UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

THE THREAT OF POLITICAL VIGILANTISM TO POLITICAL

SECURITY IN AFRICA: A CASE OF GHANA

EMMANUEL PAPA BENTIL

2020

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THE THREAT OF POLITICAL VIGILANTISM TO POLITICAL

SECURITY IN AFRICA: A CASE OF GHANA

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Centre for African and International Studies of the

Faculty of Arts, 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 International Studies

DECEMBER 2020

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 this University or elsewhere.

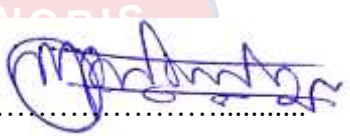Candidate's Signature ……………………………...Date…3.·.11.·.21

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Supervisors' Declaration

We 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.3.·.11.·.21

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Name…Prof. Wilson K. Yayoh

ABSTRACT

Ghana is gradually building a political culture that seems to support political vigilantism; the activities of vigilante groups have assumed a cyclonic nature. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana and the roles of state and non-state actors in all of this. It explores the sources and the motivations for acts of political vigilantism. It addresses the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. It also analyses the implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global image. Lastly, it discusses the roles of state and non-state actors in mitigating the threat of political vigilantism to political security using both primary and secondary sources in the data gathering process. The study demonstrates that unemployment and vulnerability of the youth, mutual suspicion among the political actors, and low confidence in state institutions motivate political vigilantism in Ghana. It also finds a high possibility of terrorists riding on the back of political vigilantism to plunge the country into chaos. The porous nature of borders in the West African sub-region even makes this threat imminent. Political vigilantism tends to erode Ghana's soft power in global affairs. Therefore, the study recommends that both state and non-state actors adopt a broad-based approach to confront the problem frontally.

KEYS WORDS

Civil Society Organisations

Non-state Actors

Political Security

Political Vigilantism

State Actors

Vigilante Groups

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My utmost gratitude goes to the almighty God for giving me wisdom, knowledge, understanding, strength and good health to complete the programme successfully. Special thanks also go to my supervisors: Dr Tony Talburt and Prof Wilson K. Yayoh, for granting me the privilege to share their expertise and accumulated experiences. Their patience, guidance, wisdom, and encouragement have given me a certificate and a lasting experience.

I am highly indebted to my parents; very. Rev. and Mrs Bentil for all the sacrifices they have made towards the completion of this study. Other special thanks go to the Director for the Centre for African and International Studies, the University of Cape Coast, Dr Alex Wilson, Dr Mario Nisbett, and all the Centre for African and International Studies lecturers.

My profound gratitude also goes to my colleagues at the Centre for African and International Studies, University of Cape Coast, particularly Jennifer Quartey for her assistance in the transcription and collection of data; and Bismark Asamoah, Nani Selasie Samuel, Cosmos Ansah, Joseph Takyi Odoom, Evelyn Bartels, Abigail Teiko, Bridget Essilfie, Theophilus Gyimah, Esther Onomah, Ruth Quansah, Ebenezer Ackon, and Desmond Asiwoko for the immeasurable contributions they have made in making this study a success. I also appreciate my good friends Nana Adutwum Boateng, Felix Whyte and Nana Kweku Sekyi for all the support they have given me. I am also grateful to my larger family, especially my uncle, Mr George Bentil and my aunt, Naa Ayeley Mensah Kuphe. My last gratitude goes to the University of Cape Coast for offering the opportunity to pursue my first and second-degree programmes successfully.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Very Rev. Archibald Felix Bentil and Mrs Alberta Bentil, my

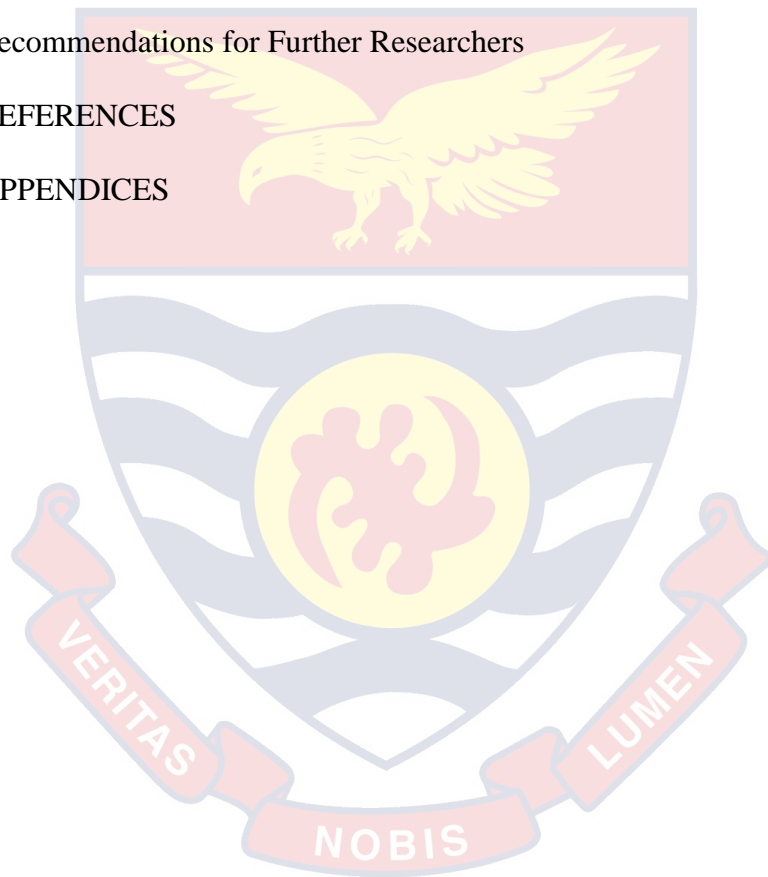siblings and the larger Bentil family.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCSAPV	Coalition of Civil Societies Against Political Vigilantism
CDD	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development
CDF	Civil Defense Forces
CHS	Commission on Human Security
CODEO Ghana	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers of Ghana
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
EC	Electoral Commission
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
FDI(s)	Foreign Direct Investment(s)
FOSDA	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
GPS	Ghana Police Service
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IGP	Inspector General of Police
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPC	National Peace Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLPP	People's Party of Sierra Leone
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Despite the roles, state and non-state actors play to mitigate political vigilantism, the reoccurrence of political vigilantism continues to threaten political security in Ghana. The role of state and non-state actors remains a crucial feature of international relations. In the last decades of the twenty-first century, the notion that the primary actors in the global system are the sovereign states has become a significant debate in international relations (Willetts, 2001; Colás, 2002 and Arts, 1998). This has led to the re-defining of roles to include non-state actors. La Porte (2012) also avers that the emergence of non-state actors has changed international relations in recent years. Although state actors remain an integral part of nation-building, non-state actors equally play a crucial role in shaping a country's democracy and international relations.

This study explores the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana with reference to state and non-state actors. It explores the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism. It addresses the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. It also analyses the implications of political vigilantism on Ghana's global image and the West African sub-region. Lastly, the study discusses the roles of state and non-state actors in tackling the threat of political vigilantism to political security.

State actors in this work refer to government agencies and machinery. The work also classifies civil society groups, academics, non-governmental organisations and vigilante groups as non-state actors. The study adopts the

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frustration-aggression theory and the Marxist theory of conflict as the basis of the theoretical framework.

This study uses the qualitative research method with analyses based on primary sources, such as reports, state policy documents, and newspapers. It also employs interviews with resource persons from state institutions such as the National Peace Council of Ghana, the Ghana Police Service, civil society groups, namely CODEO Ghana and FOSDA, security analysts, academics, and vigilante group members. Secondary sources such as reference books, research papers, dissertations and scholarly articles from journals, research institutions, and publishers are used in this research.

Background of the Study

The historical origins of the term political vigilantism could be traced to the two-section Greek and Latin word, "Politika," which implies undertakings of the urban areas and "Vigilantem," which means watchful, anxious, and careful, respectively. The latter was first used as an allusion to refer to an advisory group set up to smother and rebuff wrongdoings, particularly in situations when the procedures of the law seemed deficient. Therefore, it is vital to note that to be "vigilant" does not necessarily mean to be violent. Vigilantism commonly has positive connotations such as watchfulness, alertness, observance, and caution.

Haas (2010) avows that the literature on vigilantism generally portrays a disagreement on its rudimentary elements (such as who, what, why, when, how and against whom). Some scholars believe that vigilantes are always private citizens (Johnston, 1996; Little and Sheffield, 1983), while others see vigilantism as conducted by state agents (Dumsday, 2009; Huggins, 1991).

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Some scholars accept that prevention consists of aggression threats (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974), but some give non-violence examples as well (Hine, 1998).

The term vigilantism is sometimes used positively to refer to actions by a group of people aimed at safeguarding society. Crisis Group Africa Report (2017) indicates that actions by vigilante groups play a significant role in countering attacks and providing vital local knowledge to the regular armed forces, thus improving the efficacy of counterinsurgency campaigns. The activities of such groups supplement the effort of state actors in providing security for the citizenry. The Kamajors, for example, fought in Sierra Leone's civil war (1991-2002); the Arrow Boys of Teso, who fought the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in eastern Uganda (2003-2007); the Zande Arrow Boys, who waged the LRA and later rebelled in South Sudan against the Dinka-led regime (2005-present); and the Civilian Joint Task Force, who worked closely.

However, Johnston (1996) defines vigilantism as essentially violent, conservative, extra-legal or illegal, organised, and directed only towards crime; agents acting on behalf of the state such as the police as well as by private citizens undertake such acts. These views connote vigilantism as a negative concept. Conflict and violence threaten the political security and democracy of society. Chaos can lead to loss of property, vandalisation and, in extreme cases, death. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) hold a different view from Johnston (1996)'s assertion that vigilantism could only be encouraged by private actors. These scholars argue that sometimes, state actors are perpetrators of vigilante violence. In effect, Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974)

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posit that vigilantism is the illegitimate use of force by state-supported groups and institutions. Fuller definitions of vigilantism are offered in chapter two of this study.

Vigilante groups can severely compromise central authority, exacerbate strife by assaulting ethnic or political rivals or jeopardize long-term peace by remaining an autonomous armed group after the initial crisis has faded (Africa Crisis Group Report, 2017). State actors sometimes carry out acts of vigilantism. For instance, in 2019, an act of violence perpetrated by state actors happened at the Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency, as violence smeared what was supposed to be a peaceful by-election to replace a demised member of parliament, Emmanuel Kwabena Kyeremateng Agyarko (Graphic Online, 31 January 2019). There is a claim that National security operatives (a state actor) unleashed acts of brutality supposedly on members of the opposition party (National Democratic Congress).

In this current study, some participants such as security analysts and retired security officers likened or referred to vigilante groups as thugs or terrorist groups. Historically, both terrorist and vigilante groups argue that they operate with the hope to bring an excellent act to society. However, the study distinguishes the two. Hoffman (2006) describes terrorism as the intentional creation and exploitation of fear in pursuing political change through violence or the threat of violence. Thus, terrorist groups operate intending to undermine a political authority or ideology to gain political office. Vigilante groups work differently from the former. Despite both driving fear in people's hearts through violence, the latter primarily intends to engage in

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acts of mayhem to prove their loyalty to a government or a particular political affiliation or individual.

The study relies on the definition given in the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) to operationalise political vigilantism. Act 999 defines:

Vigilantism as conduct or threat of violence or intimidation carried out by an individual or a group of people to further the interests of that individual or any other individual affiliated or associated with or affiliated or related to a political party, a political office holder, an official or member of a political party, a landowner or acquirer of landed property, a real estate developer, a public office holder or any person who holds an office of a public nature, or mining activities, or a person who engages in any act of vigilantism.

Therefore, for purposes of this work, political vigilantism is operationalised as conduct or threat of violence or intimidation undertaken by individuals or groups loyal to the government, private citizens and associates or affiliates of political parties. The history of the world is deeply embedded with acts of vigilantism often carried out violently (Baker, 2002). Activities of vigilante groups in countries such as The United States of America, Finland, Germany, Sierra Leone, Benin, Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria, Togo, Burundi, Ghana, Mexico, Hungary, Italy, among others, show that there is an upsurge in cases of political vigilantism. In Ghana, political vigilantism has been widely used to connote political party violence, particularly in the media.

Political vigilantism has become an exceptionally constant phenomenon on Ghana's security exertion. Many individuals have depicted

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this move as a two-edged sword that accompanies a few advantages just as adverse outcomes with its negatives overwhelming, to some extent, the positives. In the last decades of the twenty-first century, the notion that the primary actors in the global system are the sovereign states has become a significant debate in international relations (Willetts, 2001; Colás, 2002 and Arts, 1998).. Vigilantism in Ghana broadly relates to violence and is associated with political parties. Over the years, since Ghana's shift to constitutional rule in 1992, the number of violent acts that have become characteristic of party vigilante groups' events during each stage of the electoral cycle has risen (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

In this sense, the vigilantes of the political party are related to a lawless group of persons associated with political parties whose violent activities are mostly evident before, during and after public elections. These acts involve forcibly expelling past administration officials from their official residence and offices, sometimes accompanied by assaults and involving uncoordinated seizures of public property and assets in the custody of government authorities. The vigilantism of the political party was an aberration in the politics of Ghana and retrogression in its path towards democracy and, most notably, the political security of the citizenry.

General elections in Ghana since the beginning of the Fourth Republic were not without the activities of political vigilante groups, resulting in violence and vandalisation of private and public properties. Their actions have caused severe injuries to innocent citizens leading to some deaths. The 2008 and 2016 post-election transition periods were nearly marred with political party vigilante groups seizing public properties. Unfortunately, the

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manifestations of political party vigilante groups have continued from the political transition periods in Ghana following elections and have become almost an everyday phenomenon (Akyire & Arhin, 2017).

Furthermore, the country has seen a sequence of politically motivated demonstrations, clashes, and political violence in recent years. Though it may be argued that citizen power is one of the mechanisms by which citizens exercise their democratic mandate, the scourge of hooliganism and violence is slowly spreading across Ghana and the rest of the world. Vigilante groups assume active jobs in improving security before and after elections, especially in areas with an institutional failure. The brutal acts of vigilante groups contribute to weakening the security issues to some measurable degree (Smith, 2004). This means that this has become a threat to human security generally and, specifically, political security.

Security has assumed a broader perspective since the end of the Cold War. Human rights, food, health, the environment and human development are now protected by security issues (Newman, 2010; Swanström, 2010; Ayoob, 1997; Hough, 2014). The 1994 UNDP Report (UNDP, 1994: 22-32, Newman, 2010) championed the idea of human protection and earned the support of countries and international organisations.

The concept of human security assumes that security should be "people-centred" and that food, jobs, health, lack of crime and freedom from repression should be part and parcel of citizens' security (UNDP, 1994). Liotta and Owen (2006) claim that the idea of human security has the safety of people at its heart. The concept focuses on "freedom from fear," "freedom from want," and "freedom to live in dignity," and assumes that only if the

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person becomes the "referent and primary recipient" can protection measures be effective (UNDP, 1994; Boafo-Arthur, 2002; Newman, 2010).

Political security falls under the concept of Human Security. The term Human Security was broadly popularised by the United Nations Development Programme (Singh, 2014). It is defined as "the security of people through development, not arms; through cooperation, not confrontation; and through peace, not war (UNDP, 1994)." Singh (2014) noted that political security is the seventh dimension of human security. Political security involves freedom of expression, conscience, and assembly. It also entails freedom from government subjugation, systematic violations of human rights, and militarisation (Singh, 2014).

In this study, political security is operationalised to preserve citizens' political and civil liberties that guarantee their involvement in their state's governance processes. It includes participating in electoral processes without fear or intimidation, absence of political repression, adherence to the rule of law, and the total observance of the freedom of press and association. Thus, any action that undermines the enjoyment of the above becomes a threat to political security.

If a conflict emerges as a result of violent acts by these vigilante groups, it becomes a threat to the political security of the citizenry. This arguably has a rippling effect on the electoral processes and, in the broader perspective, the democracy of Ghana (Gyampo, 2010). Acts by vigilante groups, particularly in Ghana, have dented the image of democracy and threaten the political security of the people. Vigilante groups are known to terrorise people who do not conform to the political philosophies of the

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specific party they associate with. Political parties have broadly acknowledged these groups as they are seen to provide security to them.

Statement of Problem

The expanding number of vigilante groups and their militarisation represent substantial challenges and concerns to Ghana's burgeoning democracy and national security. Adjei (2019) maintains that Ghana is gradually building a political culture that nourishes political vigilantism. Political vigilantism in recent times has assumed a more radical and cyclonic nature that is threatening the political security of the people. Out of this fear, the National Peace Council Chairman, Rev. Professor Emmanuel Asante, indicated that he does not feel safe in the country considering the current rise of pro-government party vigilantism (*Daily Graphic, October 31, 2017*). National Security Minister Albert Kan-Dapaah expressed his frustration with the growing trend of political vigilantism, describing the activities of political vigilante groups as criminal and reiterating that security agencies are determined to counter the groups and bring an end to their activities (*Daily Graphic, April 7, 2017*). Vigilantes' ability to ignore and physically assault President Kufuor's appointees, and then set free colleagues on trial in Kumasi for the initial offence of evicting the Ashanti Regional Security Coordinator, Mr George Adjei, implies that they have established themselves as a semi-autonomous institution that threatens the state's legitimacy (WANEP, 2019)

Though there are reports from civil society groups like Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO Ghana), media outlets and other bodies on the activities of political vigilantism in Ghana, available literature has shown that scholarly works on the phenomenon remain limited. Tankebe

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(2009), Gyampo (2010), Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) are examples of some of the few scholarly works on the concept of political vigilantism in Ghana. However, their works mainly focuses on the effect of political vigilantism on democratic governance. Their studies also fail to unearth the origins and the factors that trigger political party vigilantism and how it is organised and funded. Appiah-Nyamekye and Armah-Attoh (2018) explore Ghanaians who denounce mob 'justice' and political-party vigilantism, endorse the rule of law instead. Their study focuses on only Ghanaians perspective of political-party vigilantism.

In a policy brief on political vigilantism, Armah-Attoh (2017) used *Afrobarometer Round 7 (2017)* survey data and pre-election survey data to look at party footsoldiers in Ghana's politics. Edu-Afful and Allottey-Pappoe (2016) explore how sub-state actors provide security in the political landscape, with a focus on political vigilantism and electoral violence in Ghana. The place of state and non-state actors in mitigating the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana receives little attention. Therefore, this current study builds on existing literature by examining the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism. It also explores political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana and the role of state and non-state actors in addressing it. The study seeks to look at the implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global image.

Research Objectives

    i.   Explore the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism

   ii.   Assess political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana

iii.   Examine the implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global image.

iv.   Examine the roles of state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism in Ghana.

Research Questions

i.   What are the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism?

ii.   How does political vigilantism play out as a threat to political security in Ghana?

iii.   What are the implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global image?

iv.   What roles do state and non-state actors play in addressing Political Vigilantism in Ghana?

Rationale for the Study

This study is essential for many reasons. Although there are reports from civil society groups like Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO Ghana), The Coalition of Civil Societies Against Political Vigilantism (CCSAPV), Kofi Annan Peace Centre, West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and IMANI Ghana on the activities of political vigilantism in Ghana, research has shown that scholarly works in this area are limited. Tankebe (2009) situates what he refers to as "Ghanaian Vigilantism" in the context of Rule of Law. Gyampo (2010) concentrates on some restricted issues of party apparatchiks; notwithstanding, it did not cover specifically how political vigilantism contributes to election triumphs, defeats and stances genuine dangers not exclusively to governance yet additionally on Ghana's whole democratic development. Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) focus

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on political vigilantism and democratic governance in Ghana. In this, they looked at the genesis of vigilantism in Ghana, the link between political vigilantism and clientelism and the adverse effects of political vigilantism on the democratic development of Ghana. Arhin (2020), in a *Preliminary Report on Ghana's December 7, 2020 Presidential and General Elections* by CODEO Ghana, indicates that the elections recorded twenty-six violent cases, with the most notable being at the Odododiodio Constituency in the Greater Accra region. This development points to the mayhem of political vigilantism to the security of people, especially before, during and after elections in Ghana.

