested that perpetrators of violence at times exhibit some individual autonomy in their recruitment and use of violence which the interviews go to support by noting that individual motivations of deprived persons become an influential factor which synthesise with structural issues leading to the perpetuation of political vigilantism.

Agency motivations of civilians including deviant behaviours, attack on their affiliated political parties and attempt to switch loyalty from one political party to the next in protection of their own interest indicate the autonomy of political vigilantes in their decisions and actions to perpetuate political vigilantism. These vigilantes understand their actions, and explain them in detail. To sum these assertions, political vigilantes exhibit discursive knowledge

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in all their decisions and actions. In many of the interviews, vigilantes express their autonomy over decisions and actions to the extent that they make demands and determine a "price floor" for the sale of their services. This is built on the fact that many of the interviewees who pointed out the role of structural causes, also argued in support of individual motivations such as deviant behaviours of civilians in political vigilantism. Insofar as political vigilantes are not forced, drugged or manhandled to form or become vigilantes in the presence of structural issues, the agency feature cannot be ruled out.

Effects of Political Vigilantes on Security of Elections

Almost all interviewees (17) intimated that political vigilantism remains inseparable from elections. Indeed, the formation and actions of political vigilantes has implications for the security of state elections. It happened that many respondents agree on the significant influence of political vigilantism on the outcome of elections. Ironically according to the respondents, political vigilantism implies fear, manipulative interference, violence, and physical and psychological harm which challenges electoral security.

Generally, some respondents observe that despite the presence of state agencies including the security services to restrict illegal behaviors targeted at elections, political vigilantes continue to increasingly target electorates through the use of intimidations, fear and violence. Such practices prevent some electorates from participating in election processes. This statement by a politician better explains the situation:

> *If someone [vigilante] engages in an unruly behaviour and goes to*
> *disrupt activities at a polling station, certainly people who have queued*
> *to vote may leave. It affects people's will to freely participate in election.*

Certainly, it goes to affect the election process which jeopardises the outcome of the election. (May 25, 2020).

The exposition from this respondent goes to indicate how vigilantes influence the electoral process. The actions of political vigilantes create an unfavourable environment in which voters fail to effectively participate in the government of the day. In observing the presence of vigilantes who are known to often display unruly behaviours and vile actions, some citizens (voters) refuse to vote out of concern for their own safety. This tends to reduce the number of voters who turn up at their respective polling stations to vote, or to observe the voting process. Some respondents (vigilantes and others) cited how political vigilantes influence the decisions of the electorate in electoral processes through voter participation or lack of participation which has the tendency to distort the succession processes. Coincidentally, such vile actions according to IDEA (2015) affects vote confidence, voter participation and results which compromises security of elections. In light of this, further comments from a CDD-Gh official highlighted the fact that political vigilantism affect voter turnout through the physical harm caused by political vigilantes.

It [political vigilantism] has enormous effects on the electorate. Vigilantes create skirmishes in elections especially in areas where they know they cannot secure significant votes in order to drive away voters so as to record low voter turnouts in those areas. So, progressively, the more we have such actions on a polling day, the more we would have a lower election turnout in certain constituencies that they target. (May 26, 2020).

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The actions of political vigilantes cannot be separated from electoral violence. Through the (physical) adventures of vigilantes, electorates expected to help contribute to the integrity and outcome of elections through their involvement in the process dwindles. Vigilantism as a political strategy creates an unsafe environment which dwindles turnout for elections. This is because the deliberate physical harm caused by vigilantes to electoral facilities and stakeholders among others tend to disenfranchise citizens. In light of this discovery, Ijon (2020) had suggested that the political vigilantism creates an undesirable political environment for electorates which negatively affects the integrity of elections, election security and compromise state security. This is how an official of the Electoral Commission explained the link between voter participation and election outcomes:

> *Yes, it affects elections because if for instance vigilante groups storm a polling station, and create confusion, it affects other voters. In the just ended by-election, there were about two polling stations in the Ahafo Region which could not complete the election because whenever they are about finishing the election, then a group of muscled men supporting one candidate storms the place then the election becomes inconclusive for votes to be recast. When you do that, those who came earlier would not come again. (May 27, 2020).*

From the response, political vigilantism culminates in low election turnout which goes to affect the outcome of election. Scholars including Ijon (2020) and Impraim (2020) have argued that the outcome of elections is affected by the cycle of violence which political vigilantes perpetuate. The unrestricted nature of violence and intimidation vigilantes display, which at times takes

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place in the presence of state security personnel expected to guarantee the protection of voters and residents, induce observers to advice themselves against taking extreme risks in the name of participating in democratic processes (vis-à-vis the acclaimed free and fair elections of democracies). Therefore, interferences from political vigilantism which disenfranchises legitimate voters could significantly derail the essence of elections and its security. This is supported by an academic expert who noted,

> *Of course, if you are able to scare people away from voting, your opponent's vote margins are likely to reduce. So yes, it [political vigilantism] plays a role in the outcomes of votes. (June 3, 2020).*

The narrative of this vigilante (political vigilante 5) roundup the statements made earlier by some respondents. He specifically notes,

> *When we continuously create confusion where the support is less for our party, voters fear and leave without voting. Because then they will be like a fight has begun where we were going to vote, and the police and soldier have gotten involved. Let me just go home and sleep. Then our party gets to win. (June 4, 2020).*

Voter turnout during electoral processes at various centres is impeded by intimidation, fear and violence which vigilantes strategically wield in support of their affiliated political parties' effort to secure victory particularly in areas where support for their party is dwindling or low. Contrary to such actions by vigilantes, the freedom of voters to express their basic right (which is to vote freely) is core within any democracy. The wealth of democracy which is underpinned by the free expression of political will and choices of all qualified citizens in electoral processes, absent any form of restriction, is

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effectively inhibited by political vigilantism which refuses the participation of qualified persons in such processes.

As literature would have it, the compromised security of individuals during election processes caused by political vigilantism contradicts IDEA's (2015) view of election security. The actions of political vigilantism contradict the principles expected to be observed within democratic states. Therefore, low election turnout affects the credibility of elections due to the fact that it at times fail to reflect the will of the people which makes elections insecure. Political vigilantism which employs electoral violence as its dominant instrument affects voter turnout, particularly within constituencies and polling stations where support for major opposition parties are great.

Interestingly, Bekoe (2010) has identified electoral violence to permeate 19 to 25 percent of all African elections. The use of violence by such groups has been a significant bane on elections within constituencies and the state as a whole. Besides the physical harm it causes to voters, it tends to put some form of fear into residents (including citizens) which cause them to hesitate in participating in election processes. As a result of the violent expeditions of vigilantes in contemporary Ghanaian politics, Gyampo et al. (2018) has noted that political vigilantism has become a bane which contradicts the (constructive) pace set by the Veranda Boys.

Another issue created by political vigilantism which influences the security of elections was the destruction of election materials and attack on electoral stakeholders. According to some respondents, including the CDD-Gh official, political vigilantism leads to the destruction of electoral materials which secured elections is expected to prevent. The CDD-Gh official notes,

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In 2012 registration, about 7 registration kit of the Electoral Commission were stolen and thrown away. When we collected them, most of them were damaged. (May 26, 2020).

Political vigilantes which remains inseparable from electoral violence often at times leads to the destruction of strategic state equipment such as electoral equipment (including Biometric Voter Registration) meant to be used in organising free and fair elections in democratic states. Through the physical adventures of political party supporters, important articles of the Electoral Commission expected to assist in improving the quality and integrity of elections are destroyed. This in turn influence the outcome of the election.

The destruction of electoral material through political vigilantism delays collation of election results; at times culminate into situations in which those particular centres (areas attacked) are not considered during the collation of figures from the polling stations; or at times completely change the outcome of an election. This goes to impair the outcome of elections. Scholars including Ijon (2020) and Impraim (2020) have argued that the outcome of elections is affected by political vigilantism. More so, political vigilantism goes to create insecurity of elections which goes contrary to security of elections which Creative Associates International (2010) asserts to encompass the protection of electoral material and facilities, and security of electoral stakeholders. To add voice to this matter, a vigilante (political vigilante 5) had this to say on the issue,

You see, even the EC workers in charge of ballot boxes are attacked on the way, with ballot boxes stolen, destroyed and burnt. [Because] when we know we will lose an election when the ballot box is submitted to the

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[EC] office, we [political vigilantes] organise properly and go in for it. (June 7, 2020).

Political vigilantism tends to compromise electoral materials which are meant to hold vital information on an ongoing or a just ended electoral process. In fact, by interfering with such materials and facilities as vigilantes mostly do, the integrity of the electoral process becomes compromised. Pertaining to this discussion, this official of the Electoral Commission summarises the issue this way,

It [political vigilantism] affects election material, stakeholders, and events among others. Some of these materials can be destroyed. I know of election officers who have been beaten, manhandled and driven away from polling stations. It affects that aspect of security and to a large extent goes to affect the fairness and transpiracy of the process. If computation is restricted due to the actions of political vigilantes at a polling station, during the final collation, that place may not be added to it, which may go a long way to affect the final results or may put the whole results on hold till that election has been conducted. (May 27, 2020).

Political vigilantism challenges the realisation of credible elections. In the event where votes are recast because of violence, the electoral process is delayed and security of elections is affected. To entrench this argument, the USAID (2013) highlight how elements such as candidate selection and the accuracy in the announcement of results which political vigilantism impedes culminate into election security. Contrary to this, political vigilantism interferes with announcement of election results among others. Genyi (2013) establishes

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this fact when he links violence to election security, particularly the creation of insecurity within society. This challenges the provision of security by the state during elections. The destruction of electoral facilities and harm caused to electoral stakeholders cripples the integrity of state elections.

Political vigilantism even in the absence of violence has numerous ways in which it goes to negatively affect the outcome and integrity of elections. The actions and at times inactions of vigilantes such as switching ballot boxes has immense influence on elections. In support of this, a vigilante (political vigilante 2) said,

> It was an old house and we were brought some ballot papers which we stamped. Prior to this, we went to the Electoral Commission and asked for the total number of electorates within the Ablekuma North Constituency. We divided it into four, stamped three portions of the ballot paper for the NPP and stamped one portion for the NDC, which we later managed to change for the original at [some] polling stations. That night we won all round (June 4, 2020).