This present study examines the threat of political vigilantism to political security from the roles of state and non-state actors in Ghana. It builds on the existing literature that will serve as an academic reference for future researchers on Ghana's political vigilantism and political security. Moreover, the activities of political vigilante groups have become a significant concern to political actors, social commentators, academia and society at large. Therefore, any study to ascertain the intricacy of the phenomenon cannot be overemphasised.

As a result, the study is timely and serves to help raise the political thermometer in terms of Ghana's attempts to design mechanisms to tackle the canker of political vigilantism. The study's findings expose industry players and the government to the threat of political vigilantism to political security. The study can also serve as a primary document for policymakers to help address the menace of political violence that has undermined democracy and political security and promote Ghana's influence and image worldwide. It also

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serves as reference material and guideline for policymakers, Ghanaian diplomats and academia, and future research in the area of study.
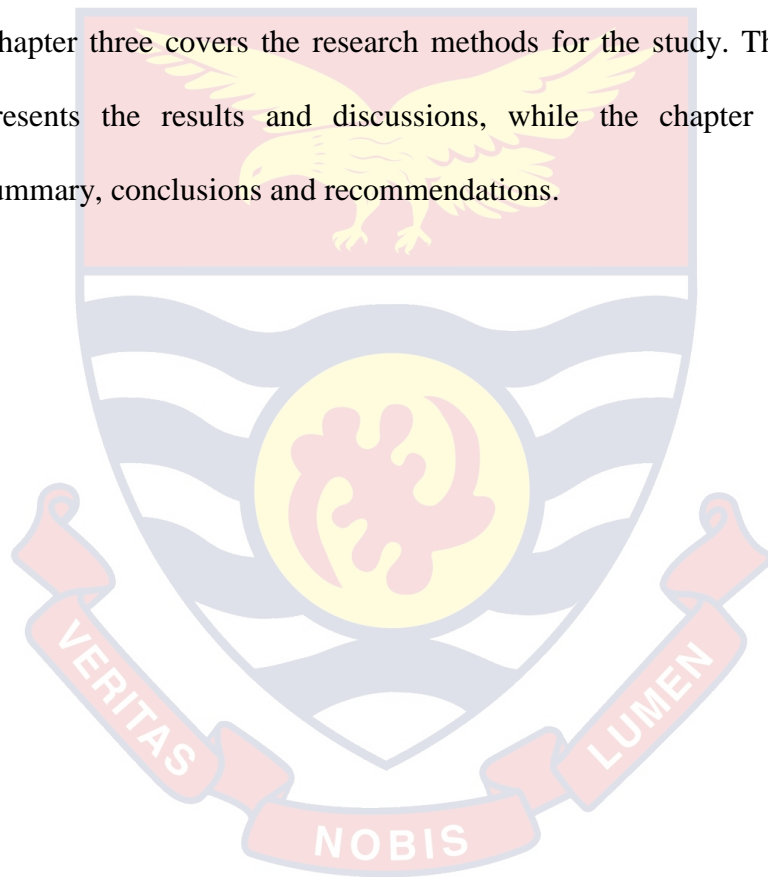
Challenges of the Study

In a quest to arrive at research findings, several challenges were faced, which were overcome. First, data gathering became quite hectic, as personnel from some of the targeted institutions the researcher sought to interview were either unavailable or unwilling to respond to interview questions because of security and other personal reasons. A section of those willing to respond also had to be followed around before responding to the questions. The coronavirus pandemic also made it difficult to reach the participants and hence delayed the work. Nonetheless, the study found other resource persons who could equally respond to the questions the researcher had formulated.

Delimitation of the Study

Several works done on political vigilantism in Ghana have focused on the threat it poses to the democracy and stability of the country. Other works have focused on community vigilante groups and their place in democracy and security. However, this study assesses the roles of state and non-state actors in tackling the threat of political vigilantism on political security. This took into account the implications not only on Ghana's global image but also on security issues. The focus of the study was on participants from the National Peace Council of Ghana and the Ghana Police Service (state actors), two civil society organisations, namely; CODEO Ghana and FOSDA, security analysts, retired security officers, academics and members of vigilante groups. This helps to contextualise and focus the research, thereby adding to its specificity and avoiding any over-generalisation.

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Organisation of the Study

The research is organised into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study. It covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the research questions to the study, the rationale for the study, challenges and delimitations of the study, and the organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with the theories underpinning the study and literature review and discusses political vigilantism in Ghana. Chapter three covers the research methods for the study. The fourth chapter presents the results and discussions, while the chapter five covers the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The study assesses the role of state and non-state actors in addressing the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. This chapter reviews related literature on the study area. The chapter first covers the theories used in the study: the frustration-aggression theory and the Marxist theories of conflict. This is followed by a review of relevant literature with particular reference to the concept of state and non-state actors, political vigilantism in retrospect, and the concept of political security.

Theories Underpinning the Study

The frustration-aggression theory is usually referred to as the hypothesis of frustration-aggression. The theory dates from the 1930s. Since its introduction in the late 1930s, it has been used and explored in innumerable fields, including clinical and social psychology, ethnology, politics, international relations, sociology, criminology, and medical science. In 1939, John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939 propounded the frustration-aggression theory. It was further developed by Neal Miller in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. Dollard *et al.* (1939, p. 1) stated that the event of forceful conduct consistently surmises the presence of disappointment and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration invariably prompts some aggression. These proponents consider aggression as the result of hindering or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal.

The frustration-aggression theory endeavours to clarify how and why some individuals become fierce or aggressive in specific situations at

gatherings. When it cannot be uprooted or eased, the thought is that frustration transforms into aggression (Berkowitz, 1989). This animosity may then culminate into violence, bringing about the baffled individual lashing out. This lashing out might be aimed at someone else or an inanimate object. Aggression does not generally develop into violence since specific individuals have found ways to avoid or control their aggression by productively utilising this energy.

The concept of political vigilantism can be examined using the frustration-aggression theory as it helps to explain why individuals or groups of people resort to political violence. Vigilant groups feel frustrated when their expectations based on the various promises made by ruling governments and opposition parties are not met in their quest for power. The pent up rage issued from frustration leads to aggression and is manifested in the violent actions adopted by vigilante groups. Another factor that sometimes causes a section of the public to express their frustration is the "winner takes all" syndrome in Ghana. This situation often leads to such aggressive and illegal acts. Such violent acts include seizing public toilets, distracting court procedures, forcefully removing appointed personnel from their offices, and stealing ballot boxes during elections (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

In the scope of Ghana's political vigilantism, ruling government supporters behave aggressively as their expectations of getting jobs, deals and political appointments are unfulfilled. On August 1, 2017, an instance involved the Tema-based Invincible Forces, a pro-NPP vigilante group, threatening to cause chaos in the Tema Metropolis should the NPP government fail to provide them with jobs. The group's representative

reportedly said, "You promised there will be some jobs coming on the way. We have shared numbers with those who should be hiring us. I have been calling them for nearly two months now, but no one is willing to answer my calls" (*CifiFM Online*, August 1, 2017). As they have the political authority's support, the vigilante groups believe their illegal practice would go unprosecuted. The vigilante groups resort to political vigilantism to register their grievances, disappointments and displeasure with the government because of the resentments and disappointments of unmet expectations.

The Marxist theory of conflict. Proponents of The Marxist theory of conflicts maintain that society is an amalgamated class of individuals with antagonistic values, beliefs and concerns. The theory establishes that society comprises the bourgeoisie comprising: a dominant class with a lot of influence (power and money), and the proletariat: a subordinate class without influence. Both classes are considered in a constant dispute against each other because of society's struggle over the scarce resources available. Domination and influence preserve social order as the wealthy and powerful dominate the weak and the poor. The Marxists describe the state as a bourgeois group ruling for the needs of the upper class (Marx & Engels, 1975).

In contrast, Weber reflected on the state as a human society that asserts the monopoly (successfully) of the legal use of physical force within a given territory (Weber, 2002). Yet to Lenin, the state is a legal system under which there is exploitation (Lenin, 1932). It is an institution with recognised apparatus purposely and directly meant to defend and uphold class domination and exploitation.

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Conflict occurs when the proletariat feels oppressed and undervalued by the ruling class because of being heavily taxed. This subordinate class wishes to be treated with respect and be provided with state services. Marxism also highlights a particular framework of conflict generated as the outcome of capitalism's forces. In theory, if the state does not ensure that labour owners (the subordinate class) benefit from the resources in society, the feeling of marginalisation and side alignment may germinate among them. Consequently, the marginalised group may seek all possible means, including a revolution, to ensure that they also receive their share.

According to these theorists, the dominant group can interpret the vigilante response as a desperate lash out as it recognises it is losing control of the state apparatus to others (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1976). Vigilante violence could be analysed as a normal section of exploitation by the dominant class. The Marxist theorists view this violence as a normal part of politics until the proletariat revolution (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1976).

Barkley Brown (1994) argues that class conflict between the affluent American cattle tycoons and the impoverished farmers and herders culminated in vigilante groupings forming. The juror who emerged from the proletariat class would not punish one of its own, allowing the elite class to fall constantly in court. The elite decoded to form rank-and-file gangs similar to vigilante groups to protect their animals in the face of this situation. In the face of the wealthy, individuals like James Jesse were treated as criminals. The poor treated them as social bandits, too (Hobsbawn, 1971). Just as it is the case in social difference without a mechanism of the diplomatic resolution,

usually violence gives dependable deterrent to groups of people in support of the interest of the elite class.

Therefore, concerning political vigilantism in Ghana, the ruling elite created a group that favoured quick justice through violence. The group would deter, sometimes by frightening the lower class threatening their interests. Just as the people of Ghana were unable to trust in the weak Ghanaian state protection machinery to safeguard them and their properties, wealthy livestock barons of the American frontline could not use state justice institutions controlled to enough extent by the poor to make them useless. Lenin points out that these vigilante groups are asserting that "a state is formed, a special power is created in the form of special bodies of armed men and every revolution by shattering the state apparatus, bodies of armed men to create a new organisation of its brand capable of serving not the exploiter but the exploited" (Lenin, 1932).

It is also worth noting that elites and leaders play a critical role in mobilising grievances and shaping narratives that may steer groups away from violent actions. Marxist conflict theory suggests collective violence does not result from spontaneous outbursts of rage. Instead, elites, in some cases, plan and execute violence to enhance group cohesion and maintain a loyal support base (Demmers, 2016). However, vigilantes have severally been criticised for steering their selfish interest, the shared desire of any group of political actors and which motivates their political activity (Bentray, 1967). This vigilante-based self-interest creates another level of conflict in society. Therefore, the vigilante groups germinate because of this conflict between the dominant and the subordinate classes.

The fusion of these theories serves as a guide for the theoretical framework of this research.

State Actors and Non-State Actors

State and non-state actors are significant stakeholders in issues of political vigilantism (Smith, 2004). State actors comprise the government and its agencies or institutions. Non-state actors include civil societies, non-governmental organisations, and private firms that have a role in political vigilantism issues. Within this study, state actors refer to government pieces of machinery and institutions charged with several responsibilities in safeguarding the political security of the people within their jurisdiction. Non-state actors also include vigilante groups who play active roles in acts of vigilantism across the globe. Abrahams (1996, 1998) demonstrated many historical and cross-cultural similarities in the relationship between vigilantism and the state, suggesting that political vigilantism is a common response to the ambiguities and ambivalence of the state. The perceived failures of a government have provided the impetus for vigilante violence.

Using the definition given by the Factbook of US National Intelligence Council (2007), in La Porte (2012), non-state actors are actors besides states, who wield significant economic, political or social power and influence at national and international levels. This definition encompasses actors ranging from terrorists and criminal networks to NGOs or multinationals. La Porte (2012) also avows that international relations are being changed by the emergence of non-state actors in recent years. Any ramifications of globalisation, such as the crisis of the state or the effects of emerging

technology, or the development of a robust civil society, have several global players.

The definition of non-state actors is often commonly understood to include any non-state entity, sometimes used to refer to armed groups, terrorists, civil society, religious groups, or corporations; the term is also used to include intergovernmental organisations (Clapham, 2009). The term is also used in the particular sense of post-conflict peacebuilding to refer to various entities that function outside state control (Clapham, 2009). Non-state actors also involve vigilante organisations who perform active roles across the globe in acts of vigilantism. Therefore, this study focuses on four categories of non-state actors. These comprise two civil security groups, namely Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO Ghana) and Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), security analysts, academics, and vigilante groups.

Civil society organisations are essential "conciliator organisations," such as professional societies, religious organisations, trade unions, community engagement organisations, where citizens with like minds come together to promote common interest and enrich the quality of government through public participation. Organisations of civil society are the bridge between the state and the people (Ijon, 2017). Therefore, there is an interconnection between state and non-state actors in addressing issues of political vigilantism in the West African sub-region.

According to Gyekye-Jandoh (2017), civil society organisations (CSOs) have dominated the African political landscape, and their influence in democratic governance has also grown tremendously. Mutfang (2003)

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envisages civil society organisations are a large spectrum of organisations and other coordinated collectives capable of articulating the interests of their members, influencing and constraining state power. He emphasises that civil society's recognition or rejection of what is going on in government leads to transparency. Besides, Mutfang (2003) suggests that a well-endowed country is well-equipped to democratise and guarantee effective governance. Through this medium, a weak civil society can be used to justify democracy's flaws.

In examining the role of civil society in the democratisation of Ghana using the 2008 general election as a case study, Gyekye-Jandoh (2017) outlines the roles of CSOs as educational, cooperative, communicative and operational. She argues that the CSO's educational role is to inform the general public about their civil rights and obligations, government functions and to provide education to clarify and encourage democratic principles and concepts of trust and free and fair elections. The cooperative position is where CSOs broaden public engagement and involve the disadvantaged in politics, she added. They work to assist the government in adopting policies that would support both the government and the people. Furthermore, Gyekye-Jandoh (2017) avers that CSOs communicative function is to improve the rapport between the government and the public and serve as a platform through which ideas, relevant issues, and policies are transmitted from the government to the people and from the people to the government.

This is further strengthened by the work of Cooper (2018) on the place of civil society. Cooper (2018) avers that civil society organisations perform roles such as the provision of services (operating primary schools and delivering essential community health care services); advocacy or

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campaigning (lobbying governments or companies on issues on indigenous rights or the environment), and serving as a watchdog (monitoring the compliance with government regulations). They also help develop active citizenship by promoting civic participation at the local level, engaging with local, regional and national governance, and eventually, participate in global governance processes such as civil society organisations serving on the World Bank Climate Investment Funds advisory board. Therefore, civil society organisations actively bring societies together for collective action in the development process: they mobilise society to express their demands and voice concerns at local, national, regional and international levels.

Political Vigilantism in Retrospect

The world has witnessed several vigilante activities. World politics is smeared with such acts that have undermined the rule of law and democratic process of many countries, including the United States of America, Germany, Finland, Togo, Nigeria, and Ghana and have attracted the attention of many scholars: Baker (2002), Meagher (2007), Pratten (2008) and Smith (2004). Vigilante activities is not a new development. Such activities have played out in various forms across the globe. In Africa, for example, the activities of vigilante groups have affected many countries in which they existed.

There are also alternate meanings of vigilantism, such as taking the law into one's hands, a kind of do-it-yourself justice when failing to resort to any other proven means (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974). Etymologically, being 'vigilant' implies being on constant alert, and therefore watchfulness would denote a phenomenon in which groups organise to detect risks. Mireanu (2014) avers that a comprehensive definition of vigilance is burdensome

because of the inflation of concepts that have a close relationship significance, such as a paramilitary, civil militias, neighbourhood patrols, private security, informal policing, death squads and, indeed, terrorism.

Haas (2010) argues that the presumed purpose of vigilantes often varies widely, such as the preservation of an existing socio-political order (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974), law enforcement in an illegal environment (Alvarez & Bachman, 2007), ending an unpleasant situation (Ayyildiz, 1995) and the arrest and prosecution of alleged criminals (Shotland, 1976; Zimring, 2004). For the same rationale, some argue that vigilantism must always be planned (Dumsday, 2009; Johnston, 1996), while others accept more impulsive forms (Adinkrah, 2005; Huggins, 1991; Shotland, 1976). Crime perpetrators (Stover & Brown, 1975), law enforcement officers (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974), minority groups (Sederberg, 1978), whalers (Nagtzaam & Lentini, 2008), witchcraft (Adinkrah, 2005), and political party members are all victims of vigilantism (Asamoah, 2019; Gyampo, 2010)

However, Johnston (1996) refers to vigilantism as essentially violent, conservative, extra-legal or illegal, organised and directed only towards crime. It implies that such activities could be recognised as legal or illegal and can be undertaken by agents acting on behalf of the state, such as the police and individuals within the society. This does not imply that non-state actors only carry out acts of vigilantism. Johnston (1996) discusses six elements of vigilantism. Therefore, without evidence of these elements, vigilantism cannot be said to have taken place. The first element is planning, pre-meditation and organisation. The private voluntary agency is the second element of vigilantism. The third element is autonomous citizenship, with the fourth

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element being the use or threatened use of force. Johnston (1996) described the fifth element as the reaction to crime and social deviance. The sixth element is personal and collective security.

Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1976) aver that vigilante politics is a coordinated effort to suppress or nullify any threats to the status quo outside of legitimate systems. Simply put, it means taking the law into one's hands-on purpose. This was experienced in the context of the United States of America and its history of vigilantism. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1976) acknowledge that politically motivated violence often associated with vigilantism is a worldwide phenomenon and not confined to the United States. The Esquadāro da Morte (Death Squad) executes individuals charged with being constant lawbreakers in Brazil. From 1920 to 1922, the Protestant B Specials in Northern Ireland mistreated Catholics. Strong opposition to Chinese sentiments gave rise to vigilante groups in Southeast Asia. Other vigilante organisations include the Muslim Brotherhood Society in Egypt, the Jewish Protection League, the White Hand of Guatemala, and the Nazi Brown Shirts (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1976).

Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1976) dedicate the first part of their work to theory and offer a typology of vigilantism. The second part looks at vigilante episodes in the United States by tracing the origin of vigilante politics in the United States. The final part examines vigilantism from a comparative perspective, incorporating Asia, Africa, and Europe examples. The comparative perspective becomes very necessary in supporting the claim that vigilante politics is a global phenomenon. There is an element of clientelism in most cases. Also, people who engage in such acts hide behind

the pretence of what they perceive to be a "break-down of the law," thereby justifying their actions with the ideology of letting the "status-quo" remain.

Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) hold a different view from Johnston (1996), arguing that private actors can only encourage vigilantism. They aver that sometimes, state actors are perpetrators of vigilante violence. Thus, Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) argue that vigilantism can be referred to as the unconstitutional use of force by state-supported organisations and institutions. There is scientific consensus on the belief that activism beyond the limits of the law, frequently synonymous with violence, characterises political vigilantism (Nivette, 2016; Phillips, 2016; Silke & Taylor, 2000). Activities of vigilante groups are mostly considered illegal and contrary to the laws of a country. For instance, acts of political vigilantism are captured in the constitution of the Republic of Ghana as unlawful. However, there are still traces of such activities in recent times (Asamoah, 2019).

Almond, Powell, and Mundt (2001) maintain that political vigilante groups' actions generally reflect anomic group behaviours. These usually spontaneous groups arise spontaneously when many individuals react to frustration, dissatisfaction or other strong emotions. This is in line with the frustration-aggression theory that endeavours to clarify how and why a few people, or gatherings of individuals, become fierce or aggressive during specific situations. Because of the frustrations and disappointments of unmet expectations, the vigilante groups resort to political vigilantism to register their frustrations, disappointments, and disappointment to the government.

The activities of vigilante groups are deeply embedded in the history of many countries across different continents. The purpose of the creation of such

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groups also varies from one to the other. Their mode of operation also varies from one to the other. Nonetheless, there are some similarities in some of the actions that vigilante groups take. A common feature of such activities is the high patronage of state actors, weaponry, and the increased reliance on violence to signal their presence. The ensuing section focuses on some vigilante groups across Africa. It looks at the creation, purpose, actions and demise of some particular vigilante groups.

The case of Africa

Gratz (2007) argues that, in the Weberian sense of the term, many contemporary African countries are poor states due to a lack of complete control of their territories, an absolute monopoly of violence and weak institutions. This picture further emphasises the presence of local influences, authorities and forms of resource annexation. Similar systems and power activities vary from corporate groups coordinating tax avoidance, corruption, smuggling and informal development to autonomous spheres of local jurisprudence, including arbitration, fines and taxation, to opposition political parties, quasi-independent regions and warlords. Beyond the scope of the state, many 'intermediary' types of local political influence can rely on both local forms of political action and emerging institutions (Alber, 2000, 2001; Schlee, 2001). Among these are vigilante groups and militias, which in many African countries have recently increased in significance. Specific regimes of public order (Abrahams, 1998), control of legal processes and control of economic subsystems may often be created by vigilante groups.

In looking at the characteristics of vigilante groups in Africa, Gratz (2007) points out that they usually operate in marginal or peripheral regions in

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African states. In any event, they are often more than simple organisations of self-defence; they give rise to local movements, create multiple social ties and relationships among their members, and are shaped by pertinent moral discourses (Gratz, 2007). These characteristics may differ from one vigilante group to another. In some scenarios, most of these characteristics are visible, while only a few exist in others. The action of vigilante groups, be it paramilitary, militia groups and the struggle for legitimacy, carried positive and negative connotations.

According to Comaroff and Comaroff (1993) and Gore and Pratten (2003), the occurrence of vigilantism in Africa can be productively examined in the context of ideas of political and moral accountability. In contemporary Nigeria, for example, the prominence of vigilantism stems from a widely held belief that recent political and economic events have resulted in increased inequality and injustice. However, this current study argues to the contrary, taking into account the views from other vigilantism-related events, that this is the case for most African countries. Linked to the frustration-aggression theory (discussed earlier in work), the mistrust and lack of confidence in the system have accounted for the activities of most vigilante groups across Africa. Vigilante groups sometimes feel entitled to various promises made by state and non-state actors to better society and their lives. Frustrations that arise from failures of these state and non-state actors and then transformed into aggressive actions by such vigilante groups. Political vigilante groups' activities typically reflect anomic group behaviours, usually spontaneous groups that develop spontaneously when several individuals respond to frustration, dissatisfaction or other bad feelings (Almond *et al.*, 2001).

Asamoah (2019) avows that the wave of military coups or power grabs that shook the continent in the late 1990s was related to multiple forms of vigilantism. Yayoh (2007) avows that Ghana's political history since independence has been marked with several successful and unsuccessful military take-overs attempts. It appears that the use of military and politics are old bedfellows. The insurgencies in most African countries have led to vigilante or paramilitary groups across the continent. State actors sometimes became linked or associated with vigilante groups to do the bidding of the government. These vigilante groups considered non-state actors have undertaken several activities that threaten the citizenry's political security. Examples of such vigilante groups in different African countries are discussed below.

Benin

Benin is a country located in West Africa. In discussing political vigilantism in Africa, the activities of a vigilante group known as the Group of Colonel Devi is well documented (Gratz, 2007; Kohnert, 2000; Lorin, 2016). They only existed for over seven years in the Mono region of south-western Benin. Their dominance subsided with the arrest of its leader by the military force in January 2002. As a response to the overwhelming insecurity and criminality attributed to armed gangs operating in the border region between Benin and Togo, the Group of Colonel Devi was established in 1999. People's economic and social life was very much threatened as market activities dwindled and public life was primarily influenced by augmented cases of violent rape and murder (Gratz, 2007). Despite some arrests, the state actors

were unable to reduce these criminal activities. They were accused of being unproductive, fearful and lacking strategy.

During this period, youths clustered around the former soldier, alias Colonel Devi (they were always called 'Devi's men' and did not possess an official name) and established a self-help group. Initially conceived as a defence unit, it soon started to chase and try robbers and gangsters throughout the region (Gratz, 2007; Kohnert, 2000; Lorin, 2016). They organised regular patrols, set up night watches, instituted roadblocks, encouraged people to report suspicious movements and contained punitive assemblies. Devi's activities thus encompassed many typical elements of militia activity, but he also borrowed, at least performatively, from some practices of official establishments. For example, tribunals were held. As Gratz (2007) indicated, his informants' notes that they began as court trials do, by calling everybody to stand up when the judges entered, calling upon the accused to give their name, and so on.

However, later, the Colonel of Devi tortured delinquents, and most of those arrested were sentenced to death by being buried alive. State actors who have a role to play in the maintenance of law and order in the country were disabled in their efforts to stop them and seemed, in a way, content to let them continue. A few years later, however, things took a different turn at the end of 2001. A dozen cases of arbitrary arrest were reported, and even minor crimes were punished with the death penalty. The group investigated Persons accused of possessing witchcraft, and the mutilated bodies of women accused of being witches were found (Kohnert, 2000; Lorin, 2016).

The group's purpose was defeated. It had transformed into a mafia-like group or militia, refusing all collaboration with state security forces, which they did not tolerate in the Mono area. State security forces were threatened with death threats, tortures and various forms of abuse in their attempt to intervene. Colonel Devi operated as an illegal entity whose activities were considered a clear violation of the state's laws. The group, which began as a social control institution, started to challenge the state's sovereignty, not only in its monopoly of violence but also in its endeavours to control public services, taxes and roads, which were vital means for its agents to generate revenue.

The group had assumed a more radical posture that was a danger to the political security of the citizenry and a dent in the democracy of Benin. The government commenced an effective move against the group as a state actor, establishing a veritable territorial hegemony in the Mono region. In January 2002, government forces (the army and police inclusive) moved into the area in joint action and apprehended many group members, including Colonel Devi. The group has become insignificant in recent times.

Sierra Leone

The Kamajors is a well-known vigilante group in Sierra Leone. The civil war in Sierra Leone started as a struggle between government forces and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the early 1990s. The RUF, initially based in Liberia, conducted attacks on both military and civilian targets, mainly in the provinces of the east and south (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2017). In response, local leaders began mobilising young people, including Kamajor hunters, to safeguard their homelands. Sam Hinga Norman, a retired

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military captain and local governor, organised the youth in and around Bo, the country's second-largest city. Norman rose quickly to become the Kamajors' national leader and figurehead, due mainly to his military experience and moral courage. As the fighting spread, other ethnic groups formed defence factions in their areas, but the Kamajors in the south and east remained by far the largest and assumed a reputation as the fiercest (Zack-Williams, 1997).

According to Zack-Williams (1997) and Crisis Group Africa Report (2017), recognising the strength of the local forces and the usefulness of their local expertise, the beleaguered government enabled them to serve as auxiliaries to the army, acting mainly as guides and informants. Nevertheless, Kamajors' distrust of the soldiers soon undermined cooperation. The government rapidly expanded the military to counter the insurgency, quadrupling its numbers from 3,000 before the war to around 13,000 by 1992. Rapid expansion, coupled with poor leadership, training, and machinery, resulted in some frontline troops becoming so-called Sobels (soldiers/rebels) who preyed on civilians, sometimes collaborating with insurgents. In response, the Kamajors defended their communities and shielded them from both rebels and soldiers.

To compensate for its military fragility, the government engaged a private South African military firm, Executive Outcomes, which battled rebels from 1995 to early 1997. They heavily relied on the local experience of the Kamajors. Their joint operations brought the Mende-dominated People's Party of Sierra Leone (SLPP) to power in a time of sufficient stability to allow the February 1996 elections to take place. Norman, the most well-known Kamajors representative, was designated deputy defence minister, and the

state increased funding for the local security force. To persuade those who alleged the Kamajors were becoming the ruling party's army, the government established the Civil Defense Forces, a national umbrella organisation for all vigilante organisations (CDF). A central coordinating committee largely composed of members from various ethnic defence groups used government funds to acquire weapons, ammunition, food, and medical supplies, then distributed to ground units (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2017).

According to Human Rights Watch, neither national leaders nor the ECOMOG (self-accused of complicity in Civil Defence Forces abuses) was inclined or able to manage such a massive, disparate, undisciplined, and largely untrained force (2001). The Kamajors' admirable fearlessness was matched by their brutality, especially when operating outside their home areas, reinforced by initiation rites that were supposed to make fighters infallible to bullets. They robbed and harassed civilians in bigger cities like Freetown and Bo, killing those suspected of collaborating with the enemy; they were accused of committing massacres in supposedly pro-rebel villages in rural areas (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2017). A cautionary lesson lies in this: the willingness of the state to mobilise civilians to fight on its behalf can cause widespread, unchecked recruitment, swell a vigilante force beyond the capacity of the state to supervise, let alone monitor it.

Nigeria

Smith (2004) notes that in 1999, the inauguration of Obasanjo's first civilian government in over sixteen years was met with much enthusiasm as it grew public optimism that democracy would ensure economic growth and political reform. As a rebuttal to the perceived failures of the government,

Gore and Pratten (2003) and Ikelegbe (2001) avow that numerous violent groups emerged in many parts of Nigeria in the late 1990s and operated with widespread public support. The rise of youthful urban-based vigilante groups is not unique to Nigeria. Similar trends in Ghana (Gyampo, 2010), Cameroon (Argenti, 1998; Malaquais, 2001), Kenya (Anderson, 2002), and South Africa (Baker, 2002; Haysom, 1990) indicate that Nigerians' understandings of inequality and power in the era of democracy are widespread. The Bakassi Boys, a vigilante group in Nigeria, will be the focus of attention.

According to the Human Right Watch (2002), the Bakassi Boys is a vigilante group located in south-eastern Nigeria. The group that traders created in response to criminal activities by armed robbers turned into a violent one. The Bakassi Boys' violent vigilantism, starkly uncivil in its practises and consequences, exemplifies the intricacies and discrepancies that characterise the contours of political organisation and imagination in contemporary Nigeria. In late 1998, the severity of extortion and violent robberies carried out by an ever-growing powerful group of criminal gangs enraged traders and shoemakers in the commercial south-eastern Nigerian city of Aba. This led to the formation of the Bakassi Boys (Meagher, 2007; Smith, 2004; Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Originally consisting of young traders and other young men paid by the traders' associations' contributions, the Bakassi Boys embarked on a campaign to rid violent criminals of Aba's main market and publicly execute many suspected criminals in Aba. The instant justice meted out was usually held in prominent public spaces such as major intersections or market centres, attracting tremendous observers. With machete blows, the party executed

these suspected offenders, mutilated their bodies, and set them ablaze at the execution site (Meagher, 2007; Human Rights Watch, 20002).

Smith (2004) asserts that acts by vigilante groups within Nigeria enjoyed popular support. Even as the Bakassi Boys appeared to perpetrate violence and injustices that surpassed the deeds of criminals that vigilantism was meant to combat, the group enjoyed popular support (Smith, 2004). As in many vigilante groups within Africa, the group's purpose was changed from one meant to protect people's livelihood to one that terrorised people through violence and injustices. Having much influence on society, the Bakassi Boys sharply transformed themselves into a regional vigilante force. By 2000, the group succeeded in its operations in several cities in three states across south-eastern Nigeria. Their exploits were widely reported in the media, giving them fame in the southeast region of Nigeria and beyond.

Politicians at the local level saw the Bakassi Boys' popularity as advantageous and used it to their obvious benefit, providing them with legitimacy and support. The state governors of Abia and Anambra states, which are home to the major cities where the Bakassi Boys worked, provided official support to the vigilantes. They were given formal names such as the Abia State Vigilante Services and the Anambra Vigilante Services and support, cars, and political cover (Smith, 2004). This appears to support the argument that state and non-state actors' roles in political vigilantism and political security are crucial.

Prominent politicians and sometimes government officials legitimised the activities of vigilante groups such as the Bakassi Boys. This served as a cushion or a shield that made them engage in their unlawful acts without fear

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of government intervention at the local level. The patronage by unscrupulous government officials further gave the Bakassi Boys a sense of purpose and self-fulfilment. This seems to be the norm across most African states who are battling the canker of political vigilantism. Sometimes, these vigilante groups grow much more robust to the extent of rebelling against their patrons or clients. It also sometimes becomes a battle for supremacy and greater power.

After a few years, many rumours circulated about how the Bakassi Boys themselves were political thugs in service to their patrons and engaged in killing innocent citizens. A series of reports and statements detailing the alleged atrocities of the Bakassi Boys were released by international and domestic human rights organisations in the spring of 2002. Their activities posed a serious threat to citizens' political security, and it was just a matter of time before it escalated into a mass political massacre. Thus, there was a strong call for the Federal government of Nigeria to intervene and save the situation (Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Following a deadly clash with police in Abia State and the widely publicised murder of the Anambra President of the Nigerian Bar Association, the government disbanded the Bakassi Boys in August and September 2002. The deceased had publicly condemned the Bakassi Boys' human rights violations and their close ties to the state governor. According to Omonobi and Akoni (2002), the Nigerian police arrested dozens of vigilantes and released scores of detainees they allegedly tortured and destroyed their headquarters in several southeast cities.

Mali

Grotz (2007) discusses the impact of the tomboloma of Mali. They are often referred to as the 'mining police'. In many countries located in West Africa, including south-western Mali, small-scale gold mining (popularly known as 'galamsey' in the Ghanaian context) has seen a boom in the last decade. Small-scale gold mining has been the source of livelihood for many people in West African society. The demography of West Africa has made it a haven from the abundance of natural resources such as gold, diamond and ivory. Since medieval times, the Mande region of Mali has been known as a gold-producing area. Due to several factors such as the crisis in cash crop production, droughts, currency devaluation and civil wars, there has been a relative increase in the artisanal production of gold (Grotz, 2007). Migrants from all over West Africa seek gold, open new pits, and create huge camps close to the mines.

The tomboloma comprises young men and some elders from the local village. Each tomboloma group is associated with the area controlled by a particular town. These territories essentially correspond to historical Mande agricultural areas, usually confined by rivers, which define borders between tomboloma groups. Together with the damantigi (considered the 'master of gold'), the tomboloma determine how to compensate the local landlords affected by gold mining (Grotz, 2007). They also plan how to go about vital ceremonies and rituals. Besides, they observe local and immigrant miners' activities to ensure continuing profits from mining and that local taboos are not infringed. The tomboloma supervise the compliance of norms and public order in the mining camps, such as the prevention of any mining activities on

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Mondays, the acceptance of specific rules for sharing, negotiated prices, and good behaviour.

From one village to the other, the role of the tomboloma groups differ. In most cases, they collect contributions and taxes and supervise all mining activities in the region. They assume the role of sanctioning everyday transgressions and quarrels but also deal with theft cases and murder. Officially, they should hand over those they seize to the police, who are often distanced from the villages. In some instances, vigilante justice ranging from beatings to the poisoning of lawbreakers have been reported, though they are seldom. A more frequent form of sanction is to demand compensation or fines, while a more dramatic option is the expulsion of lawbreakers from the mining region.

In some cases, the tomboloma assume moral responsibilities, judicial powers, social responsibilities and offer economic backbone to the society. Recent matters are debated with regular and ad hoc meetings, and sanctions against those contrary to the rules and norms are decided. They also have systems in place in which thieves are tried. As their membership comprises many young men and the middle generation, they counterbalance the elders who have conventionally enjoyed more power in village issues. The tomboloma give the young more social power and prestige in a region that has been marked by emigration and the loss of economic and social options for the current generation (Grotz, 20007).

Grotz (2007) further maintains that the tomboloma do not fill the peculiar gap between the state and indigenous societies. They still operate on the fringes of state interest, and their role is very much confined to the

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indigenous context. They claim moral continuity in a rapidly shifting economic context and discursively refer to ancient institutions. Grotz (2007) argues that, despite their powers, the tomboloma embodies neither an alternative institution nor a challenge to the state. They do not interfere in matters of the state. They are localised and do not operate outside their respective region. Many recent interventions by the Malian state have strengthened the position and role of tomboloma. For instance, joint efforts to reduce child labour, prospecting work, and the introduction of new pumps by specialised development in Mali have only been possible with the cooperation of the tomboloma (Grotz, 2007).

Effects of Vigilante Groups in Africa.

From the above, it can be deduced that vigilantism in Africa is mainly associated with violence. Vigilante groups assume a more radical posture after being formed. Their activities evolve and the tacit support they enjoy from the political class further support their acts of violence and tumour. There are also vigilante groups that exhibit good characteristics and operate within the confines of the law. For instance, the activities of the tomboloma of Mali are in sharp contrast to those of the Kamajors of Sierra Leone or the Group of Colonel Devi of Benin or the Bakassi Boys of Nigeria. The tomboloma depicts a group akin to a vigilante group whose aim is to keenly protect their society's moral and social fabric and serve as a disciplinary body to lawbreakers within their indigenous community. There has been a collaboration and co-existence between the tomboloma and the Malian government that has fostered the development and nation-building efforts in the country.

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The impression one could also get from this is that vigilantism could help in nation-building. One clear example is the activities of the tomboloma from Mali. Another example is the Asafo Company in Ghana. Although the Asafo Company was much of a paramilitary wing, it served as a robust social mechanism that kept the indigenous society in check (Arhin, 1985). Unfortunately, however, vigilante groups are often in the spotlight for negative reasons. The lack of trust and the lofty promises politicians (state actors) made to these vigilante groups are mainly the recipe for chaos. Frustration arises when their expectations are not met, and they resort to aggression in the form of violence to get their points across.

A typical example is the Kamajors of Sierra Leone and the Bakassi Boys of Nigeria. These vigilante groups were in close connections with some government officials who needed them to do their bidding. The state actors sometimes channel a massive amount of resources to support the activities of the vigilante groups. State power is abused, and vigilante groups tend to exhibit a gross disrespect for state authority. They do so without fear or intimidation due to the support they get from state actors.

The activities of vigilante groups in Africa sometimes supplement the effort of state actors in providing security for the citizenry. The Kamajors, for example, fought in Sierra Leone's civil war (1991-2002); the Arrow Boys of Teso, who fought the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in eastern Uganda (2003-2007); the Zande Arrow Boys, who waged the LRA and later rebelled in South Sudan against the Dinka-led regime (2005-present); and the Civilian Joint Task Force, who worked closely.

Kyei (2020) further supports this point in his work about vigilante groups in Ghana. He maintains that the discourse on political vigilantism in Ghana broadly frames vigilante groups as a threat to democratic governance and security because of their association with collective or group violence. During fieldwork, he conducted Tamale and Kumasi on political vigilante groups like the Kandahar, Azorka Boys, Aluta Boys, Al Jazeera, Bawumia Boys, Samira Boys, NDC Task Force, Invincible Force, and Delta Force. The findings indicated that violent acts by such groups do not constitute the core of their day-to-day activities. There is evidence that political vigilante groups are engaged in mobilising people at the district and community level for political participation and representation, community engagement in development activities, and security for political elites and political party activities. Other roles include liaising with political elites to cite development projects within local communities and creating employment opportunities for members of their group, relatives and friends (Kyei, 2020).