One of the many ways the security of elections is challenged by political vigilantism is through vigilante interference with ballot boxes, theft of ballot boxes and ballot fraud. From the response of this vigilante, their role in the voting process was critical and for that matter led to the victories of their affiliated political party. Their interference with the results of the legitimate ballot boxes during that voting exercise clouded the outcome of the entire election process. To vote is to make a choice between two things, in this regard, political parties. The actions of political vigilantes such as stuffing of ballot boxes or switching ballot boxes which contain the legitimate choices (votes) of

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the electorates within various polling stations, tends to significantly influence the outcome of elections as much as it flouts the very essence of elections. In effect, this affects the final results announced which goes contrary to the creation of election security as presented by USAID (2013). This is because democratic elections are expected to create an atmosphere in which choices of legitimate electorates are counted, no matter who they may be or how perverse one might consider the choice of that voter. This in turn compromises the confidence of the voter in election results as asserted by IDEA (2015), which could escalate into mass violence when the section of citizens in support of the losing party realise the atrocities committed against their party, and in the interest of wanting a free and fair elections with untainted results resort to violence.

In order to ascertain the extent to which these political vigilantes interfered with state elections, I prevailed specifically on vigilantes and asked the extent to which they felt their actions overhauled these elections. Briefly, one of them (political vigilante 5) had this to say on the issue,

> *But let's say within this area 20 people are to vote but we deliberately create tension so about 5 people could vote then we stamp the rest of the 15 ballot papers and place them in the ballot box. (June 7, 2020).*

The commotions created by political vigilantes at various polling stations and on social media platforms is also to create an opportunity for group members to switch ballot boxes, stamp more ballot papers among others to ensure they secure power for their parties. Subsequent comments from political vigilantes (1 and 2) explain the degree to which they compromise election

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security through ballot box improprieties. Vigilante (political vigilante 1) said that,

> *To affect elections in the interest of our benefactor, we sometimes plan to go steal a ballot box. Sometimes we cause commotions at polling stations and the polling agent who is a supporter of the party gives us more ballot papers which we thumbprint, fold individually, and place in the ballot box. (June 4, 2020).*

Later, another vigilante (political vigilante 2) also narrated,

> *Prior to commencing the 2008 elections, Joe Appiah, an aspirant for Ablekuma North, brought me 5,000ghc to assist him to win power. Within my team, I stamped the most ballot papers and broke the record. You see, we allowed him to win. (June 4, 2020).*

Per the responses it could be identified that political vigilantism is an indiscriminate weapon which promote interference to ballot materials and vote compilation. This is due to the fact that vote compilation which relies solely on thumb-printed ballot papers put into ballot boxes at various polling stations (during African elections) goes to compromise legitimate vote counting and results of elections as advanced by IDEA (2015).

Another discovery made centred on the compromised integrity of electoral processes which political vigilantism promoted through tensions and fears which it creates. Fear is a powerful tool political vigilantes wield to ensure that the outcome of an electoral process falls in their favour. This is supported by an academic expert who noted that,

> *Yes, fear affects political participation…because it is just a civic duty to go and vote so if you see this macho men looking so frightening to you,*

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you turn away. Eventually, the NDC candidate pulled out of the Ayawaso by-election process because they felt that their members' lives were important and that they felt threatened. (June 3, 2020).

The exposition suggests that beyond the use of violence by vigilantes, the fear and terror they project interferes with the effective democratic participation of citizens, and the freedom of the individual to choose. The (mere) presence and the reputation of vigilantes among the citizens is enough to derail the integrity of electoral process through fraudulent malpractices as well as intimidations which IDEA (2015) affirms to contribute to electoral insecurity. Regardless, to eliminate fear and guarantee security is a difficult task particularly during elections. A history of electoral violence by vigilantes establish an atmosphere of tension which becomes hinged in the minds of people. To elaborate, the impunity with which these vigilantes act, creates a daunting reputation for these agents through which the mere mention of their name incites intense fear in electoral stakeholders. When I inquired from one official of the CDD-Gh about the issue, he had this to say,

I was speaking to a friend recently who raised concern that he was thinking of flying his children outside the country during elections, to later bring them back when the elections are over. It tells you the fear that elections and political vigilantism brings to Ghana. Therefore, if this becomes entrenched, then elections in Ghana would be seen as a danger every four years. (May 26, 2020).

Vigilantes deliberately create vast tensions through threats of violence, manipulative interference, compulsion, and physical and mental harm which create fear and a want for safety among the populace. Thus, the (human) security

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of these voters become non-existent or effectively impaired in the presence of intense fear as argued by Paris (2001).

One Electoral Commission official adds voice to this assertion by noting,

Yes, when they patrol polling stations and constituencies, they come in groups and everybody starts moving away. Then, people are like they [vigilantes] are coming. Example, there was violence in the George River states of Nigeria where news came that vigilante groups affiliated to some political parties were on their way to the centre to scatter and destroy electoral items and results. From that second, you should have seen how everyone ran from the centre. I didn't know that I had left my pastor whom I was working with. Come see how the election officers were taking their results and we the observers were all running and jumping here and there. Nobody [no vigilante] came there, but even our security officers moved together with us into our vehicles. No one [vigilante] came there. So that is the level of fear they [vigilantes] put in us, the people. (May 27, 2020).

The fear alone granted by the reputation of these persons within states causes a halt (be it a brief one) in democratic processes. According to this respondent, the notion that there were vigilantes at the premises was enough for them to take to their hills which interfered with the entire electoral process and by extension, its integrity. One vigilante (political vigilante 4) had this to say on the matter when asked whether fear was essential to their work,

Hahaha [he laughs], me, I have my reputation. I am a leader. When you hear my name in Odododiodio constituency, you begin to fear. You do

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not need to see me. The name alone commands respect. Those who know,

know. And I tell you, when my boys follow, no one gets to stop us. (June

7, 2020).

Contrary to arguments made by Kyei and Berckmoes (2020) which noted that political vigilantism contributes positively to the democratic process, responses from vigilantes and other categories of respondents indicate that the reputations of these persons and the fear they wield rather impede participation and electoral processes. In order to measure the influences of political vigilantism on the voter population, I approached some citizens on this issue. This is because more often than not, the citizen become the target of political vigilantism. Subsequently, a citizen airs his grievance on the matter and how it affects him,

Psychologically it influences me, because when I saw what went on at

Ayawaso, the first thing that came in mind was that is this Ghana, the

peaceful country they talk about. (June 11, 2020).

When participation in election processes dwindles as a result of fear, tensions and confusion caused by political vigilantism, the chances of opposition parties challenging election result increases. In support of this, the USAID (2013) have recognised the tendency for conflict to compromise the integrity of elections. The prevalence of fear caused by violence and intimidatory tactics of vigilantes mentally harm electoral stakeholders including the voter population who then feel insecure, thereby restricting their human security. This may cause the populace of the state to call for advanced security measure because they feel their security is challenged. In the quest to ensure security and calm tensions, the state might be forced to deploy its security

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service agents including the military which might culminate into injuries, maiming and intense attacks on perpetrators and innocent civilians alike since the military are often involved as a resort to vehemently deal with mayhem. This then goes to mar election processes in subsequent years.

More so, the terrain of political violence is believed to have transcended physical attacks and intimidations to the realm of technological influences. Contemporary political vigilantes seem to adopt the use of social media (though to a limited extent) to perpetrate (virtual) fear, panic and intimidation in order to advance their interests. The understanding of some respondents (excluding political vigilantes) was that vigilantes at times use social media to perpetuate vigilantism in order to influence elections in their favor at the expense of the state. To support this, Nasr (2020) has noted that while the expectation is for social media to increase awareness on election-related rules, devastatingly however, social media is consistently being weaponised. Specifically, Nasr (2020) affirmed that social media is being used to manipulate and misinform voters, spread hate speeches, discredit democratic institutions, violate the rules of election and incite violence thereby negatively affecting electoral integrity and election security. This is partially due to the increasing patronage of social media among the youth who dominantly constitute political vigilante groups. When asked about the influences of social media on electoral processes, a CDD-Gh official notes,

> *Social media influences everything. More and more youth are now patronising social media. So social media has been influencing every aspect of our lives [especially] where misinformation and fake news wrongly influence people. (May 26, 2020).*

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Misinformation and fake news at times tend to incite voters and electoral stakeholders, and promote mistrust of the populace against state agencies charged to ensure that the rights of the populace are secured. Misinformation through social media as purportedly perpetuated by vigilantes has the tendency to inhibit accountability, transparency and inclusiveness as noted by Norris (2014). This could culminate into situations where state agency operations to guarantee election security is impeded. This assertion was supported by an academic (security) expert who noted that,

> *Of course, social media is playing a major role. Vigilantes belong to these groups and they use social media to mobilise, circulate information about what their opponents are going to do to them, doesn't matter if true. (June 3, 2020).*

The use of social media in misinforming the public as noted by Nasr (2020) discredit democratic institutions such as the Electoral Commission which is charged by the state to conduct free and fair elections and determine its legitimate victors. The prevailing understanding of respondents on the use of social media to promote political vigilantism was seen in the response of a DSP,

> *Social media affects us psychologically because some of the things they put out there at times are totally false. Many of these political parties have set up social media bodies and they create false news purely to advance their interests and needs. The Police too, is an organisation where you cannot easily go and rebut especially when they [the accusations] become so personal on some of the personnel. (May 22, 2020).*

This respondent advances the knowledge that political vigilantism embodies social media which restricts state security agencies from effectively discharging their mandates particularly during elections when citizens are supposed to be free to make decisions on who to rule them. Few claimed that the use of social media by vigilantes reduce the operational capacities of state security services which aim to ensure the integrity and security of elections. This may be drawn from the fact that when security personnel (such as police officers) are attacked through social media, they cannot easily rebut. This at times goes to tarnish the image of security and state agencies, and their relationship with the populace on whom the police at times rely for information in order to proactively curb violent acts of vigilantes. When the electorates lack trust and faith in the security agencies due to misinformation, the presence of these agents at polling stations becomes an inefficient guarantee for some section of electorates which could influence the level of participation during elections. Virtually perpetrating political vigilantism challenges the information and communication security which is considered to contribute to election security by the Creative Associates International (CAI, 2010). Information from the Electoral Commission and other state mediums which are charged to distribute information on elections could be compromised. This could be seen through doubts created through misinformation from loosing opposition parties which at times contradict results and information from state agencies. This compromises the confidence of the people in the election results which is declared after the voting process which could even ignite violence.

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In subsequent attempts to get a clearer understanding of the linkage on the contemporary dimensions of political vigilantism, this respondent (a DSP) gave a diverging view on the trending assertions of previous respondents. He notes,

> It is rather social media that is helping the Police to curb their actions. Previously, some of these things [offenses] were committed and people [politicians and culprits] denied. Especially during this Ayawaso by-election, due to the use of the social media, we were able to deduce the perpetrators of the violence. (May 22, 2020).