Brief History of Political Vigilantism in Ghana

In tracing the genesis of political vigilantism in Ghana, Asamoah (2014) avers that this activity started during the pre-colonial days. Most of the pre-colonial vigilante actions were of a protectionist nature, mainly in support of the government. While the British Colonial Administration utilised coercion to maintain colonial rule, Ghana's youth struck back by organising violence to subvert the colonial regime, thereby indirectly transforming the colony into political independence and republic rule (Asamoah, 2014). The colonial administration's killing of some veterans was one example of protectionist zeal, which contributed to the disturbances in February 1948 that drew popular

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support and led to a boycott of foreign goods, accruing the wrath of the colonial administration.

Gyampo (2010) traces the history of political vigilantism in Ghana back to the British colonial era, when the Convention People's Party's youth wing, known as the "Veranda Boys" of Nkrumah, set the tone for party youth activism in Ghana. Kwame Nkrumah led his 'Veranda Boys' (mostly children) to British political sovereignty (Paalo, 2017). Since independence, several political parties have been associated with the programmes of youth organisations. Despite the achievement of independence, political party youth groups did not cease their vigilante activities. Soon after independence, Nkrumah was met with fierce opposition from political parties such as the National Liberation Movement (NLM) and other ethnic-based political parties engaged in watchfulness (Asamoah, 2019).

The NLM, the main political opposition party, founded the Action Troopers, a vigilante group. This organisation instilled fear and panic in the Ashanti Region and victimised leaders of the People's Convention Party (CPP) with dynamite, firearms, and other lethal weapons to overthrow and kill opposing political factions. Other vigilante groups, such as the "Tokyo Joes," sought to protect Ga Adangbe's interests, and Ga Ekomefeemo Kpee sought to protect the CPP's interests and popularise Nkrumah's government among Ghanaians in Accra (Paalo, 2017).

The proliferation of such vigilante groups acting as opposition to the CPP contributed to the promulgation of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, which prohibited the presence of any ethnic or religious-based political grouping. In July 1958, the Prevention Detention Act (PDA) also enacted the

Prevention Detention Act that allowed the government to detain anyone without trial for no more than five years in prison (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

The lack of constitutional means to challenge Nkrumah's rule culminated in several unconstitutional and vigilante-styled attacks on Ghana's first president, such as the 1963 Kulungugu bomb attack that resulted in several injuries and deaths. In 1966, Nkrumah's regime was overthrown in a military coup led by Colonel E.K. Kotoka, Major A.A. Afrifa and Mr J.W.K. Harley (Asamoah, 2019). There were coups and counter-coups after Nkrumah's overthrow that were more brutal and bloodier than the coup of 1966. For example, the 1979 coup d'état culminated in the bloody execution by a firing squad sanctioned by the Revolutionary Council of the Armed Forces (AFRC), Jerry John Rawlings, of certain former Ghana Army generals (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

The Committees for the Protection of the Republic, the Militia, and the Civil Defence Organizations all engaged in vigilantism during the government of the Provisional National Defence Councils, which Rawlings also led, commencing in 1981. (Asamoah, 2019). Several paramilitary or vigilante groups, including the "Mobisquad," the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR), Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs), Peoples Defence Committees (PDCs), and others, were trained and prepared to protect the revolution during the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) era.

Several wings were founded, including the Women's and Youth Wings of Political Parties, particularly the two largest (NPP and NDC), consisting of die-hard or core foot soldiers (Gyampo, 2010). In Ghana, there are over

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twenty-four (24) registered political parties, including the Convention People's Party (CPP), People's National Convention (PNC), NDC, and NPP (Paalo, 2017). Both the NDC and the NPP have garnered national and international notoriety as a result of their ongoing affiliation with youth arms such as 'Azorka' (for the NDC) and 'Invincible Forces' (for the NPP) (Bob-Milliar, 2012; 2014).

It is crucial to note that the activities of political vigilante groups have been manifested in all of the seven elections and three transitions witnessed by Ghana's fourth Republican democratic dispensation (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017). The NPP and NDC also have vigilante groups in all sixteen regions of Ghana, mostly with different names (Kyei, 2020). These groups have engaged in unlawful actions such as confiscation of state property, coercive eviction of state officials from their apartments, physical assaults on former government appointees, and other human rights violations, filling Ghana's political body with tension, rancour, and acrimony in the first few months of new regimes. As aforementioned, the actions of political vigilante groups have numerous ramifications.

The state has made several attempts, such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the National Peace Council of Ghana (NPC), to address political vigilantism in the country. Non-state actors, mainly civil society groups such as CODEO Ghana and Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), have made tremendous efforts to end the menace of political vigilantism in Ghana. They have engaged the various stakeholders involved to try to find a lasting solution to the issue. The passing of the Vigilantism and Other Related Offences Act, 2019, coupled with the

signing of the Roadmap and Code of Conduct for the eradication Of Political Vigilantism in Ghana by the political parties and other stakeholders, is considered by many as a step in the right direction. However, the big question is whether the parties involved are willing to corporate the significant issue. The rippling effects of these vigilante groups scattered across Africa on the political security of the citizenries in their respective countries are immense.

The Interconnection between Political Vigilantism and Clientelism

Studies of African politics were generally conceptualised in the 1960s and 1970s with words such as "clientelism," "neo-patrimonialism," "personalism," "prebendalism," and "rentier state" (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994; Lindberg, 2004, p. 4). During these periods, policy clientelism became a prominent feature of developing countries. Many comparative studies have identified Africa's electoral politics as systematically and inherently clientelistic (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994; Lindberg, 2004). In choosing people in exchange for unceasing political patronage, African leaders, whether autocratic or democratic, depend on the distribution of personal favours (Scott, 1972; Bratton & van de Walle 1994).

Although there are many definitions of clientelism, it can be defined as providing material favours in exchange for political support in the polls as a transaction between politicians and citizens (Wantchekon, 2003, p. 3). Clientelism also refers to a multidimensional network of personal bonds between political beneficiaries or managers and their clients or supporters. These ties are founded on common material points of interest. The supporter outfits provide exclusive assets to their clients or wards and associates as a by-

product of their unwavering support and collaboration (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 2004, p. 165).

Clientelism is a political system in which, in exchange for a "client's" vote or support, a politician (that is, "patron") provides patronage. Clientelism also refers to a multidimensional chain of personal relationships between bosses, clients, supporters, or political patrons. These bonds are conceived on mutual material benefits, in which the patron provides exclusive services to his client or dependents and accomplices in exchange for their steadfast support and cooperation (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2004, p. 165). These patrons are influential, and they are distributing their assets to their supporters for the latter to do the former's bidding. Patrons are not autonomous actors but are linked to a larger network of contacts who act as intermediaries, organising exchanges between the local and national levels.

Political patrons neglect the long-term national interest and concentrate on helping their clients; therefore, someone who is not a client earns nothing from the government. These acts of clientelism tend to thrive in uncertain rural and urban political and economic environments making it an avenue for patrons and clients alike to engage in survival politics. As a result, due to limited access to formal assistance, the poor and marginalised in the society are drawn into such networks, as this seems the only solution to their daily survival. A dominant feature is that jobs are exchanged for votes in clientelism (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994; Lindberg, 2004; Robinson & Verdier, 2013, p. 262).

The political clientelistic relation structure concerns both the input side of democratic politics concerning elections and its output side with regard to

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state-funded benefits based on political and administrative decisions, that is, characteristics correlated with functions of the welfare state (Kusche, 2014, p. 208). Such a welfare state requires uniform requirements for subsistence, health, housing, schooling, among other requirements that would render redundant patron-client relations, sometimes central to receiving help otherwise (Therborn, 1987, p. 240). Yet, as such, a social policy does not impede clientelism (Kurtz, 2002).

Clientelism is used to discuss various groups within the electorate in some welfare systems and connect welfare state benefits with individual voting decisions. In addition to these advantages, in a clientelistic relationship, public sector employment, administrative decisions involving concessions, penalties, public contracts, and many other aspects of state policy and service are turned into personal favours when the public bureaucracy does not make decisions based on universal standards. In the context of a democratic political system, the leading service clients would vote in political elections in exchange for these favours, in addition to deferential acts and diffuse loyalty (Kusche, 2014).

Clientelism drives the acts of political vigilante groups in the sense that if the patron gains control, clients, in this case, the vigilante groups, feel entitled to jobs and all the benefits given by the government in this case. As a result, they resort to any means of forcibly capturing state resources, property, and possibilities, especially when patrons appear to be dragging their heels in meeting clients needs within the framework of patron-client relations (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994; Robinson & Verdier, 2013; Kusche, 2014). It is important to note that patronage is also spurring political vigilantism in Ghana.

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Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) posit that political vigilantism can be attributed mainly to clientelism, especially in Ghana. Clientelism energises the activities of political vigilante groups in the sense that once the supporter wins control, clients, who in this circumstance are the vigilante gatherings, feel that they are entitled to jobs and own assets. They, thus, resort to persuasively take state assets, property and openings, mainly when there is an inclination of deferral concerning the benefactors in addressing the necessities of customers inside the casing deal with supporter clients' relations (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994; Robinson & Verdier, 2013; Kusche, 2014).

Political Vigilantism in Ghana

After languishing for over two decades in political instability, Ghana subsequently adopted democratic governance in 1993. Unfortunately, Ghana's Fourth Republic saw the emergence of what is known as political vigilantism. Asamoah (2019) notes that political vigilantism has become a major topical issue in Ghana. The persistence of vigilante groups' existence without addressing the underlying issues can potentially transform them into militant groups, with far-reaching ramifications for a fragile and unstable sub-region (Asamoah, 2019).

Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) have worked extensively on political vigilantism, particularly in Ghana, and its threat to democratic governance. They assert that Ghana's fourth attempt at constitutional democratic governance started in 1992, has been plagued with hostile acts of political vigilantism. They examine the connection between Clientelism and vigilantism. Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) also explore the activities of vigilantism in Ghana from a historical perspective and emphasise the

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influences of vigilantism towards electoral successes and losses. To them, political vigilantism remains a threat to the survival of democracy in Ghana.

Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) avow a connection between political vigilantism and clientelism in the case of Ghana. Political parties essentially patronise the activities of vigilante groups, who feel that political parties owe them, especially when they gain power. Ghana's two major political parties: New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), are culpable for patronising various vigilante groups. This is a clear example of the interconnection between political vigilantism and clientelism.

Political vigilantism in Ghana is linked to several sources and motivations. These comprise unemployment and vulnerability of the youth, the zero-sum game, lack of confidence in state and security agencies, the prestige attached to belonging to a vigilante group and the mutual suspicion and mistrust among the political class or parties. These sources and motivation trigger violent acts of vigilante groups who remain loyal to their respective political parties, especially before, during and after electoral processes (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

UNECA (2005) reports that in many African countries, unemployment has a political dimension. Poverty, with its rippling effects of high unemployment in Africa, has given rise to youthful urban-based vigilante groups across the continent. There are similar developments not only in Ghana (Gyampo, 2010), but Cameroon (Argenti, 1998; Malaquais, 2001), Kenya (Anderson 2002), Nigeria (Gore & Pratten, 2003) and South Africa (Baker 2002; Haysom 1990). The youths are vulnerable as they are either unemployed

or under-employed, leaving them at the mercy of their patrons and acting as the clients (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

According to a CODEO (2017) report, the justifications for the surge of vigilante groups can be credited to mutual distrust among political parties, as well as a lack of trust in the security apparatus, most notably the police service. The report demonstrates that mistrust or mutual distrust is a critical challenge that disrupts the process of democratisation and, to some extent, the political security of most African countries when not regulated. Furthermore, to some extent, political vigilantism has implications on security issues and Ghana's global image.

With the threat of terrorism on the high in the West African sub-region, political vigilantism exposes Ghana to a possibility of a terror attack. Asamoah (2019) argues that Ghana should be on guard with the increasing rate of terrorism cases in neighbouring countries. Bamba (2014) opines that porous borders and weapons proliferation remain examples of Ghana's threats, making the country vulnerable to terrorism. Often, this proliferation of weapons ends up with people who are not well equipped in terms of training and are not authorised to carry such ammunition. Unfortunately, these vigilante groups in Ghana and West Africa at large have unlimited access to such weapons: a factor that poses a significant security threat to nations and their citizens. Given the spread of militant groups in Burkina Faso to the south and laxity at the borders, the cross-border incursion into Ghana tends to be an issue of great concern (Bamba, 2014).

In West Africa, the porous nature of the borders also makes it a target for terrorism. The border is the first line of protection against terrorism and the

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last line of the territorial integrity of a country. The porosity of African borders is primarily due to how the colonialists cut up the continent in terms of the essence of their post-colonial states' management (Onuoha, 2013; Yayoh, 2013). Yayoh (2013) maintains that creating these artificial boundaries led to the institution of micro-nations within macro-nations. In the Balkanisation of Africa, the initial purpose of the colonists was not to make a border in the first place but to create a zone of power-driven by political and economic motives. These boundaries segregated several racial and cultural groups. Consequently, most African governments find it extremely hard to administer international borders that are sliced through cultural and ethnic groups (Onuaha, 2013).

Ghana is often regarded as one of the beacons of peace on the African continent (Gyampo, 2010). This has helped the country, through its diplomatic ties, to create an international image of peace and development that has attracted various kinds of investors (governments and foreign businesses into the country. Tarte (2014) refers to diplomacy as the conduct of relations between states through peaceful means. It can also be referred to as human engagements by peaceful means, using persuasion, attraction, and negotiation methods. This relation is sometimes fostered through subtle means known as soft power.

Nye (2009) avers that political leaders and actors of global politics have come to understand the power of attractive ideas or the capacity to set a plan and decide the inclinations of others. Thus, a country's soft power approach may project peaceful and stunning images of itself by promoting peace and security globally (Lee, 2009). Political vigilantism poses threats to this soft power because it begs the question as to what extent the elites in our

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societies can confidently convince their counterparts to respect their electoral laws when they seem to have come to power through the help of vigilante violence. Increased events of vigilantism give a bad report of Ghana in the media and world politics largely.

Political instability in any country tends to hurt its economy. Political vigilantism stirs up fear and sends a wrong signal to the Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) international community. Diplomatic ties between countries have paved the way for MNCs and international firms across the globe (Wilkins, 1991). Nations rely on political stability to foster economic activities. This is why political vigilantism could undermine economic investment. Thus, MNCs rely on the diplomatic ties between their home country and the countries where they have their businesses. These companies aim to make profits from such countries. Besides, countries where multi-national companies are situated benefit from Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), which forms a considerable part of their financial budget (Tihanyi & Roath, 2002; Hall-Jones, 2006).

According to Trading Economics (2020), for example, government revenues in Ghana increased to 4458.67 GHS Million in September from 4452.16 GHS Million in August of 2019. Government revenues, in this case, refer to all receipts the government gets, including taxes, custom duties, revenue from state-owned enterprises, capital revenues and foreign aid. As of July 2020, the general corporate income tax (CIT) rate is twenty-five per cent (25%). At a rate of thirty-five per cent (35%), mining and offshore oil firms pay CIT, while companies mainly active in the hotel industry pay a reduced

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rate of twenty-two per cent (22%). For companies engaged in non-traditional exports, the CIT rate is eight per cent (8%).

In comparison, banks' lending to the agricultural and leasing sectors pay a twenty per cent (20%) CIT rate on those companies' profits (Worldwide Tax Summaries, 2020). Thus, any activity such as unbridled acts of political vigilantism and its threat to peace and security can undermine MNCs' smooth running and other Ghana businesses. No investor would invest in a place where they believe business cannot thrive. This will bring a ripple effect on the country's economy, impacting job creation, FDIs, technology transfer, remittances, and the government's monetary expenditure.

Political Security

In this study, political security is operationalised to preserve citizens' political and civil liberties that guarantee their involvement in their state's governance processes. It varies from participation without fear or coercion in democratic processes, the absence of political repression, adherence to the rule of law, and complete observance of press freedom and association. Thus, any action that undermines the enjoyment of the above becomes a threat to political security.

One of the seven components of the 1994 UNDP Report on Human Security is political security. Whereas the concept of human security does not favour one component over another, political security tends to serve as an anchor for the other components. According to Hassan (2015), the clear and transparent link between human security and political security is that the former's primary goal is to ensure that societies encourage and safeguard people's fundamental human rights.

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Peterson (2009, p. 4-5) also avers that it is the Liberal-Operational Approach of the two dominant approaches to human security that concerns elections, human rights, good governance, the rule of law, among others, rather than the emancipatory approach that dominates his discourse. Owutu (2012) agrees with these statements, pointing out that almost every aspect of society's life is politicised and that politics impacts people's lives. In this way, Karl W. Deutsch also asserts that politics and all that comprises decision-making have become the determinants of fortune in societies. He posits that diseases or pestilence shall not kill humans if civilisation is destroyed and most of humankind dies over the next twenty to thirty years; politics must kill them. Politics has become a life and death issue (Deutsch, 1970). Therefore, political security is fundamental to the labelling of development in every aspect of life.

Human protection remains a crucial way of achieving sustainable growth, according to Marfo (2013). Africa, a continent described as the home of suffering, hunger and desperation by Moyo (2009), would have no choice but to embrace such an opportunity. The ideas of the definition, especially Political Security, are not new to Africa. Tsai (2009, p. 21) emphasises that when individuals are subject to political oppression, proper protection cannot be assumed to exist. The Commission on Human Security Report (2003) adds, "Without popular participation in shaping agendas on security, political and economic elites will do it alone in a process that will further marginalise and impoverish the people of Africa" (CHS, 2003, p. 3). Da Costa (2008) notes that political security, emblematic of social sciences concepts, lacks a clear-cut

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definition. Hitherto, some scholars and practitioners alike have made an effort to devise contextual definitions for the concept.

McEldowney (2005) opines that the fundamental freedoms enjoyed in democratic systems serve as political security. He argues that the value of political security is based on civil strife's collapse of law and order threatens society's survival. Political protection, therefore, refers to defending citizens' freedoms in a manner that strengthens their sense of being part of the political system. Although his statement fails to list how such fundamental freedoms might be achieved, it clarifies the nature and importance of the political security central to this study.

Ong (2007) avows that political security is primarily concerned with the structure of government and mechanisms and the philosophy that provides legitimacy to a country's leaders. He identifies two aspects of political security: the procedures for forming a government and the reasons why such a government remains a legitimate governing body. His study focuses exclusively on the governing class, while his exposition sets the grounds and processes for governance. He thus refuses, under these circumstances, to exercise the rights of individuals. Besides, he does not clarify the philosophies that legitimise the control of a government.

The UNDP Report (1994) used the term to mean the "prevention of government repression, systematic violation of Human Rights and threats from militarisation" (UNDP, 1994, p. 32, Hassan, 2015, p. 86). The term employed by the United Nations refers to the defence of people's human rights to protect their well-being and dignity. It seeks to promote civil and democratic rights, including the right to vote or contest elections, freedom of

the press and expression, and the prohibition of constitutional arrest, arbitrary confinement, torture, and political opponents' disappearance. The exposure of political repression, systemic torture, ill-treatment, disappearance and widespread abuse of human rights in the 1993 Amnesty International Report informed this definition of political security by the UN.

This perspective suggests that Political Security seeks to address citizens' component of Human Security's 'freedom from fear.' As interpreted by the Canadian Government, Human Security focuses on people's freedoms regarding their rights, peaceful living environments without violence or threats of violence (MacLean, 2002). Nevertheless, this contradicts Japan's principle of avoidance of circumstances that threaten human life's survival, everyday existence, and dignity (freedom from wanting).

The UNDP Report establishes that the relationship between political security and Human Security is the proposition that "people should be able to live in a society that honours their basic Human Rights" (UNDP, 1994, p. 32). Therefore, political security concerns the conditions necessary for the realisation of the individual's dignity. According to Hassan (2015), this UNDP explanation of political security aimed to set a schedule for protecting the citizens of countries that were tortured, oppressed, and encountered ill-treatment and disappearance. Da Costa (2008) argues that the conceptualisation of the term by the UNDP appears too narrow because it is confined to only sub-categories of human rights and repressive government actions against political opponents. He further points out that such conceptualisation of Political Security for research purposes do not provide

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meaningful insights. Therefore, to better understand the purpose of this report, a broader and complete scope must be given to the definition.

Da Costa (2008) avows two converging ideas in political security to advance his clarification of the word's definition. The first is the involvement of people in legitimate decision-making processes as regulated and provided for by state laws. This includes the right to engage in political activities in a state, as far as the law is concerned. Secondly, the framework of Political Security protects regulating practices such as voting, division of powers and responsibility of elected individuals and bureaucrats. It also includes the security of human rights, the stability of the government and the right of people to a share of the national cake (Da Costa, 2008).

He further asserts that political security, the compendium of relationships between individuals and groups on the one hand, and the state on the other, for the exercise of the rights and obligations of power distribution, addresses the essence of government (Da Costa, 2008). Furthermore, the political security spectrum broadens to include situations that can include a new level of protection for individuals' data and preferences against unauthorised intrusion (Da Costa, 2008). Since globalisation, political security has become essential, and it involves dangers. With its ensuing technological advancement, the globalised environment has made the privacy of people vulnerable to intrusion. The ongoing effort by criminals and terrorists to exploit the relation and the determination of governments to curb it has intensified the vulnerability. A close reading of the work of Da Costa shows that the environment and the hub in which Political Security spins is democracy.

Political security, like democracy, calls for opportunities for people to engage in their state's governing processes. Political stability is also coterminous with the poor regimes of embedded liberal democracy (Merkel, 2004). Therefore, economic electoral systems, civic participation, civil rights, horizontal transparency, and the assurance that democratically elected representatives have the power to govern are all elements of political security (Merkel, 2004). As a result, political security includes citizen control over the formation of governing bodies and their power management.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a review of the existing literature under the study. Before reviewing the literature relevant to the study, the frustration-aggression theory and the Marxist theory of conflict were discussed. The role of state and non-state actors remains a crucial feature of international relations. Political vigilantism was carried out by state agents and groups loyal to specific political classes or individuals. Vigilante groups in Africa have had some effects on the continent. They sometimes form part of counter-insurgencies, act as agents of development and aid in keeping the social fabric of the society. However, these vigilante groups later transform into mafia-like groups that disregard the rule of law and terrorise people who do not confront their dictates. They also enjoyed state actors' tacit support, primarily the political class who relied on these vigilante groups for their dealings. The actions by vigilante groups threaten the peace and security of individuals within their respective countries. The chapter also reviewed some existing literature on political security.

The chapter also explored political vigilantism in Ghana. Most of the pre-colonial vigilante actions assumed a protectionist nature, mainly in support of the government. The Convention People's Party youth wing, known as the 'Veranda Boys' of Nkrumah, set the pace for party youth activism in Ghana during the British colonial period. Subsequently, vigilante organisations such as the Action Troopers, 'Tokyo Joes', 'Mobisquad', and others have existed. The major political parties, NDC and NPP, have gained national and international notoriety in the Fourth Republic of Ghana for their ongoing affiliation with youth arms such as 'Azorka Boys' (for NDC) and 'Invincible Forces' (for NPP).

The reliance of the political elite group on youth arms establishes an interconnection between political vigilantism and clientelism. Clientelism drives the actions of political vigilante groups. Clients who are the vigilante groups, in this situation, feel entitled to jobs, and all the benefits provided by the government should the patron gains power. These patrons capitalise on their accumulated power to distribute assets to their supporters to have them at their beck and call. Failure to fulfil the promises made often results in vigilante groups creating chaos and in the form of the forceful removal of government appointees from their offices, seizing of public toilets and distraction of court proceedings. The mutual suspicion and mistrust exhibited by the political parties and the youth's vulnerability and high unemployment rate account for acts of political vigilantism in Ghana.

Acts of political vigilantism potentially make Ghana a target for terrorism. The porous nature of borders in the West African sub-region and the illegal migration of people across these borders makes the threat of terrorism

imminent. Peace and stability form part of Ghana's public diplomacy strategy. Political vigilantism paints a negative image of the country and, thus, could adversely affect Ghana's economic status, especially in terms of FDIs, tourism, technology transfer and job creation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the procedures adopted in carrying out the research. A methodology, according to Kothari (2004), is a systematic approach to solving the research problem. It can be interpreted as a science of learning how to conduct scientific research. Singh (2006) avers that methodology entails the systematic procedures by which the researcher begins from the preliminary identification of the problem to its conclusions. Research methodology, therefore, presents a roadmap that helps in the conduct of research work in a more logical manner. This chapter presents the research approach, research design, the data collection instruments, sampling procedure, target population, sampling size, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis and ethical issues.

Research Approach

The study adopts a qualitative research method. The qualitative research method is employed because it focuses on collecting rich and detailed documentary data. It also allows the researcher to scrutinise and understand issues and events related to the phenomenon under study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The use of a qualitative research method ensured Participant Observation because the method creates opportunities for flexibility, allowing for more naturalness and acclimatisation for the interaction and collaboration between the researcher and the participant. The qualitative research approach includes historical, descriptive, correlation,

feminist, ethnological, case studies, and phenomenological research designs (Walliman, 2011).

Walliman (2011) avows that the use of qualitative research methods also allows the researcher to access open-ended questions that will not confine the research work and broaden the knowledge scope of this work. This implies that a lot of valuable information cannot be reduced to numbers, which is the hallmark of quantitative research. People's opinions, feelings of comfort, emotions, ideas, and beliefs, to name a few, can only be expressed in words (Walliman, 2011).

Research Design

The study employs the case study research design. Political vigilantism is a universal phenomenon. As such, this study was making a case of political vigilantism in Ghana. De Vaus and de Vaus (2001) find that it is possible to group research designs into four categories: experimental, longitudinal, cross-sectional, and case study. While the experimental look at intervention and regulation, longitudinal takes into account the analysis over time in different units, and cross-sectional designs focus on variations between various independent variables.

On the other hand, the case study design focuses on an exhaustive contextual analysis of a case or series of cases. Murray and Beglar (2009) describe a case study as a comprehensive, in-depth study of a specific entity or unique context or circumstance. The core strength of the case study method is its ability to illuminate a 'case' in great depth and detail and position it in a 'real' context. Therefore, this study employs the descriptive case study design because it is the most appropriate for its discussions. This kind of case study is

used to characterise an intervention or phenomenon and the context in which it happened in real life (Yin, 2003).

Yin (2006) indicates that the case study method is most effective when research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events. Yin (2003) asserts that the case study design is needed when the questions of "when" and "how" must be solved, the behaviour of the object of study cannot be manipulated, and contextual conditions must be covered to understand a phenomenon. In this context, Ghana, which has had its fair share of acts of political vigilantism, was selected to collect primary data for analysis. The study focused on events in Ghana. This was influenced by factors including proximity, time and financial constraints on the part of the researcher.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data in this research included interviews (One-on-one, via zoom and via skype), newspapers and press conferences. Data from primary sources were obtained through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview guide enabled the researcher to ask questions on a wide range of political vigilantism and security issues without following any strict pattern. A semi-structured interview was preferred to a structured interview because it provided the researcher with the ability to ask follow-up questions where necessary to get whole meaning and understanding of issues. The semi-structured interview method was used in soliciting data from participants that comprised security analysts/experts, officials from NPC and GPS, officials

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from CSOs, specifically CODEO Ghana and FOSDA, academics, retired security officers and members of vigilante groups.

Data from secondary sources were also obtained from written and non-written materials. Written materials included in written materials such as books, journals, newspapers, notes, state publications, internal reports, annual reports, staff details, and committee reports. Non-written materials, including documentaries, live broadcasts, interviews and other data from similar sources, were collected from tape recordings, videotapes and films of all kinds. A comprehensive analysis of literature ranging from books, academic articles, journals, and speeches by government officials, government studies, and other Internet and Social Media fora outlets such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube were included in the data sources.

Sampling Procedure

The study adopted the purposive, convenience and snowballing sampling techniques in the selection of participants. Purposive sampling is when the researcher chooses subjects from a population because of their direct relevance and expertise to the research questions. The purposive sampling method enables the researcher to select the participants based on their qualities or know-how in the area under study (May, 2011; Singh, 2006). Purposive sampling is a tool commonly used to categorise and select cases that are rich in knowledge to make the best use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This includes detecting and identifying individuals or groups of individuals who are extremely familiar with or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). The participants targeted for the purposive sampling comprised officials from state institutions, particularly the National

Peace Council and the Ghana Police Service, officials from CSOs such as CODEO Ghana and FOSDA, security analysts and academics.

The need for well-informed participants, coupled with the technicality of the issues under review, was the reason for selecting the above participants for the study. The chosen participants are considered stakeholders, and they play a role in mitigating the threat of political vigilantism to political vigilantism in Ghana. Besides, only people with in-depth knowledge of the area could adequately discuss political vigilantism and its challenges to political security and the role of state and non-state actors in tackling this albatross. The purposive sampling method remains the most applicable technique for a qualitative study where the focus is not to generalise but rather achieve a detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Kothari, 2004).

Convenience sampling was used due to proximity, while the purposive sampling method enabled the researcher to select the participants based on their qualities or awareness of the issue/phenomenon under study. As this study was conducted during COVID-19 restrictions, it became prudent for the researcher to reach out to participants in close proximity. For example, Instead of relying on the Headquarters of the National Peace Council of Ghana, convenience sampling ensured that participants from this state actor were selected from close proximity. Thus, views solicited from the National Peace Council were obtained from their officials at the Regional Peace Council's office at Cape Coast.

Snowballing sampling became critical in reaching out to the members of the vigilante groups who were participants in this research. According to Kirchherr and Charles (2018), snowball sampling is frequently employed to

sample a hard-to-reach population that does not want to be located or contacted, such as illegal drug users, illegal migrants, prostitutes, or homeless persons. It became vital to solicit the views of some of the vigilante group members as they are considered stakeholders in the issue of political vigilantism. However, reaching this vigilante group members was initially difficult as they were hard to get. As such, the security analysts interviewed in this research introduced the researcher to these members of vigilante groups to solicit their views.

Target Population

Harrison (2001, p. 19) describes a research population as "a group which shares characteristics to which we apply an explanation". To Kothari (2004, p. 14), the term refers to "all the items under consideration in any field of inquiry". Therefore, within the setting of a study, a research population denotes the cluster of objects. These objects have some common characteristics, as indicated by Harrison (2001). The target population for this study is people with in-depth knowledge of political vigilantism and political security issues. The population, therefore, included civil society groups such as the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO Ghana) and the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA). It also included the National Peace Council and the Ghana Police Service, which are considered key state actors in the discourse of political vigilantism in Ghana. The population also comprised security analysts, retired security officers, academics, and members of vigilante groups. The study focused on this target population because they are significant players in political vigilantism and political security.

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Sampling Size

The targeted sample size was twenty-five participants. However, the actual study was based on interviews with fifteen participants who have had direct experiences with the phenomenon under study. The breakdown of the fifteen participants is as follows: two officials from the National Peace Council of Ghana, an official from the Ghana Police Service, an official from CODEO Ghana, an official from FOSDA, an academic, a retired security officer, a human security analyst, two conflict and security analyst and five vigilante group members. The research participants were primarily males and females within the age range of twenty and sixty years. Thus, the participants comprised members of vigilante groups, security analysts, academics, officials within state and non-state organisations who are stakeholders in political vigilantism and issues related to political security.

Data Collection Procedures

Primary data was pursued to get the needed information and to achieve the objectives set for the study. The primary data were gathered through interviews with the participants. Interviews were conducted over a definite period between July and September 2020 due to the lockdown of the country during the Coronavirus Pandemic. Participation in the interview was voluntary for the participants. The various institutions, such as the National Peace Council and the Ghana Police Service, were given introductory letters in June 2020 to seek permission. Still, most of the approvals were received in July. Interviews for the various departments and official participants were conducted face to face (at their offices) and online (Skype and Zoom). The research site for individual participants varied as participants converged at

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proposed venues. The choice of venues for interviewing was made based on participants' preferences. This was ensured before the interviews were conducted.

The purpose behind this was to ensure that participants felt relaxed and secure while assuring them of a high sense of confidentiality that would ensure accurate answers to questions from the interview. The objectives and purpose of the research were read and discussed with the participants. Before the interview, informed consent was acquired from the participants. The interviews were conducted in English.

Data Processing and Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that data analysis includes analysing, transcribing, and substantially reviewing notes, audio or videotapes while keeping the relationships between the parts intact. In processing the data, the interviews were recorded after the participants gave their consent. The recorded data were stored on a tape recorder. These were later listened to and transcribed verbatim. The transcribed data was read thoroughly and organised by building classifications. This classification by properties helps form subgroups within the general category at an average level of measurement (Walliman, 2011). This helps to identify a pattern in the data collected.

The pattern aided in coding and labelling relevant pieces. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that coding is the part of analysis wherein the researcher differentiates and combines the data retrieved and reflects upon this information. Coding is achieved by using keywords as an identification method to categorise or identify the text by researchers (Sarantakos, 1993).

Keywords were incorporated into parts of the text during the coding process, giving the text unique meanings and marking the section. Specific themes were generated and developed from the coding. Themes were connected and described. Results, interpretations, and discussions were presented based on the related themes.

The study employed the content analysis approach to examine how political vigilantism plays out in some African countries and Ghana. Content analysis is a method in research employed to assess specific terms, themes or ideas in certain qualitative data (Babbie, 2010). Babbie (2010) maintains that content analysis is the study of recorded human communications. She noted that data sources for content analysis include books, magazines, web pages, speeches, letters, e-mail messages, laws, and constitutions. The data from the participants were subjected to critical analysis. This ensures the study includes only the data or aspects that correspond with the study's objectives.

According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), the content analysis approach utilises specific terms or concepts within texts to conclude the messages for establishing meanings and relationships. This analysis method is appropriate for the study as it helps express the salient arguments and thoughts within the discourse on political vigilantism. It serves as an appropriate method to filter relevant information from the data obtained through interviews.

Essential contextual analyses and scrutiny have been carried out on the data obtained through interviews. Using the manual analytical process, the field notes collected through in-depth interviews were coded and analysed. Texts and direct quotes were used to present the final results. This method ensured that the participants' opinions were not marred by the researcher's

prejudices and stayed as original and precise as possible. Again, because the answers were so detailed, the methodology aided in explaining the issues under consideration. It also aided in the resolution of all vagueness inherent in human behaviour and provided adequate redress.

The research questions were extended to cover all the different topics to ensure that the interviews mirrored the critical goals of the study for easy analysis. The themes reflected the study's overall objectives. It explores the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism. It addresses the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. It also analyses the implications of political vigilantism on Ghana's global image and the West African sub-region. Lastly, it discusses the roles of state and non-state actors in tackling the threat of political vigilantism to political security.

The responses were all juxtaposed and grouped into themes addressed within the context of political vigilantism and its threat to political stability, and these were then addressed. Each thematic group sought to develop the views of the participants on the problems under research. Participants' responses to the various questions were also cross-referenced to construct a full image of the situation as revealed by the results. This approach provided the chance to evaluate the problems experienced against the response, which subsequently influenced the results and conclusions and recommendations.

Ethical Issues

Walliman (2011) points out that working with subjects in research often poses ethical questions about how you treat them. Before, during, and after the study, participants should be handled with respect, which has ramifications for how accurately studies deal with them. Participants for this

study were fully informed about the study's aims. They were told their comments or opinions were confidential and used only for academic and limited research purposes.

Some participants expressed the desire to remain anonymous - a request to which the researcher respected. Thus, the identities of such participants were not revealed, and their names were replaced with pseudonyms. Permission was obtained, and consent was given by each participant, who was at liberty to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research process if they felt reluctant to proceed. Throughout the study, participants were neither physically nor mentally injured, nor were they coerced in any form to provide information. The participants were assured that the interviews were for academic purposes only and would not be divulged to a third party or used for any other purposes.

Chapter Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to set an outline of the overall research design. It, therefore, presented the research approach, research design, the data collection instruments, sampling procedure, research population, sampling size, data processing and analysis and ethical issues. The qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate for this study. The main instrument used was semi-structured interviews. Participation in the interview was voluntary. Interviews were conducted over a definite time. The analysis of data was done using content analysis in the form of examining and categorising. The researcher captured the data manually.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The overall purpose of this study is to explore political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana. This is discussed with reference to four objectives of the study: the sources and motivations for acts of vigilantism, the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana, implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global image, and the role of state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism in Ghana.

This chapter discusses the results obtained from the interviews. The analysis considered the possible outcomes of the ideas expressed by the participants by categorising similar ideas and diverse views. The responses are juxtaposed against existing literature that helped to contextualise the analysis of the data better. Qualitative methods were used to collect the data for the study.

Objective 1: Sources and Motivation for Acts of Vigilantism

One of the research objectives was to investigate the sources and motivations for acts of vigilantism in Ghana. Information was obtained through participants such as security analysts and officers, academics, members of vigilante groups and resource persons from civil society organisations. To better understand their responses, the researcher first solicited their views on what they perceived as political vigilantism, especially in the Ghanaian context. Participants alluded that political vigilantism was illegal and criminal acts carried out by groups or individuals in the interest of

their political affiliations.   Human Security Analyst 1, a human security analyst interviewed for this study, explains that:

> Political vigilantism is a term that has been pretty much corrupted in Ghana. Vigilantism in its original state means seeking to do right where no one else is doing so. An example is drawn from where the Special Prosecutor (Martin Amidu) was nicknamed the Citizen Vigilante. However, political vigilantism now is the act used to describe the actions of a person or a group who are perceived to be doing the right thing, enforcing the law, and providing justice for themselves but without any legal authority. The laws of Ghana does not permit any person or group to have an armed body except the state. Any other thing of that sort is wrong. These vigilante groups are thugs, and they practice hooliganism. These groups are given paramilitary training built to be bodyguards and cause mayhem (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

When asked about his understanding of political vigilantism, Conflict and Security Analyst 1, a peace, conflict and security analyst also maintains that:

> Political vigilantism is the violation of electoral processes to achieve partisan goals. This mostly involves using violence (threats, intemperate languages, misuse of state security, intimidations, beatings, killings, and property vandalism). Also, the term is often used to counter perceived threats to commonly agreed rules governing political competitions. Political vigilantism can arise during an intra-party competition (i.e., party presidential, parliamentary primaries,

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selection of party executives) as well as in inter-party competitions, especially during national elections and transfer of political power from one government to another of a different political party. It is divided into pre-vote activities (e.g., voter registration, voter register validation, vote canvassing), vote-day competitions (balloting, ballot declaration) and post-vote governance vigilantism such as evictions of previous regime appointees from offices as well as perceived less loyal party members (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

The above statements from the participants corroborate Rosenbaum and Sederberg's (1974) argument that vigilantism can only be encouraged by private actors, in this case, people loyal to a particular political party. However, there is also an element of involvement from state agents as raised by the participants. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) aver that state actors sometimes are perpetrators of vigilante violence also support this view. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) argue that state-supported groups and institutions' illegitimate use of force can be called vigilantism. Thus, the responses from the participants are generally in support of a scholarly consensus on the idea that political vigilantism is characterised by activism outside the boundaries of the law, often associated with violence (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974; Nivette, 2016; Phillips, 2016; Silke & Taylor, 2000).