Embedded in the comment of this respondent is the fact that virtual (political) vigilantism through social media ends up entrenching security particularly during elections rather than it being a medium for the perpetration of virtual violence as some respondents had earlier claimed. Similarly, one civilian noted,

> When I saw the Ayawaso incident I was a little shaken by it but, social media does not help the vigilantes but rather the service personnel. The service personnel sometimes get some of the information on Facebook since people post things there. (June 10, 2020).

According to this respondent, though the spread of political violence on social media indicates lapses in state security and creates some level of fear among citizens, social media again becomes a critical medium for intelligence gathering on such persons which further serve as a check on vigilantes thereby promoting security during electoral processes.

From the exposition of these respondents, three conclusions arose. It could be drawn that social media is a powerful tool, whether weaponised to perpetrate violence or curb one. The claim that political vigilantes adopt and use social media to advance their interests persists however, the responses of political vigilantes contradict such assertions made by other categories of respondents. Perhaps the use of fake news to influence the outcome of elections by virtually instigating fear, though exists, cannot emphatically be associated to political vigilantes. From this perspective, social media is used to tarnish the reputation of the state institutions and promote fear among some citizens to influence their participation in elections. Virtual violence becomes a tool used by groups to disenfranchise citizens which makes elections insecure.

Political vigilantism which may take the form of physical harm and destruction of electoral materials, events and harm on electoral stakeholders, contradicts and sidelines principles of democratic elections particularly article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] by the United Nations (UN) (2015) which highlights the existential rights of all individuals to partake in the government of their country, and express their will through genuine periodic, free and fair elections based on equal and universal suffrage.

It appears political vigilantism produces more negative outcomes than positive outcomes and therefore deserves to be seriously curbed. As we recall, numerous (17) respondents have noted the traumatic and heinous effect of political vigilantism. Almost two-third of the respondents noted that political vigilantes are a menace to security of elections and the state. Interestingly though, all 18 respondents were of the view that political vigilantes, express autonomy in their decision to establish or join political vigilante groups, as 17

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respondents felt vigilantes deliberately use violence against members of society and the state. Recall that the consensus among all 18 respondents is that political vigilantes are not manhandled, or forcibly drugged to join these groups or to perpetrate violence. It remains to be seen in subsequent sections, the tendency for the formal and informal regulations to end political vigilantism.

From the prevailing views of respondents, political vigilantism instigated havoc as much as it conferred negative influences on election processes and outcomes. Among the respondents who answered that question, almost all (17) endorsed that political vigilantism had negative connotations for security, peace and development. It could be confirmed from the respondent's position that political vigilantism instigates fear, causes physical and psychological harm, which dwindles participation in electoral processes, causes destruction of electoral materials which impede the declaration of legitimate unadulterated results which goes to impede and interfere with electoral processes.

Political vigilantism delays the process of transfer of power, and at times prevents the realisation of the "true" essence of elections within democratic states. The response by these state officials, citizens, CDD-Gh officers and political vigilantes among others, contradicts the true aim of democracy which is meant to be free and fair, as well as non-discriminatory. The notion of non-discriminatory free and fair elections as captured in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is continuously being compromised by political vigilantism.

Therefore, political vigilantism compromises the security of electoral stakeholders through the deliberate instigation of fear and panic through violence (both virtual and physical). Psychological harm, intimidation and fear

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imposed into the lives of the populace prevents some voters from voting, effectively contributing to democratic development or observing electoral processes such as the counting of ballots among others. The political environment created by political vigilantism disenfranchise citizens within states. The mere adoption of intimidation tactics and fear makes some citizens disassociate themselves from their political parties, party activities and rallies which are meant to inform voters of a political party's agenda in order to make informed decisions. Fear and threats alone is potent enough to affect voters and lead to a want for security, which may lead to the use of the military and other security agencies by the state in curbing the phenomenon. This may lead to killings, maiming or the injuring of security personnel and the populace since the immediate solution to the indulgence of the security service is to calm tensions or end chaos through the use of force if and when there is the need.

Further, political vigilantism leads to the destruction of state properties including electoral instruments. These electoral instruments consist of ballot papers and boxes, registration materials and Biometric Voter Registration among others. The destruction of electoral equipment, many of which are critical to the peaceful survival of the state and its democratic maturity, when destroyed tends to either delay or cause immediate exchange of power, as well as influence electoral outcomes. This affects the security of elections of a state. This is supported by Root et al. (2018) who concur that trust is promoted in the outcome of elections when election security is entrenched which in turn ensure the proper functioning of a state's democracy. Though dearth in literature, Ijon (2020), Impraim (2020) and Genyi (2013) among others have argued on the dangers of political vigilantism by asserting that the phenomenon has negative

implications for the security of elections. This at times sees the military is deployed (in conjunction with the police service) to constituencies and polling stations classified as hotspots in order to use immense force (when necessary) to ensure a safe environment for the conduct of free and fair elections. When elections are secured, peaceful and considered credible, the populace consider the leaders as legitimate and therefore channel efforts towards the agendas and development of the state.

Effectiveness of Regulation in Constraining Political Vigilantism

This section assesses the effectiveness of the mechanisms to constrain political vigilantism. Specifically, this takes into consideration the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" and the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana (also known as Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism).

Many respondents were very excited about these new regulations due to the possibilities it offered in curbing political vigilantism. A significant number of respondents including vigilantes apparently felt the new regulations against political vigilantism was a step in the right direction. All respondents except for one vigilante (political vigilante 5) was aware of the new regulation (particularly the new law against vigilantism) against political vigilantism but as to what these regulations entailed, many failed to comment. These regulations according to some, signalled the readiness of the state to enforce laws and the attempt of the private sector to end electoral violence using codes of conduct regardless of one's political affiliation. This is supported by Act 999 which targets vigilantes including political vigilantes through its definition of a vigilante and laws (see sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) which puts punitive measures

in place to prevent any person from organising, abetting or among others, facilitating the activities of political vigilantes.

To some, these regulations specifically targeted political vigilantism which should give the law and the security agencies a better edge to curb political vigilantism in Ghana. As drawn from the exposition of a DSP,

Yes, the new law could be effective… To me, there were laws but those laws were not targeted at vigilantism. It only focuses on whether someone causes you harm but it never actually focused on people who planned and formed an organisation with the intention of going to perpetrate harm. So, we need the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Law. The previous laws focused on individuals but the vigilante law focuses on offenses from groups which actually plan that we are this [vigilantes] and for that matter we are going to do this. (May 22, 2020).

This respondent advances the knowledge that the specificity of these new regulations which targets vigilantism brings with it new hope which could effectively target specific individuals who have taken it upon themselves to mar the political environment with violence, rancour and their illegalities. This is supported by Clause 3 of the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act by the Republic of Ghana (August, 2019) which forbids the organisation and adventures of political party vigilante groups. The new law specifically targets political vigilantism as opposed to former rules such as the Criminal Code of Ghana in the prevention of political vigilantism. To this extent, another Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) had this to say,

Yes, and Act 999 is the surest way to curb political vigilantism. Previously there were laws such as the Criminal Offenses Act. Though

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meant to curb violent acts, they were unspecific against political vigilantism. So currently we can use the new law to effectively deal with culprits and suspects of political vigilantism (May 26, 2020).

The statement of this respondent goes to support and acknowledge the fact that though there were regulations in existence to curb the phenomenon, it becomes imperative to accept this new regulation due its specific nature. According to this respondent, Act 999 provides the needed edge to deal with culprits and suspects of political vigilantism. Further, a citizen adds voice to the expression of the DSP:

There were laws but I think the laws were not clearly defined so since they implemented the particular laws which tackle vigilantism, I think when people fall foul for it, it's very obvious that the law will get its way. (June 11, 2020).

To some of these people, these new regulations signalled and projected some degree of fear into lawbreakers which was an essential element which could help curb political vigilantism. Particularly, the severity of these regulations (especially the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act) is expected to caution persons with possible inclinations (seasoned deviants) of flouting state laws and informal regulations against such decisions. To this end, the CDD-Gh official notes,

This Vigilante Act, you realise that the sanctions in there are severe than that of the Criminal Code (May 26, 2020).

This to some respondents would ensure the effective prevention of the phenomenon and inure to the benefit of the populace. To support this, the direct penalty of ten years above prescribed by Act 999 for those who become

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instruments of political party violence creates expectations of ending vigilante violence (Republic of Ghana, August, 2019). This becomes an essential element in the attempt to curb political vigilantism. When asked whether the new law could help curb political vigilantism, another citizen briefly noted, "*Yes, I think it's going to instil some volume of fear in the vigilantes. (June 10, 2020)."*

The severity of the sanctions depicts the seriousness the state attaches to ending the phenomenon. To these respondents, these regulations were a necessity in the attempt of the state to control political vigilantism and this was a sign of good things yet to come. To some of these respondents, the formal law on vigilantism connoted the determination of the state and its institutions to not compromise on offenders in attempt to eradicate political vigilantism. As viewed from their expressions, the new laws and Code of Conduct exhibit features which are meant to instil fear into offenders, and influence model behaviours from citizens and residents in order to end political vigilantism.

However, some respondents have claimed that these new regulations are bound to fail against its designated attempt to end political vigilantism. Numerous factors including political elite interference and lack of political will to implement and enforce state laws as intended, gives the impression that these new regulations against political vigilantism are likely to be ineffective.

It turns out that the incumbent government (NPP) and opposition parties (especially the NDC) seem dedicated to ending the menace of political vigilantism as indicated by the signing of the Code of Conduct and Roadmap to ending political vigilantism, as well as the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" by political stakeholders. However, as a result of personal and political party interests, political parties seem fixated on securing their party interests.

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This is expressed mainly through the ineffective implementation and enforcement of state laws (such as the Criminal Code). Since the submission of recommendations by the Emile Short Commission and the enactment of the new law among other regulations, vigilantism persists. These regulations, rather than curb vigilantism, has seemingly remained a "toothless bulldog" although its "true" capacity is yet to be seen in subsequent elections, and post-election periods.

Another respondent draws on the fact that lack of political will to ensure the enforcement of these regulations is yet another issue which could inhibit the proper functioning of these new regulations. The Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act and the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana have a convoluted operational system since the informal regulation relies on state agencies to achieve its aims as much as the formal law relies on the compliance and assistance of Civil Society Organisations to help shape the morals of the people within the state. Subsequently, this is what one citizen says about enforcement issues pertaining to the new regulations:

> We have laws, lots of them. These laws have always been there to restrict and shape our behaviour. Vigilantes could have been arrested for any number of things like racketeering yet, the laws let them be. The Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), also have rules and work in conjunction with other security services yet these vigilantes are not being arrested. Even the new law has not been enforced to those Ayawaso guys who committed those heinous acts. The problem is our country and those who wield power have refused to enforce the laws. (June 10, 2020).