Johnston (1996) asserts that vigilantism is primarily violent, conservative, extra-legal or illegal, coordinated and directed solely toward crime. It can be undertaken by agents acting on behalf of the state, such as the police and a private citizen, in line with what the participants perceived to be

their understanding of political vigilantism. The quest to be watchful has undergone radical transformations with the emergence of today's groups involved in illegitimate and unlawful actions. Johnston's (1996) work further supports the participants claim that political vigilantism has been corrupted in the Ghanaian landscape. Therefore, political vigilantism is the act of violence by individuals or groups loyal to the government and by private citizens and affiliates of political parties. Political vigilantism is regarded as a hostile activity in which individuals, groups and sometimes, state agencies who are more inclined to a specific political affiliation get involved with the aim of doing the bidding of their parties. Conflict and Security Analyst 1, a peace and security analyst, reacts to this view. He states that:

> I hold the assertion that the term vigilantism has been corrupted. The reason is that the constitution of Ghana even provides room for positive vigilantism. Positive vigilantism could happen in a case whereby an individual or group aim to subvert the constitution or overthrow a government through a coup d'état are stopped by civilians, and such perpetrators are brought to order. However, political vigilantism is currently used to describe illegal or unlawful actions by groups or individuals loyal to parties or people with prestige and state agents. State agents are turning out to be the most perpetrators of vigilante acts in recent times. (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

Therefore, the above quote regards vigilantism as seeking to protect people's interests and guard them against perceived aggression from unknown sources. In this sense, vigilantism is only in the domain of private actors.

However, that is not always the case. Acts of political vigilantism can be conducted by state agents as described by Dumsday, 2009; Little and Sheffield, 1983; Huggins, 1991; Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974. The participants' description of political vigilantism also corroborates with scholarly works on vigilantism by Little and Sheffield, 1983; Dumsday, 2009; and Huggins, 1991. They believe that vigilantes are always private citizens, and the activities of vigilantism are carried out by individuals or groups who seek to satisfy their interests.

Political vigilantism deals mainly with groups or individual acts to cause mayhem in society to please a specific political affiliation (selfish interest). The actions carried out by these vigilante groups or individuals are criminal and do not conform to what society expects. Although vigilantes have severally been criticised as having steered their selfish interests, they shared the desire of political actors that motivates the political activity of vigilante groups. This vigilante-based self-interest creates another level of conflict in our society.

Furthermore, there is the issue of illegality of vigilantism. Activities of vigilante groups are mostly considered illegal and contrary to the laws of a country. The participants maintained that political vigilantism is unlawful. Asamoah (2019) avows that acts of political vigilantism are described in the constitution of the Republic of Ghana as illegal. However, there are still traces of such activities in recent times. Political vigilantism includes the actions or threats of violence in violation of the formal boundaries of an existing socio-political order. However, the violators plan to defend against any sedition.

Upon soliciting the participants' understanding of political vigilantism, questions were asked about the sources and motivations that individuals or groups derive from indulging in acts of political vigilantism in Ghana. Varying responses were received from the participants. The participants pointed out a common source and motivation of unemployment and mistrust or low confidence in state security agencies and among political parties.

Furthermore, the participants attributed the sources and motivation for acts of political vigilantism to politicians' insatiable thirst for power and mistrust among the major political parties and the state security agencies. Other sources also referred to the prestige that an individual or a group derives from belonging to a vigilante group. This zero-sum game gives the executive arms of the Ghanaian government excessive power and leadership failure, particularly from the political elites, among others.

The youth's unemployment and vulnerability are significant causes of political vigilantism in Ghana and Africa at large. The participants mentioned that the youth's unemployment and vulnerability to the political class's whim and caprices are the main sources of political vigilantism. A participant, CODEO Official 1, Team Leader Security Sector Governance and Local and Urban Governance of CDD Ghana, believed that the rise in political vigilantism is largely due to unemployment. He stresses that vigilante groups in Ghana, such as the Delta forces, Azorka Boys and Hawks, primarily consist of vibrant youth who are not received adequate formal education and thus, rely on the benevolence of the political elites for their survival. A member of a vigilante group in Ghana confirmed this point in his statement:

I have not found any meaningful job to do after completing Junior High School. My parents died early, and I needed to find a means of survival. Being part of this group was a source of socialisation for me, and I was promised that I would get a decent job once our party won power. At least this group gives me a sense of purpose. The minor works I do, such as providing security for my party, give me resources to cater to my needs (Vigilante group member 4, personal communication, August 15, 2020).

The issue of unemployment in Africa has given rise to youth urban-based vigilante groups across the continent. There are similar developments not only in Ghana (Gyampo, 2010), but Cameroon (Argenti, 1998; Malaquais, 2001), Kenya (Anderson 2002), Nigeria (Gore & Pratten, 2003) and South Africa (Baker 2002; Haysom 1990). The youths are vulnerable as they are either unemployed or under-employed, leaving them at the mercy of their patrons most especially politicians (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017). Thus, the insatiable leadership of the two major political parties in Ghana (NPP and NDC) to win power at all costs makes them resort to youth groups whose members are mostly unemployed and vulnerable to intimidate their opponents into achieving this desire.

Adjei (2019) claims that political party militia activities are related to systemic and participatory factors such as youth unemployment, unfulfilled election commitments, and elite groups' survival strategies within parties. This corroborates with the views of the participants. In the scope of Ghana's political vigilantism, ruling government supporters behave as their

expectations of getting jobs, deals, and political appointments are unfulfilled. For example, a member of a vigilante group notes that:

> The party promised us that some jobs would come our way if we helped win political power. We will be enlisted into the security agencies and public offices so that our sacrifices for the party will not be in vain. However, after the elections in 2016, it seems we have been side-lined, and we feel betrayed. Some of the people who promised us are not even answering our phone calls. We hope to get decent jobs so that the politicians who are not great at fulfilling their promises do not exploit us. (Vigilante member 5, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

Unfair or limited access to critical economic assets such as land, education, and training dictates who is employed and who is not. Control of a small group of a country's resources can contribute to a phenomenon of jobless growth, where economic development benefits only a tiny part of society. These distributive inefficiencies are considered the root cause of high unemployment and poverty rates in many African countries. As a result of the high rate of unemployment in Africa, some of the youth who form the central part of the working class of the economy is susceptible to the whims and caprices of the political class. The political class offer menial jobs to some of these youths in exchange for their services to these vigilante groups. Failure to do so might be detrimental to the individual in question due to Africa's high poverty rate.

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However, Conflict and Security Analyst 1 disagrees with the assertion that the immediate cause of political vigilantism is the lack of employment for the youth. He argues that:

It is a lazy approach to note that political vigilantism is a result of unemployment. No government in the world has provided a hundred per cent employment to the youths in a country. There are many alternatives available that these members of the vigilante groups could resort to. They need a justification for their existence, and hiding behind the pretence of low availability of jobs cannot be classified as a major cause of vigilantism (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

In addressing another source and motivation for acts of political vigilantism, the participants raised similar issues pertaining to mistrust among political parties and low confidence in the state institutions. NPC Official 1, Ag. Regional Executive Secretary of the National Peace Council, Cape Coast, avers that the two major political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, exhibit a level of mistrust towards each other. This was evident in the National Democratic Congress' delay in signing the National Peace Council's roadmap to end political vigilantism. This mistrust is further extended to state institutions. Though there is little or no empirical evidence to their claim, political opposition parties often believe that state institutions operate under the whims and caprices of the ruling government or party. The state institutions, in this case, referred to the Electoral Commission of Ghana, The Ghana Police Service and the Judiciary.

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Conflict and Security Analyst 1 asserts poor trust and confidence in state institutions managing elections and regulating political behaviours. The political perception is that members of these institutions can barely extricate themselves from governments and ruling party elites. This motivates opposition parties to develop suspicions for those interpreting and implementing electoral laws and enforcing compliance with agreed procedures to conduct political behaviours. Doing so encourages political parties with capacities to win elections to resort to vigilantes to protect partisan interests. This problem sometimes tends to be indirectly amplified by tendencies of officials staffing these institutions to conflate the independence of state institution *qua* institutions with the independence of themselves as *human beings*.

Human Security Analyst 1, a human security analyst, adds that these political parties exhibit little or no trust in security agencies, especially the Ghana Police Service. They perceive that such security agencies do the government's bidding in power. Thus, the parties rely on these vigilante groups to serve as internal security to protect themselves. Academic 1, in an interview with the researcher, buttresses the point made by Human Security Analyst 1, claiming that the law does not bar any group or individual from having an internal source of security so far as it complies with the dictates of the constitution of Ghana. The state security agencies are biased and do not offer equal treatment to the party in power and the opposition party. These vigilante groups sometimes beef up the efforts of providing internal security for their members, particularly at party ceremonies or during elections. The vigilante groups also help in mobilising the grassroots and gingering the

masses for their respective political parties. That explains why these vigilante groups show up at events of these political parties.

In addition to the above, there is a usual mistrust between opposition parties and ruling parties in Ghana. In Africa, elections are mostly seen as a win at all costs, and political parties are eager to retain or capture power. Therefore, democracy is seen narrowly as either being in power or vice versa. Borne out of this is the mistrust between political parties is the labelling of state institutions such as the electoral commission and the security agencies as being biased in dispensing their duties. The selfish interest of these political parties, coupled with the winner takes all syndrome, helps to account for some mistrust (Academic 1, 2020; Conflict and Security Analyst 1, 2020, NPC Official 1, 2020; Human Security Analyst 1, 2020). Academic 1, a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, also explains that:

> When the electoral commission does not apply the rules somewhat, that is, when people perceive that they are treating one political party more favourable, this can also lead to the formation of vigilante groups. For instance, in the recently ended voter registration, the National Democratic Congress complained that they used some means to bring them down so that their people would not register in their stronghold. When this happens, those who are there will come together and fight them (Academic 1, personal communication, August 24, 2020).

It is worth noting that politicians and their followers, especially vigilante groups, have misconstrued change of government to mean the takeover of government. The transition process within nation-states is a

feature of modern democracy that follows the change of every government, on the one hand. On the other hand, a change of government could take the form of a coup d'état, as Adjei (2019) posits. Parties that do not gain favourable success in their bid to rule tend to call state institutions and security agencies biased. Sometimes, they make unfounded accusations against institutions charged with maintaining decorum and rely on their vigilante groups to do their bidding.

In addition, a CODEO Report in 2017 indicated that the justifications for the surge of vigilante groups could be credited to mutual distrust among political parties, as well as a lack of trust in the security apparatus, most notably the police service. The report demonstrates that mistrust or mutual distrust is a critical challenge that disrupts the process of democratisation and, to some extent, the political security of most African countries when not regulated.

In support of the above claim, a participant maintains that:

The government can be bias, but the state cannot be biased. Governments are elected periodically, but state agencies remain the same. The security agencies are state agencies; they are not government or party agencies. They are supposed to work for the state's good and not in any particular government's interest to avoid being labelled as acting biased towards any group. Suppose the government of the day decides to use state agencies against other members of the state. In that case, those members affected by such acts may determine on their own to form these vigilante groups to protect

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their interest and safety (Academic 1, personal communication, August

24, 2020).

A vigilante group member adds that:

The security apparatus, especially the Ghana Police Service, has

exhibited several bias levels to our party. These security agencies are

supposed to act without fear or favour, but due to the excessive

executive power given to the ruling government, they fail to do so.

Thus, we cannot fully trust them for our safety, especially during,

before and after elections. There have been cases where the police have

only targeted members belonging to our party, especially when we are

in opposition (Vigilante group member 3, personal communication,

July 27, 2020).

In the participants' views concerning Ghanaian political vigilantism,

the wealthy barons (in this case, the political parties and people of influence)

created and supported a gang (vigilante groups) that favoured quick justice

using violence. The country's security system's low confidence, especially for

opposition parties, prompted vigilante groups for their internal security.

Stakeholders, especially the political parties and their members, cannot trust

the weak Ghanaian state protection machinery to safeguard them and their

properties (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017). Therefore, these vigilante

groups germinate because of this conflict between the dominant and the

subordinate classes. In this case, there is mistrust between the political parties

and state security agencies.

The practice of democracy across advanced countries consists of

elections that are a crucial criterion of these societies. It is assumed that

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elections illustrate two aspects of democracy: engagement and competitiveness. While elections are not an end in themselves, they continue to be a means to an end because they provide the primary roadmap for the progress of democracies (Ayee & Gyekye-Jandoh, 2014; Bratton & Haynie 1999). From 1992 to 2016, successive democratic elections in the Fourth Republic of Ghana resulted in three peaceful transfers of power, as described by Huntington (1991). He cites the "turnover test" between the major political parties (in 2000 and 2008) and the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of its formal institutions, particularly the Electoral Commission (EC) and the judiciary, particularly in the landmark case of Ghana's presidential election petition.

However, findings from the data also reveal that this violence does not constitute the daily activities of vigilante groups. A vigilante group member who also doubles as a participant in this research maintains that they are not working as thugs or criminal organisations filled with unemployed youth. Most of his colleagues who are part of their vigilante group are gainfully employed. They mobilise people for political involvement and representation at the district and community level, civic engagement in development activities, protection for political leaders and political party activities. Other functions include working closely with political leaders to support local economic development initiatives and generating opportunities for employment for group members, relatives, and friends. For example, one participant indicates that:

> The road in this community is well constructed because of the lobbies
> that we make with our Member of Parliament and the minister for

roads. We also ensure that our children go to school to be like you (the researcher). Some of our members have gotten scholarships to further their education. Others have been enrolled in various tertiary institutions with the hope of being agents of change in society (Vigilante group member 1, personal communication, July 22, 2020).

Another participant maintains that:

People sometimes refer to us as criminals, but that is not the case. We are young and vibrant men who want the best for our society. Some of us are employed as petty traders, shop attendants, cleaners, among others. We do not subscribe to violence, and we aim to support our party in the best way we can. There is even a sense of prestige attached to belonging to this vigilante group. We are a big family that exhibited massive support, sometimes financially, to each other (Vigilante group member 2, personal communication, August 15, 2020).

The above view corroborates with Kyei's (2020) work concerning vigilante groups being violent or criminal associations. During fieldwork he conducted in Tamale and Kumasi on political vigilante groups like the Kandahar, Azorka Boys, Aluta Boys, Al Jazeera, Bawumia Boys, Samira Boys, NDC Task Force, Invincible Force, and Delta Force, the findings indicate that violent acts by such groups do not constitute the core of their day to day activities. There is evidence that political vigilante groups are engaged in mobilising people at the district and community levels for political participation and representation, community engagement in development activities, and security for political elites and political party activities. Other roles include liaising with political elites to cite development projects within

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local communities and creating employment opportunities for members of their group, relatives and friends (Kyei, 2020).

The remarks above point to the claim that vigilantism is not only about violence. The literature from the *tomboloma* of Mali further supports this claim that vigilante groups may not solely engage in violent acts. Besides, vigilante groups sometimes play a crucial part in counterinsurgencies. An example of such a group is the Kamajors of Sierra Leone. The Kamajors defended their communities and safeguarded their communities against both rebels and soldiers. The operation of the Kamajors had some similar characteristics to the Bakassi Boys of Nigeria. The extent of extortion and violent robberies perpetrated by an ever-growing powerful group of criminal gangs angered traders and shoemakers in the commercial south-eastern Nigerian city of Aba in 1998 (Meagher, 2007; Smith, 2004; Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002). Also, as a response to the overwhelming insecurity and criminality attributed to the engagements of armed gangs operating in the border region between Benin and Togo, the Group of Colonel Devi was established in 1999 (Gratz, 2007; Kohnert, 2000; Lorin, 2016).

In assessing, the place of vigilante groups in Ghana, Gyampo (2010) asserts that in 2008 general elections, they are instrumental in monitoring polling centres, precisely the remote rural constituent that contributes massively towards checking of impersonation. Therefore, they form part of the electoral process and, in a way, contributed to the smooth progress of the elections. The participants shared the same consensus with the CODEO Report (2017) and NCCE Report (2018). The reports indicate that these

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groups provide security to the various political parties (NPP and NDC, respectively) during their events or elections. After offering their services to the political parties, these vigilante groups expect a favour in return. They are sometimes given lofty promises by their patrons that are not fulfilled. A member of a vigilante group in Ghana concerning this assertion said:

> We offer our services to the party out of the love we have for it. If you fail to be proactive, your opponent might outsmart you. We are more like polling agents who ensure the party's interest is protected at the polling station. I was a polling station representative in my constituency, and I did not go there to cause mayhem but only to protect my party's interest. (Vigilante group member 2, personal communication, Aug 22, 2020).

However, vigilante groups later transformed into violent groups which terrorised people and blatantly disregarded the rule of law in their respective countries. Political vigilante group activities are based on the premise of reciprocity and the supply of personalised products. They assume that the holders of public office (patrons) are wealthy and control vast resources (Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012). Therefore, they expect the political elite to share the wealth of the state. Consequently, they work hard for them once they are in government to gain and hold power for their political elite (Bob-Milliar, 2014). They feel that their contributions to their respective political parties will not go unnoticed.

For example, Colonel Devi of Benin assumed a more radical posture when the group's purpose was defeated (Gratz, 2007; Kohnert, 2000; Lorin, 2016). The group had transformed into a mafia-like group or militia, refusing

all collaboration with state security forces, which they did not tolerate in the Mono area. State security forces were threatened with death threats, tortures and various forms of abuse in their attempt to intervene. Colonel Devi operated as an illegal entity whose activities were a clear violation of the country's laws and rules. The group, which began as a social control institution, started to challenge the state's sovereignty, not only in its monopoly of violence but also in its endeavours to control public services, taxes and roads, which were vital means for its agents to generate resources.

These sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism align with the frustration-aggression theory and the Marxist theory of conflict. The frustration-aggression theory has been applied and studied in different fields since its inception in the late 1930s, including clinical and social psychology, ethnology, politics, international relations, sociology, criminology, and medical research. As a result, the theory contends, aggression results from obstructing or frustrating a person's efforts to achieve a goal. Issues of unemployment and vulnerability of the youth, the insatiable desire of leadership of the two major political parties to win power at all cost, mutual suspicion and mistrust among political parties and security agencies are all a result of the frustrations people have towards the system. Acts of political vigilantism in Ghana have become cyclical, which points to the issue of system failure. The disappointment with this failure then turns into aggression that needs to be addressed by the roles of state and non-state actors.

Marxist theorists such as Lenin and Karl Marx maintain that society is an amalgamated class of individuals with antagonistic values, beliefs and concerns. There is the bourgeoisie comprising a dominant class with a lot of

influence (power and money) and the proletariat-comprised of a subordinate class without influence. The two classes are in constant dispute because of society's fight for scarce resources. Domination and influence preserve social order while the wealthy and powerful dominate the weak and the poor.

Therefore, it can be deduced from the participants' responses that the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism are largely due to people's frustration. Frustration on the path of the political class arises due to the perceived biases by state institutions such as the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the Ghana Police Service and the National Peace Council of Ghana. This frustration tends to create the arena of mistrust and mutual suspicions among the political class (patrons). This transcends to their followers (clients) who are at times lured with money and drugs to threaten the state's security by engaging in violent acts.

Consequently, frustration leads to aggression that is manifested in the violent techniques employed by vigilante groups. In addition, the syndrome of "winner takes all" in Ghana often leads to aggressive and illegal actions by sections of the public to point out their frustrations. Such violent acts include seizing public toilet facilities, distracting court procedures, forceful removal of appointed personnel from their offices, and stealing ballot boxes during elections, among others. Because of the frustrations and disappointments of unmet aspirations, the political class, through their vigilante groups, resort to political vigilantism to register their displeasure with the state institutions.

Objective 2: Political Vigilantism as a Threat to Political Security.

This current research posits that political vigilantism threatens people's political security, especially before, during, and after elections. A peace and security analyst in an interview for this study indicates that:

Political security essentially implies political stability, meaning the capacity of state institutions (especially security agencies) to provide security to enable a country to maintain its internal cohesion and peaceful development. Political vigilantism attempts to erode this capacity. It renders police officers and law enforcement institutions ineffective and suggests that people take care of their security. Because it arises especially during political competitions, the low but intense violence it causes exposes the country to large-scale violence. Indeed, political vigilantism negatively affects political security (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

NPC Official 1, who is the Ag. Regional Executive Secretary of the National Peace Council of Ghana, Cape Coast, supports this assertion by noting that:

Suppose activities of political vigilantism are very much on the rise to the extent that these vigilante groups unleash acts of violence in public spaces, especially polling stations. In that case, the political security of people expected to participate in their political activities goes under threat. People live in fear, especially during general election periods, as this is an atmosphere of uncertainty in areas identified as hotspots for acts of vigilantism. Some people are even tempted not to engage in their constitutional mandate of voting due to this fear. Moreover, if

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political security is well guaranteed or safeguarded, political vigilantism becomes less of a threat. The more people partake in acts of political vigilantism, the more political security issues become complicated. They are inversely related (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

Another participant who is a conflict and security analyst notes:

The attacks and thuggery from vigilante groups threaten the safety of the people. No one is safe to freely engage in political activities such as registering to vote or going to a polling station to perform your mandate to vote. You do not know what to expect as vigilante groups or individuals could attack you if they feel you pose a threat to them. A recent example was in 2020 in Kasoa, whereby a Minister of State, Hon. Hawa Koomson fired a gunshot at an ongoing voters' registration exercise due to fear of being attacked by individuals loyal to the opposition party NDC (Conflict and Security Analyst 2, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

The above quotes from the participants demonstrate that political vigilantism has become a threat to the democratic credentials Ghana has achieved in Africa and an albatross to political security. In this case, there was an element of fear on the path of the citizenry. The participants indicated to the researcher their fears to willingly engage in political activities such as elections due to the threat these vigilante individuals or groups posed. With the proliferation of arms and unwarranted attacks witnessed within the country, there is a sense of insecurity as vigilante groups or individuals could launch an attack at any given time. The views from the participants

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corroborate that of top public officials within Ghana. Top public officials have acknowledged that they feel unsafe with the growing heights of acts of political vigilantism across the country. Most Rev. Professor Emmanuel Asante, Former Chairman of the National Peace Council, stated that, with the current rise of pro-government party vigilantism in the country, he does not feel safe as he was living in fear (*Daily Graphic*, October 31, 2017). National Security Minister Albert Kan-Dapaah, expressing his dissatisfaction with the ever-increasing trend of political vigilantism, described the activities of political vigilante groups as criminal and reiterated that security agencies are determined to fight the groups and stop their activities *(Daily Graphic*, April 7, 2017). This has rendered political activities a hub for potential acts of violence or mayhem by vigilante groups.

Asamoah (2019) asserts that to understand what possesses a security threat, one must look at what security itself is. To him, security cuts across every aspect of human life- economic life, political life, social life, religion and everything; hence anything that threatens the achievement of any of these aspects or areas is a security threat. Therefore, people should be able to go about their daily activities without fear. One participant maintains that:

> Political security essentially implies political stability, meaning the capacity of state institutions (especially security agencies) to provide security to enable a country to maintain its internal cohesion and peaceful development. Political vigilantism attempts to erode this capacity. It renders police officers and law enforcement institutions ineffective and suggests to people to ensure their security. Because it arises especially during political competitions, the low but intense

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violence exposes the country to large-scale violence (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

Another participant addressed the threat political vigilantism poses to political security from the perspective of the vulnerability of the youth. She notes that:

Young people who should be groomed as future leaders of the country are being used for such violence. In most cases, the political class feed these vigilante groups with drugs and arms. This implies that they are being groomed for disaster. When politics is over, they do not have anything to use their energies and arms for. As a result of them being unemployed and idle, there is a tendency to invade peoples' homes with these weapons to raid their properties. Besides, most of them become contract killers. It is a cycle, keeps evolving, and is a threat to the nation as a whole. It affects peoples' freedom to freely participate in the political process, especially their constitutionally mandated right to vote. People are scared for their lives due to the ever-growing acts of vigilantism across the country (FOSDA Official 1, personal communication, August 25, 2020).

The responses from ten of the participants are similar to McEldowney (2005) work on political security. McEldowey (2005) argues that the fundamental freedoms enjoyed in democratic societies function as political security. He avows that the value of political security is based on civil strife's collapse of law and order threatens society's survival. Therefore, political security means protecting the freedoms of citizens in a way that enhances their sense of belonging to the political system. From the views above, there is a

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link between political security and political vigilantism. The link is that political vigilantism is a threat to political security. They are closely related and intertwined.

Their responses also corroborate Merkel's (2004) assertion of political security. Political security, like democracy, demands an opportunity for citizens to partake in the governing processes of their state (Merkel, 2004). Therefore, elements of political security include "economic electoral systems, civic participation, civil rights, horizontal transparency, and the assurance that democratically elected representatives have the power to govern" (Merkel, 2004). Political security, therefore, includes the control of the citizens over the constitution of governing bodies and the control of their power. In this case, political vigilantism becomes a hindrance to the enjoyment of political security within Ghana. The participants acknowledged that acts of vigilante groups are gradually instilling fear and panic among citizens. This fear and panic are detrimental to the democratic credentials of Ghana. Out of this fear, people will not freely express their democratic rights as mandated by the constitution (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

NPC Official 1 and Human Security Analyst 1's assertions align with the UNDP Report, which established a relationship between political security and human security. The proposition is that "people should be able to live in a society that honours their basic human rights" (UNDP, 1994, p. 32). Therefore, political security concerns the conditions necessary for the realisation of the individual's dignity. The culmination of an individual's dignity has much to do with the person's ability to engage in the political discourse with their country. Acts of political vigilantism curtail the

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enjoyment of such dignity as people rather live in fear and panic due to the unpredictable nature of these vigilante groups. According to Hassan (2015), this UNDP explanation of political security attempts to set an agenda for protecting the citizens of countries that torture, oppress, and encounter ill-treatment and disappearance. Political security, in this case, is classified under the individual level and state level, respectively. At the state level, political vigilantism erodes the capacities and independence of state security agencies to execute their mandate and provide security to safeguard the peace and stability of the country.

Ong (2007) avers that political security is fundamentally concerned with the organisation and process of government and the ideology that provides legitimacy to a country's rulers. He contends that political security consists of two components: procedures for forming a government and the grounds on which such a government remains a legitimate governing body. This view aligns with Human Security Analyst 1's description of political vigilantism as a threat to political security. Political security implies political stability, i.e. the capacity of state institutions (particularly security agencies), which forms a government, to provide security to allow countries to preserve their internal cohesion and peaceful growth. Political vigilantism attempts to erode that capacity. This renders government or state agencies such as the police force inefficient and further suggests that individuals care for their safety.

The point raised by FOSDA Official 1 of the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) draws people's attention to the actions of vigilante groups mostly formed to protect the interest of the political elites.

Her view corresponds with that of Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017). Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) aver that vigilante groups offer their services in the form of clientelism to their respective political parties. Political parties essentially patronise the activities of vigilante groups, and these groups feel that political parties owe them a debt, especially when they win power. After the politics is over, these vigilante groups are left to the mercy of what may come their way. Since most of these groups are made of unemployed youth, they resort to other illegal means of survival. According to some of the main sources interviewed for this study, some vigilantes are tempted to engage in thuggery lifestyles to make a living for themselves and provide a source of livelihood for their families (Academic 1, 2020; CODEO Official 1, 2020; FOSDA Official 1, 2020; Human Security Analyst 1, 2020).

Objective 3: Implications of Political Vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's Global Image

Peace, safety and security are essential tenets of good governance and are directly linked to development. Security sector quality and governance institutions define the degree to which the sector can effectively and efficiently provide security, peace and safety to the people of a society or state. In an environment of peace and security, people may carry out their legitimate activities without constraints on their development. Globalisation has made the world more interconnected. Events within a specific geographical space have a rippling effect on another. The threat of political vigilantism on political security has more general implications on security issues and Ghana's global image. One of such implications is related to

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terrorism. West Africa faces the constant threat of terrorist attacks from pro-militia and groups within the region. A participant makes a point that:

> Political vigilantism is fertile ground for terrorism. This is because the parties involved are the most vulnerable people who are unemployed or under-employed. This leaves most of these young people idle. The idleness could lead to radicalisation. Terrorists are trained to use weapons, fight and cause mayhem. Terrorism, on its face, makes it look as if they are fighting specific issues in their country. Nevertheless, if that was the case, one terrorist group could not cut across the whole sub-region. For you to have a terrorist group that cuts across many countries like what we have in the Maghreb states and they being linked with those in some West African countries (Nigeria and Mali), clearly it means that it could be used anywhere to cause mayhem (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

Another participant in supporting the above statement opines that:

> Ghana is threatened by invasions of a possible spillover of happenings in Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso, especially, bearing in mind the porousness of the Ghanaian border. Given the ethnic groups living in the entire West African sub-region, families are interconnected across countries. For instance, at the Volta borders, we have the Ewe in Togo and Ghana. In the Upper regional border with Burkina Faso, both the Fulani and Hausa people are present. In the Western Region, specifically the Nzema areas, there are people in Cote d'Ivoire who are multi-lingual (speak both Nzema and French). This makes it difficult

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to properly screen who is entering Ghana through its borders. Because of this, terrorist or violent extremists can easily capitalise on Ghana's internal crisis to spark a terrorist attack. These vigilante groups are mercenaries and are easily influenced by power and money. They train themselves to be available to do anything that people give them money for. It means some of these groups' availability also serves as fertile grounds for terrorists, violence and crimes to have easy access to a group of people they can work with. Vigilantism is, therefore, a significant threat to political security and has implications on the West African sub-region (CODEO Official 1, personal communication, July 22, 2020).
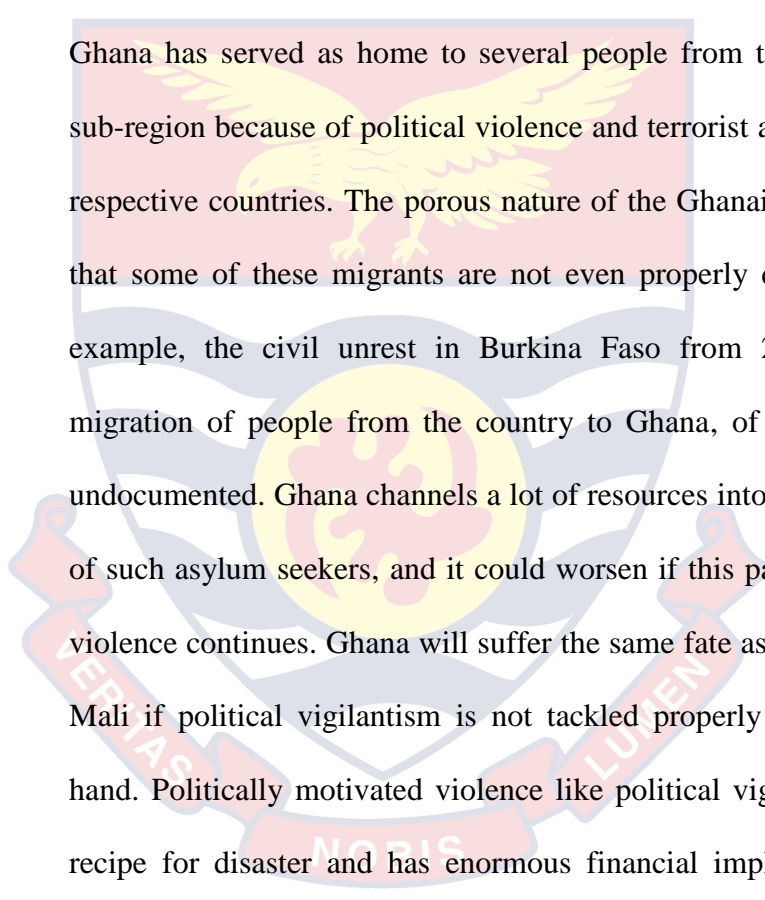
The above responses from the participants corroborate Asamoah's (2019) and Bamba (2014). Asamoah (2019) states that Ghana should be on guard with the increasing rate of terrorism cases in neighbouring countries. He also avows that the persistence of these groups' existence without addressing the underlying issues can potentially transform them into militant groups, with far-reaching ramifications for a fragile and unstable sub-region. Bamba (2014) opines that porous borders and weapons proliferation remain examples of Ghana's threats, ushering the country into terrorism. Often, this proliferation of weapons ends up with people who are not well equipped in terms of training and are not authorised to handle such ammunition. Unfortunately, these vigilante groups in Ghana and West Africa generally have unlimited access to such weapons, posing a significant security threat to people in their nations. The threat of terrorist and violent extremist attacks in Ghana has increased debate across the security circles in Ghana. Given the spread of

militant groups in Burkina Faso to the south and the porosity of the borders, there is concern about the cross-border incursion into Ghana. The security of borders, especially in Ghana, faces a challenge with the proliferation of arms and movements of illegal people across the West African sub-region. According to one participant interviewed for this research:

> We have witnessed cross border arms all relating to vigilantism and political instability in the West Africa sub-region. The chances are that if Ghana becomes politically unstable with the menace of political vigilantism, it could fuel a cross border infiltration. Some people can go across the border to Burkina Faso and engage some of the rebels in Burkina Faso to move in and cause mayhem here. We may also have some people crossing the border to African countries to cause havoc with the high proliferation of arms across the region (Academic 1, personal communication, August 24, 2020).

In addition, unbridled acts of political vigilantism could lead to political instability that has migration as a rippling effect. From the views solicited from the participants, acts of political vigilantism tend to incite fear in people, as they feel unsafe, and their livelihoods will be affected as well. This insecurity leads to the migration of people to places where they feel safe. Human Security Analyst 1 explains that if there were electoral violence in Ghana, there would be a spillover effect that could lead to the migration of Ghanaians into its neighbouring countries and vice versa. The rippling effect of political unrest in the West African sub-region is immense. It has led to the displacement of people who come in as refugees or asylum seekers across the region. Ghana has received asylum seekers from neighbouring countries such

as Liberia, Mali and Burkina Faso. For example, based on International Law, the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a country with refugees ultimately has to take care of them. Migrants who have crossed the international border to seek asylum should not be discriminated against, penalised or returned to a country where they might be at risk. It has implications on a country's finances and resources to take care of them long-term. According to one participant:

> Ghana has served as home to several people from the West African sub-region because of political violence and terrorist attacks from their respective countries. The porous nature of the Ghanaian border means that some of these migrants are not even properly documented. For example, the civil unrest in Burkina Faso from 2017 led to the migration of people from the country to Ghana, of which some are undocumented. Ghana channels a lot of resources into the maintenance of such asylum seekers, and it could worsen if this pattern of political violence continues. Ghana will suffer the same fate as Burkina Faso or Mali if political vigilantism is not tackled properly and gets out of hand. Politically motivated violence like political vigilante acts are a recipe for disaster and has enormous financial implications for any country (Conflict and Security Analyst 2, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

A report from WANEP (2019) notes that between 2017 and June 2019, Burkina Faso registered two hundred and eighty-eight (288) violent terrorist attacks. This has contributed to a rise in the influx of refugees fleeing to

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neighbouring countries. These migrants have found Ghana to be a safe haven due to the political stability the country enjoys.

A retired security officer interviewed for the research indicates that:

The complex nature of borders and the split of several ethnic groups across the West African sub-region make it hard for governments to have a firm grip over their borders. As such, documentation of migrants become cumbersome for many African governments. It even becomes difficult for governments to monitor the activities of such migrants. Some could potentially join these vigilante groups and add whatever skills they have to their respective groups to cause mayhem in the country (Retired Security Officer, personal communication, August 27, 2020).

Yayoh (2013) maintains that creating these artificial boundaries resulted in a situation where we had micro-nations within macro-nations. As a result, most African governments find it extremely difficult to administer international boundaries that are sliced through cultural and ethnic groups. There is also the potential of migrants joining the various vigilante groups as admitted by a member of a vigilante group who doubles as a participant for this research, notes:

I am from a neighbouring country and have been living in Ghana for the past ten years. I joined this group due to the prestige and their contribution to society. The keep-fit sessions organised on periodic occasions is helping to keep me fit. I enjoy being part of this group and will always contribute to support the running and maintenance of it (Vigilante member 3, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

Therefore, the insurgencies in West Africa could demonstrate the extent to which Ghana could be a target for violent extremist groups. These extremist groups mostly started as community watchdogs but later transformed into violent ones that threatened the security of their respective countries. Typical examples include the Kamajors of Sierra Leone, the Colonel Devi of Benin and the Bakassi Boys of Nigeria. Just like terrorist and extremist groups, one cannot underestimate the implications of vigilante groups because they can strike anywhere at any time. They do not give any warning signs and might even take a country's security apparatus by surprise.

Responses from the participants also indicate that political vigilantism in its extreme form can erode Ghana's soft power in regional and international affairs. A security analyst explains that:

> Ghana is well noted for respecting its political stability and as a country that champions the advocacy for peace and security in the sub-region. This soft power is generated and sustained partly because the international community respects and appreciates how we typically resort to cooperation and reciprocity rather than military might to address common grievances. Thus, acts of political vigilantism can erode Ghana's soft power image in regional and international affairs (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

Another participant avows that:

> In terms of soft power, Ghana has made a mark as a peaceful country that serves as a safe haven to refugees and all manners of people. This attraction has helped promote the economic activities that include

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tourism and arts to the globe. Political vigilantism and its threat to political security put the country at risk of losing such status. Unbridled acts of political vigilantism could lead to political instability. The effects of political instability will be immense. Situations of political unrest in neighbouring West African countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso provides a claim to how detrimental the damages can be (Conflict and Security Analyst 2, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Nye (2009) refers to soft power as the ability to attain the desired results or achieve foreign policy objectives in international politics through persuasion and attraction. It can also be said to be the ability to win the hearts of people or actors and influence their preferences positively in a way that you want. A participant maintains that acts of political vigilantism can escalate into civil unrest that will be detrimental to this internationally recognised status of Ghana being referred to as a beacon of peace in the West African sub-region.

The imposition of fear by acts of political vigilantism is a bad omen for Ghana's diplomatic ties and international image as the beacon of peace. The responses from the participants corroborate the work of Nye (2009) on soft power. Political vigilantism poses a threat to this soft power because it begs the extent to which the elites can confidently convince their citizens to respect their electoral laws when they seem to have come to power through the help of vigilante violence.

Also, when there is political instability in a country, it affects diplomatic ties with other countries in the long term. International firms mostly rely on political stability to maximise their profits. These non-state

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actors rely on the diplomatic ties between their home country and the countries where their businesses are established. Acts of political vigilantism across the West African region pose a threat to the possibility of investments from these international firms into a country. Ghana heavily relies on foreign companies and their revenues. A participant in describing this assert that:

> If there is political instability due to political vigilantism, Ghana loses some of its foreign direct investments. It will also affect job creation as Ghana heavily relies on the private sector for employment. Tourism will also be negatively affected, as it will not be safe. For example, a series of political instability in Egypt had a damaging mark on the tourism industry in the country. Tourism is a huge income earner in Egypt. Thus, it has enormous economic implications for Ghana and other foreign companies situated in the country (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

From the above, it is worth noting that the amount of peace and stability influences foreign direct investments at a place. No investor would invest in a place where they believe business cannot thrive. The rippling effects of this on the economic well-being of Ghana will be felt in the area of job creation, technology transfer, remittances and government's monetary expenditure. Thus, the repercussions of acts of political vigilantism endanger the economic survival of Ghana.