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The failure of the state to ensure that former state laws were enforced gives the impression that these new regulations against political vigilantism would yield no fruitful results. In this context, the official of the Electoral Commission briefly noted,

I have heard that the new law has been passed but I have not read the details. This is because my argument is that in Ghanaian politics the law does not matter (May 27, 2020).

According to this respondent, he had failed to read the new law despite it being directly in relation to the conduct of elections within the state. Though this respondent is a working official of the Electoral Commission, per his statement, regulations targeting politics in Ghana has never been effective. This is embedded in CODEO agency's (2017) finding that incumbent government's control over state institution result in compromised neutrality of the Electoral Commission (EC), lack of trust in the security agencies and inadequate provision of security personnel to political parties which instigate and promote political vigilantism in Ghana.

In furtherance of this line of argument, another DSP gave a variation to the failure of the state to effectively prevent political vigilantism as he bemoaned,

When the president is in power and his affiliated political vigilantes commit atrocities, political influences come in. They simply cannot do away with it and cannot also punish their people. Lack of political will could make it ineffective (May 22, 2020).

The exposition indicates that incumbent governments (and political parties) expected to remain impartial and align their interests to that of the state become incapable of pushing for the enforcement of these regulations due to their inherent interest to secure political power by any means necessary. There seems to be a consensus among respondents on the ineffectiveness of regulations on political vigilantism. This goes to attest to the fact that state agencies such as the police service and the Attorney General's office, even in the presence of these constructive regulations (Code of Conduct and vigilante law) could be inefficient and ineffective than one would expect due to the inadequate will to enforce them, be it by private organisations or state agencies. Therefore, the new law is simply a document absent implementation or enforcement, as one CDD-Gh official explained to me,

> It is just like any other document. If the programmes in the Act are not implemented, then it becomes like any other documentation. The first demand of the Act is that as soon as the Act comes to form, every vigilante person especially those that were mentioned in the schedule, must be disbanded and reports on that sent to the Attorney General's Office. I haven't heard such a thing has been done. Note, for conflict, if we do not see deterrence, if we do not see punishment, people are going to do more (May 26, 2020).

This brings to bare the failure of state institutions and informal organisations to effectively implement recommendations brought forth by the Short Commission and the state. This coincides with the Emile Short Commission Report (2019) which pointed out that inherently dysfunctional state agencies have contributed to the ongoing adventures of political vigilantes.

This implied that even before the acceptance of new regulations particularly influenced by the findings of the Short Commission Report (2019), there were laws in existence against political vigilantism which could have been implemented to restrict political vigilante activities.

To some respondents, political vigilantism has become even more difficult to deal with due to the failure of state agencies to implement laws to deal an effective blow against the phenomenon. Therefore, regulations tend to make significant impact when it is effectively implemented and enforced by independent institutions such as state agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Particularly, the failure of CSOs to also help effectively end the phenomenon, gives the impression of underlying interests in making resolution attempts ineffective. The response of the CDD-Gh official explains this further,

During the NDC era, in Afunu, this Baba guy was there and beating people, killing people, using arms, stealing and destroying people's property and we didn't see the National Peace Council (NPC) there. Now the NPP has come to power, if they [NPP affiliate vigilante] want to avenge, then you the NPC people are coming there. That is why they were sacked.

This respondent specifically targets the possible implications of the failure of private organisations to effectively intercede in a timely manner (during an instance) on the effectiveness of these new regulations to guard against political vigilantism. The respondent makes mention of the fact that laws without justice or punishment being meted to persons who flout them (particularly state laws) leads to vengeance. According to his exposition, failure of the entity (charged to protect state interests) to appear neutral could affect the

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effective implementation or enforcement of regulations which could render regulations ineffective regardless of how constructive they may be. It is no surprise that political elites fail to implement and enforce laws (to the full extent of these regulations) against persons who perpetrate political violence. As established by Gyampo et al. (2018), the winner-takes-all syndrome which metamorphose elections into a "do-or-die" affair, together with the politically clientelistic environment ensures the reliance of politicians in part, on the perpetrators of electoral violence, in order to secure power. Prosecuting political vigilantes of their (political patrons) affiliated political vigilante groups would mean cutting down their own support base which makes the enforcement of the new regulations on party members less likely, and the maintenance of neutrality a distant ideology.

Much like the case of numerous unenforced state laws, this is where a link between government involvement in the enforcement and implementation of state laws against deviants such as political vigilantes is seen. This at times assume the appearance of political indulgence as one academic (security) expert explains,

> *The laws have always been there, even in the Criminal Codes of Ghana. It is the application of the laws. So that is why some people opposed the introduction of another vigilantism law and saw it as a waste of everyone's resources. They should just apply the law. If you snatch a ballot box during a national event, and you are caught, the criminal laws must apply but it is not done because of party affiliations. This goes to support what others have said that Ghana we are very good at making new laws, because the old laws are there and can bite. They [political*

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vigilantes] have no business being at the polling station and trying to snatch a ballot box. It is the same as going to somebody's house and trying to steal (June 3, 2020).

To this respondent, the state has never lacked laws to control inflamed behaviours, attacks and violence as perpetrated by political vigilantes. Coincidentally, Public Elections Regulations (1996) (C.I. 15) prescribed punishments among other cautionary mechanisms against persons who use force, violence and undue influences among others with hopes of shaping electoral proceedings in their favour. To this extent, some respondents feel that despite the specific nature of the new law, former laws could have nevertheless been applied in such cases if the state wished it.

Discussions with respondents also indicated that political interference further complicates the issue. Therefore, lack of political will on the part of political elites is further worsened by the deliberate influence and indulgence of politicians in law enforcement duties of state institutions. This serves as a huge component in the continuous use of political vigilantes and possible intensification of violence. This is due to the fact that when vigilantes know that they are shielded from punitive sanctions and reprisals from the state due to political interventions, they tend to act in a brazen manner and carryout the directives of party patrons no matter how vile they may be. This again makes political vigilantism more lucrative to those who are marginalised and willing to avail themselves as vigilantes and perpetrate electoral violence. One vigilante notes,

I know of Act 999 and I have heard of it. But we will pass through it all the same this coming election. To tell you the truth, that law has nothing

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on us and it will not work. [On] Election Day when you are arrested, you do not stay in jail for long. It is the politicians who would encourage us [vigilante] not to worry and that even if we are caught, we will be released. Police has no power. Politicians create the law and also give the impression that it is being followed and that they have no role in our actions (June 4, 2020).

Another vigilante also simply expressed his opinion this way,

I know that when you are caught you will be released. After all, I am also being paid. I know it is not legal but I cannot be charged for it. (June 7, 2020).

For these respondents, knowing very well that they (vigilantes) were shielded from punitive sanctions by politicians, these vigilantes act and behave in a notorious manner without any regard or respect for both formal and informal regulations. This indicated that though laws were in existence to constrain political vigilantism, vigilantes were unfazed by them mainly due to assured political interference and protection. The reason is that politicians have their vigilantes working in their favour. This is supported by Reverend Mawutor's address which called for political parties to make conscious effort to end the phenomenon, realise and respect the essence of election, and for politicians to end their secret deals with political vigilantes (Peacefmonline, 2020). Due to aligned interests between political parties and their vigilantes, political parties may be reluctant to implement Act 999 to the full extent of the law. As one DSP simply puts it,

I can affirm that there were laws existing which could have helped curb political vigilantism. But due to political hypocrisy, they could not be

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enforced. It persisted because of political interference. These party leaders and incumbent political parties always interfere with the operations and enforcement of the law by the Police Service. You arrest these people when they do wrong then their pay masters, that's the politicians interfere so that person is not prosecuted. If the party is in opposition and you arrest their people for going against the law, then they see you as being bias. So, these politicians are our problem. They do not allow the laws to work. There were many laws in existence before this new law after all if you assault someone, is it not an offense? Causing harm is an offense so why this new law? There are laws but its enforcement is impeded by political interference (May 27, 2020).

From this perspective, this respondent explained the reason for the persistence of political vigilantism and involvement of politicians. It could be determined that ongoing political vigilantism cannot be tackled by a single state institution but through a concerted effort of numerous stakeholders. This is due to the fact that influences from political elites over the operations of state institutions runs deep within state politics which prevents the effective operation and execution of state laws and mandates. These politicians at times intervene when members of their party who perpetuate the cycle of political violence are either arrested, detained or are about to be prosecuted in accordance to the law. Per the responses of these officers of the state police, the intervention of politicians in their activities has been a significant inhibitor to the realisation of the true essence of recent regulations against political vigilantism. This is supported by the Government White Paper (Republic of Ghana, September, 2019) which failed to rebuke the actions of Sulemana (an individual designated

as NPP vigilante by the Short Commission Report (2019) by asserting that it was within his mandate and legal powers granted by the state to act the way he did. This makes the restriction of political vigilante actions difficult, and by extension creates a gap in the system for the unscrupulous adventures of vigilantes.

The indulgence of political elites in the role of other agencies makes vigilantes relatively "untouchable" and political vigilantism lucrative. This could be drawn from the figures issued by the Statistics and Information Technology Unit (SITU) of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) which indicates that out of the 26 persons arrested in Ghana, 16 persons were arrested and arraigned in the Ashanti Region, out of which a significant number of 13 (81%) were simply fined, while the other culprits are yet to be charged. Further, from that data, despite the occurrences of political vigilantism in the Greater Accra Region, no vigilante has ever been arrested. Regardless, per the interviews conducted on political vigilantes within the Odododiodio constituency, some of them have been arrested but clearly not booked (has been unrecorded) probably as a result of interventions from some invincible political stakeholders. The indulgence of political elites in enforcing regulations, was an argument made by Impraim (2020), and has been determined to be a major issue through the comments of numerous respondents. A variation to the response issued by the DSP was seen in the expression given by the official of the Electoral Commission,

> *Particularly, on the actual Election Day, though several electoral codes*
> *existed on violence and vigilantism, still the politicians go ahead and*
> *abuse the laws by portraying all this violence and mayhem. Police is*

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supposed to provide protection for voters, and protection for election Management. The challenge here is that the police and national security all take their authority from the government of the day. The Minister of Interior who is a member of the ruling government is the one that gives the orders and if it is not going to favour them [party appointees] they will ignore it. They deploy a lot of police to their stronghold to protect their people and when that place is not their stronghold they do not care; you just find a single police man there. (May 27, 2020).

From his response he indicates a degree of complicity of political elites in political vigilantism within the state. In spite of these challenges, one would expect the security agencies (the police service among others) to discharge their mandates independently and enforce laws regardless of foreign influences. However, the response shows that some state agencies charged to ensure peace and security have their hands tied due to government appointment of security personnel into various high-ranking positions within such agencies. Politicians have always exploited regulations to the benefit of their political parties. For this reason, Impraim (2020) has argued that politicians have always had interest in elections and therefore invest themselves into the day-to-day operations of security agencies by exercising their sway over top hierarchy (appointment of top three security officers of respective security agencies) state officials. This is drawn from the fact that politicians have significant control over strategic state institutions such as the security agencies through individual appointments.

Perhaps, this may further be affected by the proposal of incumbent party to end vigilantism in the presence of immense suspicion and allegations made by opposition parties as to the incorporation of NPP political vigilantes into state

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security agencies especially Ghana's National Security Service. This could affect the effectiveness of the new law in ending political vigilantism. This extensive discourse, while summing up the reasons for the possible ineffectiveness of the new law also deeply captures the diverging interests of the incumbent government and opposition parties, which is exacerbated by suspicions of incorporation of political vigilantes into state security apparatus. Whereas the announcement and implementation of the new act (Act 999) gives a semblance of democratic maturity, both the incumbent government and NDC opposition party seem involved in the perpetuation of the cycle of political vengeance in Ghanaian political dispensation.

In conclusion, the passing of the new law (Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act) on political vigilantism and the acceptance of the Roadmap to Ending Political Vigilantism by political stakeholders is a step in the right direction. Respondents highlighted the tendency for these regulations (even new ones) which introduce specificity against organised political groups to be capable of ending political violence in Ghana. Regardless, the effectiveness of these regulations may be tainted and inhibited by prevailing issues which persists within the state such as the lack of political will, complicity and indulgence of political elites in political vigilantism and the absence of (severe) punishment meant to be implemented on culprits which tends to promote a cycle of violence. The major challenge would be for state agencies and political stakeholders to ensure the equal and neutral enforcement of these recent regulations against political vigilantism in the spirit of promoting security, peace and development. This is worsened by the fact that the degree to which

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political vigilantism is effectively curbed by these regulations goes to determine the degree to which security of election, peace and development are affected.

Summary

The results demonstrate that political vigilantism is driven by the interaction of structural issues and the agency motivation of vigilantes. This is deduced from the fact that though structural issues persist, disgruntled and marginalised populace constitute into political groups which draw on these issues to alleviate their personal predicaments and again accrue benefit for themselves at the behest of state interest via client-patron relationship which they create with political parties. This culminates into the use of all means necessary, even extreme measures, by political vigilantes in their quest to secure power for their affiliated political parties. Measures such as weaponising fear, physical and psychological harm, and virtual violence tends to have a negative influence on voter turnout, compromises election integrity and outcome which either delays or impede electoral process within democratic states. The disenfranchisement of voters among others creates insecurity of elections which in turn creates a toxic environment which affect people's want for security which sometimes result in the deployment of the military in attempt to end mass chaos.

Overtime, new regulations have been enacted by both state and Civil Society Organisations to end political vigilantism. These regulations particularly the new law "Act 999" depicted the effort of state to end political vigilantism. Regardless, issues pertaining to the implementation and enforcement of these laws, as well as political indulgence and interventions is likely to dilute the effectiveness of these regulations to curb the phenomenon.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study carried out on political vigilantism and the security of elections in Ghana. The summary recaps the objectives, the methodology and the key findings of the study, while the conclusion reveals the implications of the key findings. The recommendation section also provides suggestions for policy guidance and further studies.

Summary

I set out to assess the association between political vigilantism and the security of elections in Ghana. Specifically, the study objectives explore the drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana, examine the motivations and the actions of individual vigilante group members, examine the effects of the actions of political vigilante groups on the security of elections in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of regulation in constraining political vigilantism in Ghana and make recommendations for strengthening the security of elections in Ghana.

The thesis draws insight from theories of structuration, horizontal inequality and clientelism to explain political vigilantism. The study again used the qualitative study design to solicit data, guide, analyse and interpret the data based on the research questions. A total of 18 respondents were used for the study. Nine (9) respondents for the study were purposively sampled from various institutions. It constitutes a politician (1), an academic security expert (1), an official of the CDD-Gh (1), officers of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) (3), an army officer (1) and officials of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC)

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(2). The snowball sampling was used to select nine (9) respondents including five (5) members of political vigilante groups and citizens (4) within Odododiodio Constituency. The study adopted an in-depth interview guide as the data collection instrument. The data was analysed through narrative analysis.

Key Findings of the Study

Based on the discussion and analysis of the study, the section presents major findings of the study. This section is organised and presented based on the objectives of the research.

Drivers of Political Vigilantism in Ghana

1. The study found that drivers of political vigilantism are numerous, arising from the interaction of structural deficiencies and individual motivation. Concerning Ghana, literature had supported and given prominence to structural issues especially increasing unemployment among the youth, and the winner-take-all syndrome which drives political vigilantism.

Motivations and the Actions of Individual Vigilante Group Members

1. The study however found out that personal motivating factors such as the urgency to protect individual self-interest; deviant inclinations of citizens who saw no wrong in making a living from the venture; and power and influence which comes with their role as vigilantes among other causes, interact with structural factors which project these individuals to perpetrate political vigilantism.

2. The study found that the feature "vigilantes for sale" is no longer simply an assumption, but a practice observed among some political vigilantes. Due to the vibrant agency of political vigilantes, they usually assess their

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political environment and exploit it to ensure they achieve and safeguard their interests. This is becoming an increasing feature in Ghanaian politics. A majority (80%) of respondents suggest that political vigilantes aim to promote their interest. A dominant section (60%) of political vigilantes highlight the fact that they now bid their services to the highest bidder due to their assertion that politicians are liars. From this, it could be established that for some vigilantes, their services are rendered as business transactions and not as a result of their loyalty or love for party.

3. Generally, responses from respondents suggest that agency might be more dominant in political vigilantism in Ghana as compared to RUF child soldiers in Sierra Leone. From the assertions of respondents (100%) (including political vigilantes), political vigilantes are autonomous, clever, conscious, and strategic in their decisions, dealings with elites and actions, and have a vibrant agency. Political vigilantes have discursive knowledgeability, exhibit awareness in their actions and exploit it to their benefit. Political vigilantes are not manhandled or forced to ingest hallucinatory drugs to perpetuate political vigilantism. Therefore, electoral violence as employed by political vigilantes is influenced by both agency and structural drivers.

4. The study found that vigilante actions such as the destruction of ballot boxes and attacks on electoral stakeholders which negatively affect conditions necessary for national peace and development as currently prevails in Ghanaian literature, have continued to downplay some exceptional circumstances in which vigilantes are invited by community members and party supporters to execute actions including protecting ballot boxes,

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property of the ordinary citizen/voter and protection of political aspirants during exceptional cases which could be viewed in a positive light.

Effects of Political Vigilantism on the Security of Elections in Ghana

1. Similarly, the study identifies that political vigilantism adopts fear, intimidation, tensions, physical and psychological harm, and violence to ensure they secure power for their political parties. This, as indicated by most (94%) of the respondents negatively affects election processes through the destruction of electoral events, electoral materials and electoral facilities; dwindles participation in electoral processes; and leads to attacks on electoral stakeholders resulting in low voter turnout which could significantly compromise electoral integrity and outcomes. The actions of political vigilantes compromise the outcome and integrity of elections and therefore create insecurity in elections.

2. Some respondents (11%) believed that social media is used by political vigilantes to recruit people, consolidate, and plan while some respondents (44%) viewed social media as being used to discharge political vigilante violence. All the political vigilantes (100%) interviewed refuted the essence of social media in their activities be it through recruitment or its use as an instrument of violence. Though social media remains a powerful tool and is at times used to spread fake news through propaganda, it remains unclear whether political vigilantes are the actual perpetrators of virtual political violence. Out of the respondents (61%) who hailed the use of social media against political vigilantism, all respondents of the security agencies (100%) recount the essence of social media in the fight against political vigilantism.

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3. When the credibility of elections is affected, the legitimacy of the incumbent government is questioned. Citizens who feel their votes were overturned through dubious means become embittered and are likely to challenge the policies and laws passed by the incumbent government. In extreme cases, this could lead to civil wars with the capacity to derail peace. This could culminate in loss of lives and human resources, as well as destroy the international image of Ghana as a bastion of democracy thereby affecting other sectors of the state and the allocation of funds by the incumbent government.

4. Human and national security becomes challenged when insecurity of elections is created by political vigilantism. Many (60%) of the respondents suggest the ineffectiveness of the police service in curbing political vigilantism emboldens vigilantes to act violently. Political vigilantism negatively affects life and properties which challenges electoral processes, makes persons within the state feel insecure, as well as create issues beyond state security architecture. The intensification of political vigilantism in Ghana could explode and lead to the intervention of the military as seen in some African states.

Effectiveness of Regulation in Constraining Political Vigilantism in Ghana

1. Many understand that the Ghana Police Service (GPS) is in charge of internal security and the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) is charged to ensure the sanctity of elections by ensuring the security of the election. Beyond that, some of these respondents suggested that the Police service could not effectively curb political vigilantism due to their alignment with

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political elites. They suggest that not only force is essential in effectively curbing political vigilante actions in the state but also prosecuting offenders.

2. The study identified that there have always been laws which could have helped curb political vigilantism such as the Criminal Code and the Public Elections Regulations (1996) of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC). This is based on the fact that existing laws have always been interpreted to suit circumstances and therefore state laws are not so rigid. On that note, many respondents noted that before the implementation of these new regulations, political vigilantism had persisted due to lack of enforcement by the Ghana Police Service (GPS), complicity and indulgence of political elites in political vigilantism and the absence of punishment for culprits which tends to promote a cycle of violence. This makes regulations unlikely to be effective as established by the findings of the study.

3. Another issue most likely to affect the capacity of regulations to curb political vigilantism is the fact that the recommendations made by the Emile Short Commission after the Ayawaso electoral violence have not been fully put into effect. This tends to instigate a cycle of political violence.

4. There is uncertainty as to the capacity of regulations to effectively curb political vigilantism in Ghana. There is great hope for new regulation against vigilantism because it specifically targeted political vigilantism however some respondents, mainly political vigilantes (94%), expressed with certainty that the laws would not work particularly on Election Day due to the interests and covert support and indulgence of political parties and patrons.

Conclusions

Key conclusions drawn from the evidence of the study pertaining to its objectives include:

1. There are numerous drivers of political vigilantism in Ghana emanating from both agency and structural drivers. Structural drivers and personal (agency) motivations are identified to interact in the projection of political vigilantism. These structural factors include the winner-takes-all syndrome, mistrust and suspicion, poor state institutions, and increasing unemployment and underemployment which are drawn upon by vigilantes, many of whom are deviants of society, with individual inclinations to attain personal interests (with self-aggrandisement agendas), and power and influence by perpetrating political vigilantism. Beyond structural drivers, the political agency drivers for political vigilantism have been silent in literature mostly due to the assertion that structural drivers strip vigilantes of their agency making the role of personal motivations in political vigilantism deemed relatively less important, or non-existent within the political sphere. However, political vigilantes are conscious agents, are aware of their actions, display autonomy in their decisions and actions, express discursive knowledge of their actions and therefore have a vibrant agency.

2. Political vigilantism leads to the destruction of election materials, events and election facilities; and causes low voter turnout. On numerous occasions, political vigilantism has created fear, panic and tension among electoral stakeholders including voters (citizens), observers, candidates, poll workers and the media. Political vigilantism also culminates in injuries and deaths among electoral stakeholders. This negatively affects electoral

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outcomes and the integrity of electoral processes. This creates insecurity in elections which makes elections less credible and ultimately affects the security of the state. Two security concerns, human and national, arise out of political vigilantism. Issues of fear and intense tension as created by political vigilantes make citizens feel unsafe and incite calls for strict security measures among the populace. Further, political insecurities and knowledge that electoral processes were not credible could incite the populace against incumbent governments which in extreme cases, could lead to an outbreak of violence which could disable governments, destabilise states, affect economies and derail peace. Overall, this restricts development within the state.

3. Managing political vigilantism is critical to security, peace and development. A major strength of recent regulations against political vigilantism is that it specifically targets the phenomenon. However, the removal of covert political support and indulgence of political parties, the diligent use of effective force by the Ghana Police Service (GPS) in enforcing laws and regulations against vigilantes, ensuring the prosecution of offenders, and full execution of the recommendations made by the Emile Short Commission could help effectively curb political vigilantism in Ghana.

Recommendations

The recommendations made to curb political vigilantism are drawn from the major findings of the study.

1. The researcher advocates for a concerted effort from the government and the citizenry to devise measures to effectively enforce electoral codes, and

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new regulations (such as the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act and the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana) against political vigilantism and laws guarding against electoral violence.

2. The study recommends that the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) collaborate with other government agencies and independent organisations (CSOs) to educate electorates on their legitimate rights as voters and caution them against practices which do not constitute part of their electoral rights. This could be done by creating a platform and soliciting the assistance of other relevant agencies.

3. The study advocates that political parties regress political vigilantism by limiting their excessive partisan politics within the state which has contributed to the failure of political parties and incumbent governments to support the prosecution of affiliated political vigilantes.

4. The researcher recommends that government should improve its effort to create jobs and establish industries which could absorb various categories of qualified persons (persons with formal and informal education) particularly the youth. This should create avenues for the youth to channel their energies through gainful employment. However, this should critically consider measures to reorient, instil and inspire patriotism among all persons particularly those about to be employed in the security services, in the direction of national goals and development.

5. The study suggests that various communities should relook at their socialisation process. Societies need to build better structures to restrict deviant behaviour. This should include restorative sanctions. Efforts should be made by communities to establish therapy organisations which take in

persons who have been involved in political vigilantism to help alleviate their (inherent) problems and help re-socialise them into society. Their smooth transition into society must be ensured.

6. Stakeholders such as academic experts and citizens could devise measures to end political vigilantism. They could call on, and pressure incumbent governments to disband (not just on paper) and enforce existing regulations against political vigilantism, particularly on their affiliated political vigilantes. The full weight of the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" should be indifferently implemented and felt by all residents of the state.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the discussions, limitations and conclusions of this study, further research is needed to examine:

1. The effects of political vigilantism on national development while accounting for the agency drivers using both qualitative and quantitative research methods;

2. Political vigilantism and implication on foreign policy; and

3. Contemporary vigilantism and future terrorism in Ghana while accounting for the role of social media.

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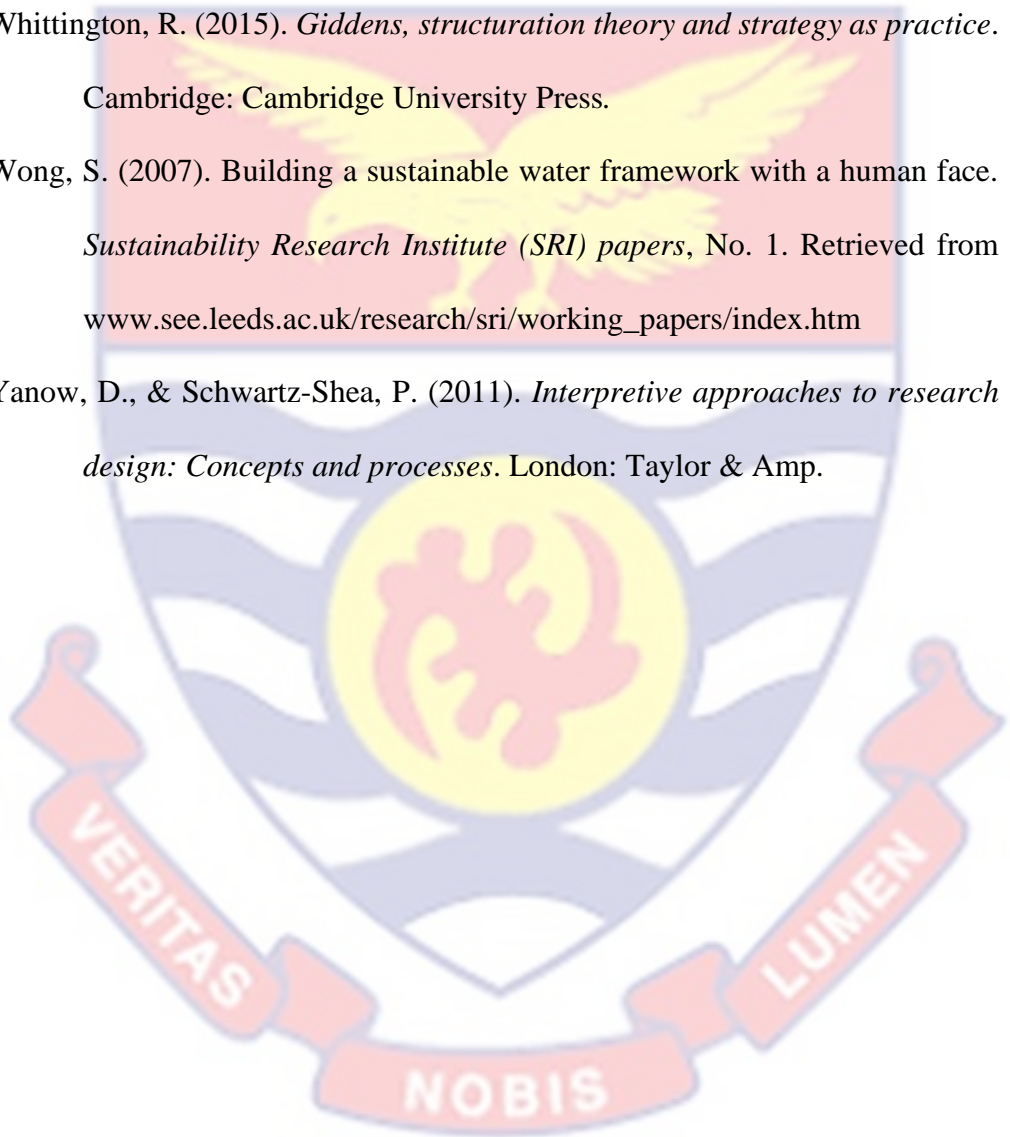
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POLITICAL VIGILANTES

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Female   B. Male   C. Others

2. Educational background…………..

3. Professional background …………………………………

4. Length of service   A. Below 1 year   B. 1 – 2 year   C. 2 years and above

5. Ethnicity…………………………

6. Are you a member of any political youth wing? If yes, which one?

Current position _____

Section B: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

7. When were you recruited?

8. How were you recruited? Were you forcibly recruited or voluntarily joined?

9. Which people do you think mostly constitute the group? Youth (15-35yrs), Old adult (above 35yrs) or otherwise…..

10. To your knowledge, do most of your members enjoy good incomes?

11. Did you sign up knowing very well the role they played in election?

12. Were there scheduled teachings (indoctrination) and training?

13. Were you beaten or manhandled to join? If yes, is it forced? Explain

14. Are you issued drugs by your superiors? If yes, is it forced? Explain

15. Are you forced to watch violent acts against other people?

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16. How do you feel about your group members? Do you feel empowered?

17. Have there been cases where vigilante members have resisted recruitment?

18. What are your reasons for joining or possibly supporting the formation of political vigilante groups?

19. What reasons does the group give for its formation?

20. Personally, do you gain anything in the formation of political vigilante groups?

21. Did social media influence the formation of your group?

Section C: Agency influences in perpetration of violence

22. What roles do you play for the party?

23. What account for the prevalence of electoral violence perpetrated by vigilantes?

24. Why do you feel the need to protect elections or discharge vigilante duties?

25. Do you always use force in ensuring free and fair elections?

26. How often are you forced to use electoral violence in your area?

27. To your knowledge, why is that?

28. Are you manhandled or drugged to use violence?

29. Have there been any instance where members have refused to perpetrate violence or showed remorse?

30. Do you gain any form of benefit from perpetration of violence?

31. Are your actions influenced in any way by social media?

32. Do you think electorates suffer as a result of the duties you discharge?

33. Do you feel some form of power, superiority, satisfaction or pride when you perpetrate violence to achieve party goals?

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34. If yes, why do you perpetrate violence despite knowing the harm they cause?

35. Who do you think are the dominant victims of political vigilantism in Ghana?

36. During which period (before, during or after elections) do you mostly discharge your duties as a political vigilante?

37. Could you rate the level of security before and after your group began operations?

38. To your knowledge, what are some of the effects of political vigilantism in Ghana?

39. Are electoral properties destroyed during your actions?

40. Do electoral events come to a halt when you act?

41. Do you feel it promotes security of elections or derail it?

Section D: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

42. In your opinion, who do you think you are responsible for ensuring peace and security during elections? Why?

43. How would you describe the state of peace and security in Ghana?

44. How important is peace and security to elections in Ghana?

45. In your opinion, do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively ensuring free and fair elections?

46. Have you heard of the new law? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

47. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

48. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason?

49. What factors do you think account for the effective or ineffective implementation of peace and security measures by the state?

50. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

51. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

52. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

53. Do you think you could help improve security of elections absent violence? If yes, how?

54. How could the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" be implemented to effectively control political vigilantism?

55. What measures do you think should be put in place to control election-related violence to ensure optimum peace?

56. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Section E: measures for the resolution of political vigilantism

57. What measure can be taken to resolve political vigilantism?

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Male   B. Female   C. Others

2. Rank   A. Senior Officer   B. Junior Officer   C. Others (specify) _____

3. Current position _____

4. Length of service on force.   A. Below 1 year   B. 1 – 2 years C. 2 years and above

Section B: State and Architecture of Peace and Security

5. Are you privy to the occurrence of political vigilantism in the area? What form does political vigilantism take?

6. Who are the dominant victims of political vigilantism in the area?

7. Period in which political vigilantism mostly occur in the area?

8. For the period that you have been a security officer, would you say the level of political vigilantism in your area has decreased, stayed same or increased?

9. How would you describe the state of peace and security in the area during elections?

10. How important is peace and security during elections?

11. Do you feel the level of security during election periods is adequate for free and affair elections to be observed?

12. Do you think state security jurisdiction covers those in opposition parties?

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13. Do agents of state security institutions receive threats from political vigilantes?

14. How is the state security affected by political vigilantism?

15. How are state security operations affected by social media?

Section C: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

16. What are the causes for the formation of political vigilante groups? Prevalent causes

17. Do you think social media plays a role in political vigilantism? How significant do you think it is?

Section D: Agency influences in perpetration of violence and security of election

18. Do you think political vigilantes have knowledge on their perpetration of violence?

19. Do you think vigilantes have something to benefit from perpetration of violence?

20. Do you think vigilantes are aware of the sufferings they cause?

21. Do you think vigilantes feel superior when perpetrating violence?

22. In your opinion, does political vigilantism affect voters? If yes, what are some of the effects?

23. What type(s) of political vigilantism have you fallen victim to?

24. Did you experience the vigilantism during duty hours or beyond official hours?

25. Does political vigilantism affect security of elections? If yes, how?

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Section E: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

26. In your opinion, which organisation(s) do you think is responsible for ensuring security of election and peace in Ghana? Why?

27. Have you heard of the new law against political vigilantism in Ghana? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

28. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

29. If yes, how effective is that partnership in maintaining security of election and peace in the area?

30. Do you think the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" can effectively curb political vigilantism in Ghana?

31. What factors do you think account for the effective or ineffective enforcement of the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act"?

32. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

33. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

34. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

35. In your own view, how could political vigilantism be curbed in Ghana?

36. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Thank you for your cooperation!

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OFFICIALS OF GHANA CENTER FOR

DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT (CDD-Ghana)

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Male   B. Female   C. Others

2. Rank   A. Senior Officer B. Junior Officer   C. Others (specify) _____

3. Current position _____

4. Length of service.   A. Below 1 year   B. 1 – 2 years   C. 2 years and above

Section B: State and Architecture of Peace and Security

5. Are you privy to the occurrence of political vigilantism?

6. Who are the dominant victims of political vigilantism?

7. During which period does political vigilantism mostly occur?

8. How would you describe the state of peace and security in Ghana during elections?

9. How important is peace and security during elections?

10. For the period that you have been an official, would you say the level of political vigilantism has stayed same, increased or decreased?

11. Do you feel the level of security during election periods is adequate for free and affair elections?

12. How often does the CDD get involved in election process?

13. Do CDD officials receive threats from political vigilantes?

14. How is the CDD affected by political vigilantism?

15. To the best of your knowledge, does social media influence political vigilantism? If yes, explain.

Section C: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

16. Which people do you think mostly perpetrate electoral violence?

17. In general, what are the possible causes for formation of political vigilante groups?

18. To your knowledge, are political vigilantes rich or poor?

19. Do you think they are starved of opportunities?

20. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the formation of political vigilante groups? Explain.

21. In general, which areas does the commission consider as hotspot for electoral violence?

Section D: Agency influences in perpetration of violence and security of election

22. In your opinion, how prevalent is electoral violence in Ghana?

23. What account for the prevalence of electoral violence in Ghana?

24. Do you think political vigilantes have knowledge of their perpetration of violence?

25. Do you think vigilantes have something to benefit from perpetration of violence?

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26. Do you think vigilantes are aware of the suffering they cause?

27. Do you think political vigilantes feel some form of power, satisfaction or pride in perpetrating violence?

28. What are some of the effects of political vigilantism on electorates in Ghana?

29. What are some of the effects of political vigilantism on elections in Ghana?

30. Over your period in office, have you ever been victimized by political vigilantes? How many times?

31. Did you experience political vigilantism before, during or after elections?

32. In your opinion, does political vigilantism affect security of elections in Ghana?

33. Does political vigilantism affect how the CDD discharge its duties?

Section E: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

34. In your opinion, which institution do you think is responsible for ensuring security of election and peace in the area? Why?

35. In your opinion, do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively fighting electoral violence?

36. Is there any partnership between the CDD and the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) in maintaining security of election and peace in Ghana?

37. If yes, how effective is that partnership in maintaining security of election and peace in the area?

38. Have you heard of the new law on vigilantism? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

39. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

40. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason?

41. What factors do you think could account for the effective or ineffective implementation of the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act"?

42. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

43. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

44. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

45. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Section F: measures for the resolution of political vigilantism

46. What measures can be taken to resolve political vigilantism?

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC (SECURITY) EXPERTS

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Female   B. Male   C. Others

2. Title   A. Mr.   B. Dr.   C. Prof.

Section B: State and Architecture of Peace and Security

3. Are you privy to the occurrence of political vigilantism in Ghana?

4. In general, how would you rate the level of political vigilantism in Ghana?

5. Who are the dominant victims of political vigilantism?

6. During which period does political vigilantism mostly occur?

7. How would you describe the state of peace and security in Ghana?

8. How important is peace and security to elections in Ghana?

Section C: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

9. Which people do you think mostly constitute political vigilantes in Ghana? Youth (15-35yrs), old adults (above 35yrs) or otherwise…..

10. In general, what are the possible causes for formation of political vigilante groups?

11. To your knowledge, are vigilantes forcibly conscripted, indoctrinated or trained in vigilante ideologies?

12. To your knowledge, are political vigilantes well to do members of society?

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13. Do you think they are starved of opportunities?

14. Do you think political vigilantes have a stake in the formation of political vigilante groups? What might those reasons be?

15. To your knowledge, do you think political vigilantes deliberately form political vigilante groups?

Section D: Agency influences in perpetration of violence

16. Over the period of your stay, have you been a victim of political vigilantism? How many times?

17. In your opinion, how prevalent is electoral violence in Ghana?

18. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the perpetration of political violence?

19. Do you think vigilantes are aware of the damage they cause?

20. Do you think political vigilantes feel some form of power, superiority, satisfaction or pride in their perpetration of violence?

21. If yes, why do you think vigilantes perpetrate violence despite knowing the harm they cause?

22. To your knowledge, are vigilantes sensitized or empowered to perpetuate violence?

23. Do you think they use drugs? If yes, is it forced upon them?

24. To your knowledge, are vigilantes forced, beaten or manhandled to perpetrate violence?

25. To your knowledge, does social media influence political vigilantism in Ghana? How?

26. In your opinion, do political vigilantism affect voters in Ghana?

27. Do you think political vigilantism affect the outcome of elections in Ghana?

28. What are some of the effects of political vigilantism on elections in Ghana?

29. Does political vigilantism affect security of elections in Ghana?

Section E: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

30. In your opinion, which institutions do you think are responsible for ensuring peace and security during elections? Explain

31. In your opinion, do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively fighting electoral violence?

32. Have you heard of the new law against political vigilantism in Ghana? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

33. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

34. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason?

35. What factors do you think accounts for the effective or ineffective enforcement of the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" by the state?

36. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

37. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

38. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

39. How do you think the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" should be enforced to effectively curb political vigilantism?

40. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Section F: measures for the resolution of political vigilantism

41. What measure can be taken to resolve political vigilantism?

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ELECTORAL COMMISSION OFFCIALS

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Female   B. Male   C. Others

2. Rank   A. Junior Staff   B. Senior Staff   C. Senior Member

3. Current position _____

4. Length of service A. Below 1 year   B. 1 – 2 years   C. 2 years and above

Section B: Other relevant information

4. Have you heard or witnessed the occurrence of political vigilantism?

5. Around which period does political vigilantism mostly occur in Ghana?

6. What is the level of security during elections?

7. Do you feel safe during the voting process?

8. Do you think there is the need for extra security during elections?

9. Does the patrol of polling stations by political vigilante during elections scare you?

Section C: State and Architecture of Peace and Security

10. In general, how would you rate the level of political vigilantism in Ghana?

11. How important is peace and security to elections in Ghana?

12. Does the Electoral Commissions' security jurisdiction adequately cover all areas within the country?

13. Does your office receive political vigilante reports from the electorates?

14. What official steps does your office take to resolve reported cases of political vigilantism from electorates?

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Section D: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

15. Which people do you think mostly perpetrate electoral violence? Youth (15-35yrs), old adult (35yrs above) or otherwise……….

16. In general, what are the possible causes for formation of political vigilante groups?

17. To your knowledge, are the political vigilantes rich or poor?

18. Do you think they lack opportunities?

19. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the formation of political vigilante groups? If yes, which form does it take?

20. In general, which areas does the commission consider as hotspot for electoral violence?

21. What account for the prevalence of electoral violence in these areas?

Section E: Agency influences in perpetration of violence

22. Do you think political vigilantes have knowledge of their perpetration of violence?

23. Do you think vigilantes deliberately perpetrate violence for benefits?

24. Do you think vigilantes are aware of the suffering they cause?

25. Do you think political vigilantes feel some form of power, superiority, satisfaction or pride in perpetration of violence?

26. If yes, why do you think they perpetrate violence despite knowing the harm they cause?

27. To your knowledge, are vigilantes forcibly conscripted, indoctrinated, trained or empowered to perpetuate violence?

28. In your opinion, do political vigilantism affect voters in Ghana?

29. What are some of the effects of political vigilantism in Ghana?

30. Does political vigilantism affect security of elections in Ghana?

31. Does political vigilantism affect how Electoral Commission discharge their duties?

32. Do you think the actions of political vigilantes are influenced by social media?

33. Does social media in anyway influence how your office discharges its mandates?

Section F: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

34. In your opinion, which institution(s) do you think is responsible for ensuring peace and security during elections? Why?

35. In your opinion, do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively fighting electoral violence?

36. Have you heard of the new law? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

37. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

38. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason?

39. What factors do you think account for the effective or ineffective enforcement of peace and security measures by the state?

40. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

41. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

42. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

43. How best do you think political vigilantism can be implemented to effectively be controlled by the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act"?

44. What measures do you think should be put in place to control political vigilantism to ensure optimum peace?

45. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Thank you for your cooperation!

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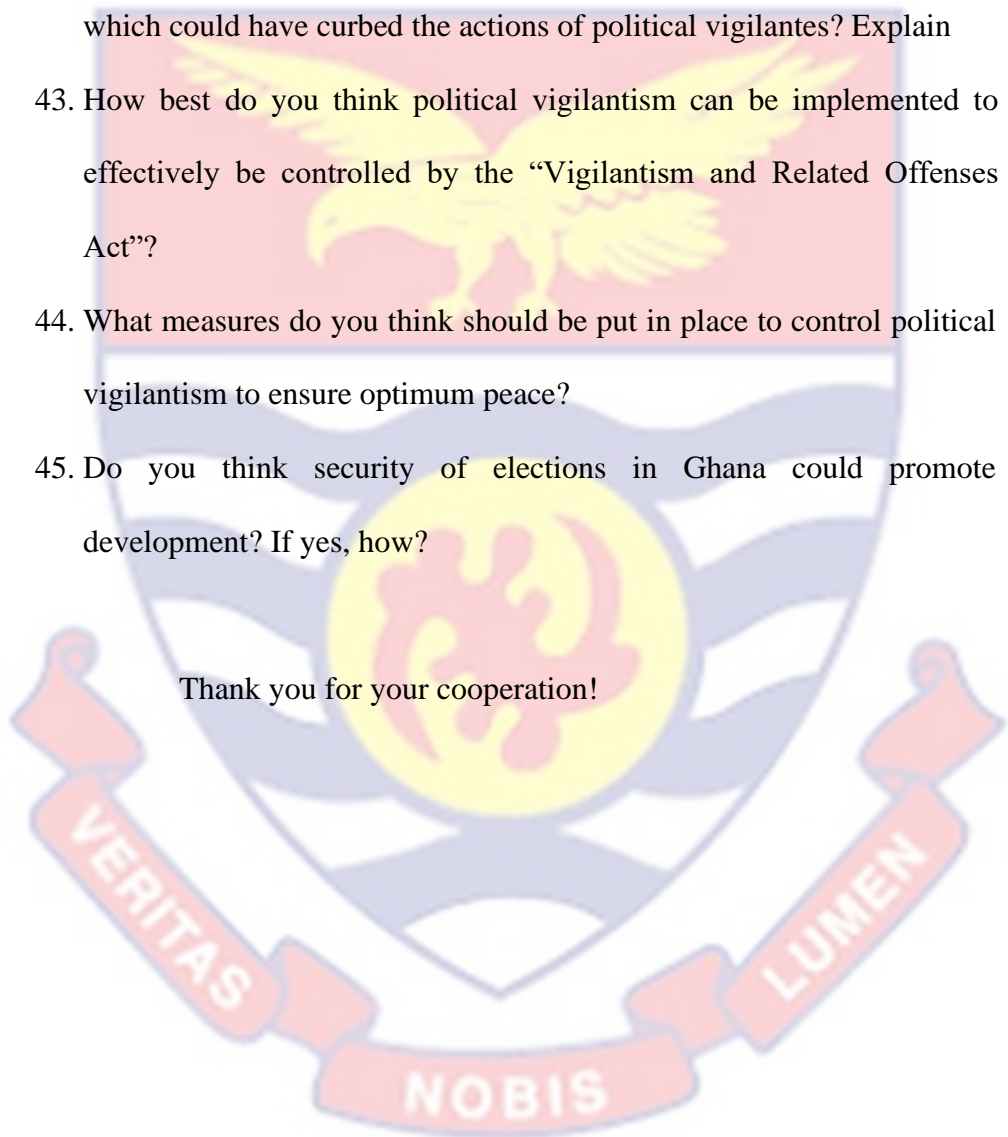
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CITIZENS (RESIDENTS)

Section A: Background Information

1. Age   A. 18-24   B. 25-34   C. 35-44   D. 45-50+

2. Gender   A. Female   B. Male   C. Others

                                                  D. Others (specify)

3. Academic level   A.JHS   B.SHS   C. Undergraduate _____

4. Religion   A. Christianity B. Islam   C. Traditional   D. Others (specify)

5. Length of stay at your residence   A. Below 1 year B. 1 – 2 years   C. 2 years and above

Section B: Other relevant information

6. Have you heard or witnessed the occurrence of political vigilantism in your area before?

7. For the period that you have been a voter, would you say the level of political vigilantism in your area has decreased, remained same or increased?

8. Who are the dominant victims of political vigilantism?

9. Around which period does political vigilantism mostly occur in your area?

10. How often do you vote? How many times have you voted?

11. Has there been a change in your participation in the voting process?

12. What is the level of security in your area during elections?

13. How safe do you feel during the voting process in your area?

14. Do you think there is the need for extra security in your area during elections?

15. Do security personnel patrol during elections scare you?

16. Is your security challenged? Explain why?

17. Are you satisfied with the urgency with which the state security departments respond to political vigilantism? Explain why

Section C: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

18. Which people do you think mostly constitute political vigilante groups?

19. To your knowledge, are the perpetrators rich or poor?

20. Do you think they are denied of opportunities by the state?

21. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the formation of political vigilante groups? Explain

22. To your knowledge, do you think political vigilantes deliberately join political vigilante groups?

23. What account for the prevalence of political vigilante groups in your areas?

24. In general, what are the possible causes for formation of political vigilante groups?

Section D: Actions of political vigilantes on the security of elections

25. Over the period of your stay, have you been a victim of political vigilantism? How many times?

26. What form did the vigilantism take? Intimidation, direct assault……

27. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the perpetration of political violence?

28. To your knowledge, do you think political vigilantes deliberately perpetrate violence?

29. Do you think political vigilantes feel some form of power, satisfaction or pride in perpetration of violence?

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30. Does political vigilantism affect how you discharge your electoral rights as citizen? Explain

31. Do you think social media has influence on political vigilantism in Ghana? Explain

32. Do social media reports influence your participation in elections? Explain

33. Do you feel safe to vote during elections in your area? Explain

Section E: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

34. In your opinion, which institutions do you think are responsible for ensuring peace and security during elections? Why?

35. Do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively fighting electoral violence?

36. Have you heard of the new law on vigilantism? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

37. How did you learn of this new law on vigilantism?

38. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

39. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason(s)?

40. Do you think the interest of politicians would in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

41. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

42. What factors do you think account for the effective or ineffective implementation of peace and security measures by the state?

43. Do you think credible elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Section F: measures for the resolution of political vigilantism

44. What measure can be taken to resolve political vigilantism in Ghana?

Thank you for your cooperation!

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APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POLITICIAN

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender   A. Female   B. Male   C. Others

2. Title   A. Mr.   B. Dr.   C. Prof.

Section B: State and Architecture of Peace and Security

3. How many years have you been involved in shaping the politics of the state?

4. Are you privy to the rise persons classified as political vigilantes in Ghana?

5. What is your narrative? Are they vigilantes or hooligans? Reason

6. In general, how would you rate the level of political vigilantism in Ghana?

7. Who are the dominant victims of political vigilantism?

8. During which period does political vigilantism mostly occur?

9. How would you describe the state of peace and security in Ghana?

10. How important is peace and security to elections in Ghana?

Section C: Drive for formation of political vigilantism

11. Which people do you think mostly constitute political vigilantes in Ghana? Youth (15-35yrs), old adults (above 35yrs) or otherwise…..

12. In general, what are the possible causes for formation of political vigilante groups?

13. Which causes are prevalent to the best of your knowledge?

14. To your knowledge, are vigilantes forcibly conscripted, indoctrinated or trained in vigilante ideologies?

15. To your knowledge, are political vigilantes well to do members of society?

16. Do you think they are starved of opportunities?

17. Do you think political vigilantes have a stake in the formation of political vigilante groups? What might those reasons be?

Section D: Actions of political vigilantes on the security of elections

18. Over the period of your stay, have you been a victim of political vigilantism? How many times?

19. In your opinion, how prevalent is electoral violence in Ghana?

20. Which causes are prevalent to your knowledge?

21. Do you think political vigilantes benefit from the perpetration of political violence?

22. To your knowledge, do you think political vigilantes deliberately perpetrate violence?

23. Do you think vigilantes are aware of the damage they cause?

24. Do you think political vigilantes feel some form of power, superiority, satisfaction or pride in their perpetration of violence?

25. If yes, why do you think vigilantes perpetrate violence despite knowing the harm they cause?

26. To your knowledge, are vigilantes sensitized or empowered to perpetuate violence?

27. Do you think they use drugs? If yes, is it forced upon them?

28. To your knowledge, are vigilantes forced, beaten or manhandled to perpetrate violence?

29. To your knowledge, does social media influence political vigilantism in Ghana? How?

30. In your opinion, do political vigilantism affect voters in Ghana?

31. Do you think political vigilantism affect the outcome of elections in Ghana?

32. What are some of the effects of political vigilantism on elections in Ghana?

33. Does political vigilantism affect security of elections in Ghana?

Section E: Adequacy of the new law in curbing political vigilantism

34. In your opinion, which institutions do you think are responsible for ensuring peace and security during elections? Explain

35. In your opinion, do you think the Electoral Commission, Ghana Police Service and the National Security Service are effectively fighting electoral violence?

36. Have you heard of the new law against political vigilantism in Ghana? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?

37. To your knowledge, did political vigilantism persist due to insufficient or unspecific laws to tackle the phenomenon?

38. Do you think the new law on vigilantism could effectively tackle political vigilantism? Reason?

39. What factors do you think accounts for the effective or ineffective enforcement of the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" by the state?

40. Do you think the interest of politicians could in any way influence the enforcement of the new law?

41. To your knowledge, is the new law strategically tailored to favor a particular political party?

42. With the exception of the new law, would you say there were no laws which could have curbed the actions of political vigilantes? Explain

43. How do you think the "Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act" should be enforced to effectively curb political vigilantism?

44. What measures do you think should be put in place to control election-related violence to ensure optimum peace?

45. Do you think security of elections in Ghana could promote development? If yes, how?

Section F: measures for the resolution of political vigilantism

46. What measure can be taken to resolve political vigilantism?

Thank you for your cooperation!

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