Objective 4: The Roles that State and Non-State Actors Play in Addressing Political Vigilantism in Ghana

Issues of political vigilantism have been increasing in Ghana, and both state and non-state actors play varying roles in addressing it. State and non-

state actors are considered stakeholders in issues of political vigilantism. Stakeholders in issues of political vigilantism comprise individuals and groups who have either direct or indirect involvement or benefit from actions of such acts. The stakeholders can be classified as major and minor. In Ghana, major stakeholders in issues about the threat of political vigilantism to political security include the government, the political parties and the state institutions such as the Ghana Police Service, the National Peace Council and the Electoral Commission of Ghana. Non-state actors like civil society groups, academics, security analysts are considered minor stakeholders.

The National Peace Council of Ghana

The National Peace Council of Ghana (NPC) is an independent statutory national peace institution established in 2011 by ACT 818 of the Republic of Ghana. Consequently, any action carried out by the Council must be derived from its mandate under Act 818 (The National Peace Council Act, 2011). The Council's core role is to prevent, manage and resolve disputes and create a peaceful society. The mandate of the NPC makes it an important stakeholder in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana. Acts of political vigilantism endanger the lives of the people within the country.

The National Peace Council became operational in 2011, with the passage of Act 818. Its establishment replaced the previous peace strategy of the National, Regional, and District Security Councils by instituting Regional Peace Advisory Councils (RPACs) and District Peace Advisory Boards (DPACs). The National Peace Council is a governing body at the national level constituted of a Board of thirteen eminent individuals appointed by the

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President. The tenure is four years, but a board member may resign, or the president may revoke membership for specified reasons. The President also appoints an Executive Secretary, who is in charge of the operations of the Council (The National Peace Council Act, 2011).

As mandated by the constitution, the National Peace Council of Ghana is considered a major stakeholder in issues of national interest. Its main objective is to facilitate and develop conflict prevention, management, and resolution mechanisms and build sustainable peace (The National Peace Council Act, 2011). Political vigilantism and other related offences have been at the frontier of the work of the NPC. It has been instrumental in playing its role as a conveyor of peace and a neutral body in dealing with political vigilantism. As constitutionally mandated, the National Peace Council has worked in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the political parties and civil society groups to curb the ever-growing threat of political vigilantism to the democracy and security of Ghana.

To achieve this, the council in 2019 established the Roadmap and Code of Conduct for the Eradication of Political Vigilantism in Ghana. The roadmap brought on board ideas from the council and the political parties, and civil society groups. The council does not have prosecuting powers. Therefore, it is there to act as a neutral source that heavily relies on mediation to compromise with the parties involved in a conflict. Since mediation takes neutrality and trust, most of the council's activities are done behind the scenes. In an interview with a staff member of the NPC in Cape Coast, he shed more light on the role of the National Peace Council in addressing issues of political vigilantism in Ghana. He indicates that:

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The constitution of Ghana empowers the National Peace Council of Ghana to operate within its jurisdiction. In 2011, the passing of Act 818 gave the NPC four key mandates. These are to prevent conflict, manage conflict, resolve conflict, and build a robust desirable society in which people will be free to carry out their regular duties (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

The NPC has several functions aimed at achieving its objective. The council must harmonise and organise conflict prevention, management, and long-term peace through networking and coordination. It seeks to empower Ghana's capacity for conflict prevention, management, resolution, and long-term peace, focusing on leaders, women, youth groups, and community organisations, among others. The Council also exists to raise awareness of nonviolent conflict prevention, management, and resolution methods and promote long-term peace.

Besides these roles, the NPC facilitates the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation and other processes, including an indigenous mechanism for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. In this case, indigenous means of conflict resolution refer to dialogue, negotiation, reconciliation, and mediation at the internal level. The council continuously promotes understanding of diversity, trust, tolerance, confidence building, dialogue, negotiation, reconciliation and mediation. After making headway or significant progress in conflict prevention, the council facilitates the implementation of agreements and resolutions reached between parties in the conflict. Lastly, the NPC makes recommendations to the government of Ghana

and other stakeholders on actions to promote trust and confidence between and among groups.
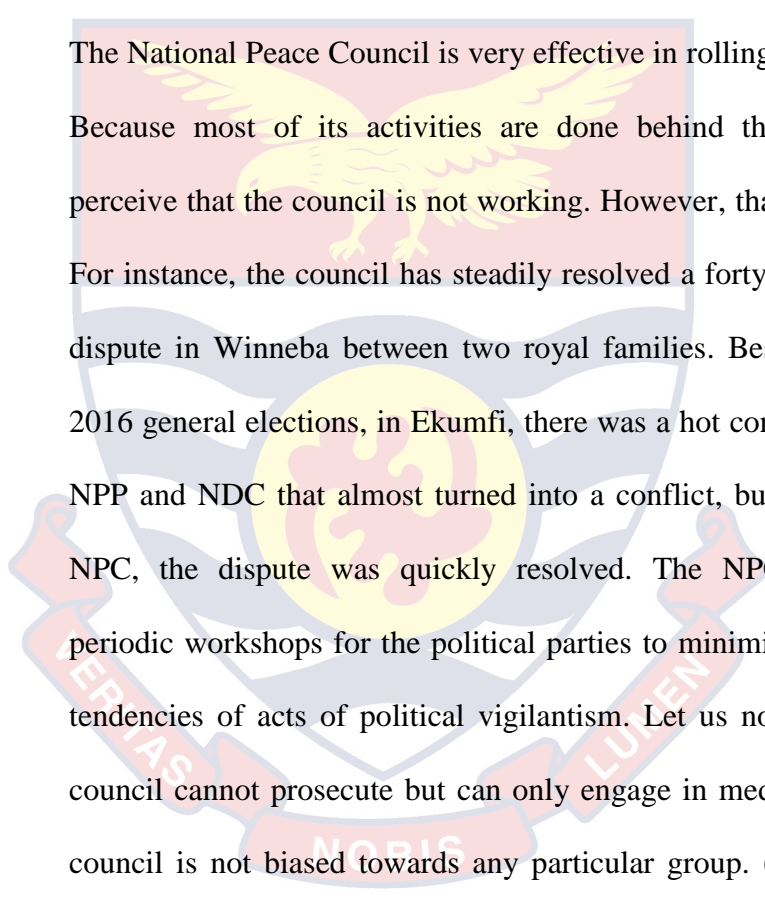
The functions mentioned earlier of the NPC depict an input of greater resources in administering such functions of the NPC. The performance of this mandate is deeply embedded with substantial financial resources and commitments by parties involved in the mediation. Act 818 established a Peace Fund. The sources of funding for the Peace Fund include; contributions from the government, local private and public organisations, international organisations, foreign governments, funds received from the Fund's programmes, and gifts and contributions from other sources. The council's expenditure is charged to the Consolidated Fund of Ghana that is released periodically (The National Peace Council Act, 2011). Therefore, the NPC heavily relies on funding from Ghana and other governments around the globe, such as the Japanese and Canadian governments, respectively. Still, they also rely on fundraising and donations from local and international organisations.

The activities of the NPC often draw high levels of criticism by a section of the public who label the council as being ineffective. A participant criticising the NPC opines that:

> The National Peace Council recently noted that they are not getting the needed cooperation from some political parties to address political vigilantism in Ghana. The roadmap and the bill, respectively, look good on paper as they show some willingness to solve a problem. Nevertheless, the worry has to do with how much power the NPC is given to deal with the situation. The NPC does not have the powers of

prosecution. It is sometimes seen as not being proactive enough in the administering of their mandate. Suppose you pass a bill prescribing punishing for offenders, and the forces who will enforce the laws are sacred to do so. In that case, it renders the bill powerless (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

However, a participant from the National Peace Council debunked this assertion. He maintains that:

The National Peace Council is very effective in rolling out its mandate. Because most of its activities are done behind the camera, some perceive that the council is not working. However, that is not the case. For instance, the council has steadily resolved a forty-year chieftaincy dispute in Winneba between two royal families. Besides, during the 2016 general elections, in Ekumfi, there was a hot contest between the NPP and NDC that almost turned into a conflict, but with the aid of NPC, the dispute was quickly resolved. The NPC also organise periodic workshops for the political parties to minimise the members' tendencies of acts of political vigilantism. Let us not forget that the council cannot prosecute but can only engage in mediation. Also, the council is not biased towards any particular group. (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020.)

The Programmes Manager of NPC, Cape Coast, supports the above claim:

The National Peace Council draws its mandate from Act 818. The National Peace Council aims to prevent conflict, manage conflict, resolve conflict, and ensure sustainable peace in the country. The

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council advocates for peace. The Peace Council goes beyond just focusing on political parties but also the individual. That is why there have been some organisations of peace campaigns, even in the churches and schools. On 3rd August 2020, a committee was set up to help monitor what these political parties have decided to do to eradicate political vigilante groups. Also, the NPC Roadmap to end political vigilantism is very timely as it will help in the fight against it (NPC Official 2, personal communication, August 19, 2020).

A participant also adds that:

The NPC was responsible for the passing of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act (2019). The president has signed that bill, and now it is an Act of Parliament 999, a full force. The NPC has been able to bring those two political parties (NPP and NDC) together held at Peduase, and they were able to juror this roadmap that has become so useful to the country. The NPC also came with a Code of Conduct for political parties attached to the vigilantism Act. The code tells the political parties what they can and cannot do (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

The above assertions show that the NPC is working within its mandate to promote peace and stability. The findings from the interviews indicated that the NPC is working to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution, and building sustainable peace in Ghana. Nevertheless, the council faces some challenges, which at times makes it difficult to function effectively. Difficult. In addressing some of the challenges the NPC faces in addressing political vigilantism, NPC Official 1 notes that:

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Resources are limited. For instance, there must be a presentation on the Act starting on Monday, and instead of addressing twenty-four constituencies, resources available has limited it to only four constituencies. As a result of limited resources, one cannot go to them at their doorsteps. Most of these members of the various parties do not have the existential idea of Act 999. For example, after the one held at Sasakawa - UCC, it was realised that some political parties members did not even know that there are sanctions for those who will engage in political vigilantism. Sometimes, a staff has to use their own money to fuel the car for such programmes before funds are later reimbursed (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

The funds of the NPC are used for the provision of assistance to conflict resolution and peacebuilding institutions in Ghana. It is also used for the facilitation and promotion of conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in the country. Lastly, it is used to fund conflict resolution and peacebuilding projects that the council may determine. To prevent political vigilantism, checks indicated that the NPC continuously allocates many resources and effort into it. Periodically, the Council organises seminars and workshops, publishes reports, negotiates and dialogue with stakeholders to foster peace and security within Ghana.

Therefore, from the foregoing analysis, this study argues that it is relatively inaccurate to label the National Council as ineffective as they are sometimes not well resourced to undertake their mandate. The NPC is doing a good job by engaging all stakeholders in issues of political vigilantism in a bid to find a solution to this menace. The activities of the NPC supplement the

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efforts of other stakeholders such as the government and CSOs aimed at addressing political vigilantism and the threat it poses to political security in Ghana. However, as a state actor, the NPC faces challenges that hamper the smooth progress of its activities. One of the challenges for the NPC from the findings of this work pointed towards the issue of adequate funding for the promotion and performance of its activities. The delay in allocating funds from the Consolidated Fund of Ghana renders the NPC incapable of rolling out some of its plans for organising workshops and seminars for stakeholders in the area of political violence. As indicated by one of the participants, at times, staff members have to fall on their resources to ensure that a task is executed. Though, such resources would later be repaid to them.

In addition, the over-reliance on donations from local and international organisations and, in some cases, governments makes the council susceptible to external influence. This external influence comes in the form of delays in rolling out their plan of action for the year, as there may not be enough funds at a particular time. The NPC is independent in the view of Act 818 that established it, but in reality, the NPC is fully independent because the funds used for its projects and activities are from these external sources. Therefore, there is a big problem with the inflow of funds. A participant indicates:

> International donors such as the UNDP also fund the NPC. A yet to be held programme on political vigilantism at Assin Fosu is funded by DANIDA, the Danish Embassy. Sometimes USAID, CFI- Canadian Fund local Initiatives, the Japanese government, and many more have been helping. Last year, the NPC sent letters to all institutions, such as the banks, big supermarkets, etc., in the Central Region appealing for

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funds that received a positive response (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

The NPC is understaffed, which is a major hindrance to the performance of its mandate of promoting peace and stability in the country. This, coupled with the lack of logistics in terms of vehicles, office spaces, among others, poses a challenge to their role in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana. This study's findings suggest that the NPC does not have enough staff to operate fully in their various District Peace Councils and Regional Peace Councils, respectively. For example, at the Central Regional Peace Council, only four staff members manage the day-to-day issues that emerge in the Central Region of Ghana. Also, there is only one serviceable vehicle for the office, which sometimes must be fuelled by the staff upon embarking on the mediation process. Concerning this, a participant interviewed for this study opines:

> There are thirteen board members that the NPC in the Central Region is working with, and from January to date, they are yet to receive their quarterly allowance, so calling them for a meeting has become a challenge. It is making things difficult. Even in terms of recruitments, there are only four personnel in the whole Central Region, so there are inadequate hands to do the work. Imagine if one goes on leave. In Winneba, there is only one person there, so even when the person is going out to buy food, he has to lock the office. The Act states that every district must have a peace council, but only Winneba and Upper West are lucky to have some in their districts (NPC Official 1, personal communication, August 14, 2020).

Another challenge the NPC faces is the willingness of stakeholders (in this case, political parties) to stick to the terms of dialogue and mediation. The NPC does not have the power to prosecute. The NPC only relies on advocacy, persuasion, dialogue, and mediation to reach out to the populace in maintaining peace within the country. The political parties involved in a conflict are not legally bounded to take whatever mediation tactics or remedies the NPC establish when there is such a case. A recent example of this was the NDC's refusal to sign the NPC's Roadmap and Code of Conduct to Eradicate Political Vigilantism in Ghana on the premise that they were not in conformity with some of the NPC's remedies suggested. NPC Official 1 explains that:

> Even with the document signing on the Roadmap to End Political Vigilantism, the NPP signed, and the NDC did not sign initially. It took some level of consultations before they later came to sign. At the point of signing, they raised a concern that even as they are signing, they want the government, as a matter of urgency, to show leadership by preventing certain acts of vigilantism from within the NPP political party from occurring. If the government does that, then they are also going to allow theirs too to be disbanded. So it means they were signing on a condition, and the NPC were handicapped as they could do nothing about that (NPC Official 1, personal communication, Aug 14, 2020).

From the above, it can be deduced that the National Peace Council remains committed to performing its mandate of preventing conflict, managing conflict, resolving conflict, and building a robust desirable society devoid of conflict. The council took steps, such as drawing the roadmap to end
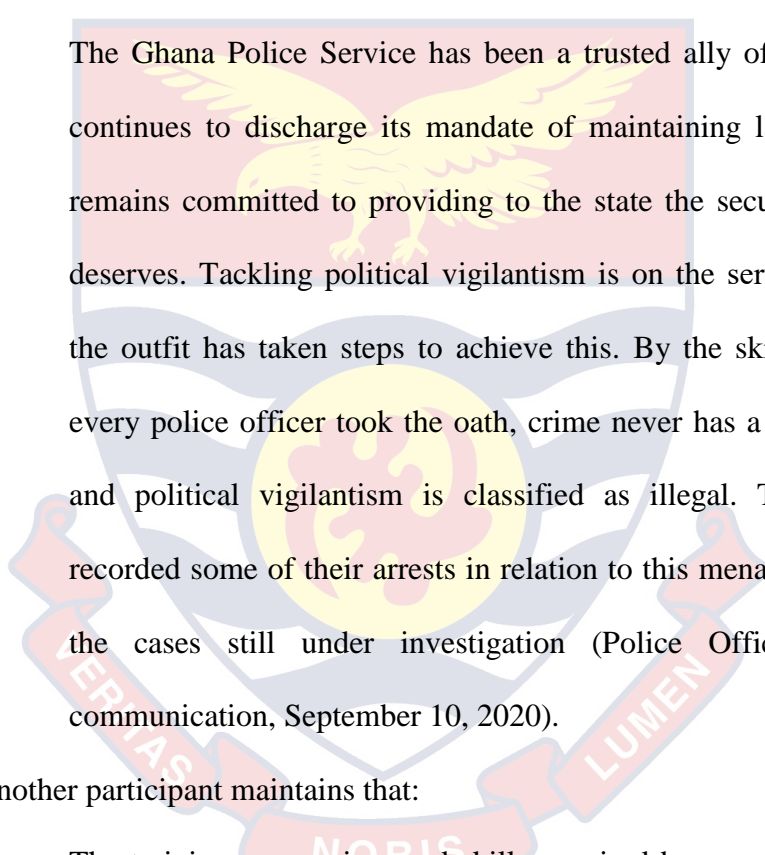
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political vigilantism and the spearheading of the zeal to draft Act 999 to address the offences of political vigilantism continues to portray its usefulness. With the lack of power to prosecute, dialogue with the groups or individuals involved in political vigilantism is the mechanism utilised mainly by the NPC. Hitherto, the activities of the NPC is hampered by some challenges that have been discussed in the previous paragraphs. A substantial exhibition of commitment from stakeholders, especially the government, political parties and vigilante groups, will ensure that the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana is drastically addressed.

The NPC remains a key stakeholder in issues of political vigilantism. In accordance with its mandate, the NPC is charged with preserving the peace and stability of the country through mediation, dialogue, consultation and prevention of conflict. Regarding conflict, the NPC is mandated to manage the conflict and, if possible, resolve such conflict. Despite the challenges the NPC faces in administering its mandate, the Council plays a crucial role in addressing the canker of political vigilantism. This supports the study's objective of exploring the role of the NPC in addressing the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana.

The Ghana Police Service

The Ghana Police Service (GPS), being a state actor, remains a major stakeholder in maintaining peace and security in Ghana. The Police Service is a single cohesive entity, framed on a national basis, with a centralised command led by the Inspector General of the Police (IGP), who is responsible for the general oversight and regulation of the Police Service's administration

and operation, subject to any directives/directives of the Police Council (Ghana Police Service, 2017).

According to its mission, the Ghana Police Service exists to provide crime prevention, identification, apprehension, and prosecution services for criminals in accordance with Ghana stakeholders' aspirations for optimal security, secure, safe, and peaceful societies. The tasks of the service include the protection of life and property, the prevention and identification of crime, the apprehending and prosecution of criminals, the maintenance of public order and public order, and the enforcement of all laws, Acts, Decrees, and other regulations with which it is specifically charged (Ghana Police Service, 2017). Below is an organogram of the GPS:

Figure 1: Organogram of the GPS (Ghana Police Service, 2017).

In recent times, the Ghana Police Service has come under scrutiny in the discourse of political vigilantism in Ghana. As the agent that is constitutionally charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the country, curbing the menace of political vigilantism and other related offences, which includes bringing perpetrators of such acts to face the rigour of the law, the GPS is considered as a major stakeholder in addressing the threat of political vigilantism to political security. A participant opines that:

> The Ghana Police Service has been a trusted ally of the public as it continues to discharge its mandate of maintaining law and order. It remains committed to providing to the state the security its citizenry deserves. Tackling political vigilantism is on the service's radar, and the outfit has taken steps to achieve this. By the skills acquired and every police officer took the oath, crime never has a place in society, and political vigilantism is classified as illegal. The police have recorded some of their arrests in relation to this menace, with some of the cases still under investigation (Police Officer 1, personal communication, September 10, 2020).

Another participant maintains that:

> The training, resourcing, and skills acquired by every security officer and the information available to them should be ready and willing to deal with any such situation. The security agencies, especially the GPS, are rendered powerless because the problem is at the top. Most of the heads of these agencies have political linkages. So in a situation where an Ashanti Regional Security Coordinator was beating by the Delta force and this same group ransacked a courtroom, it means that

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these agency heads are not prepared to do the work they were enshrined to do (Human Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 29, 2020).

From the above statements, it can be deduced that the police service, like the other security agencies, is trained and equipped to tackle political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana. Through its campaign, education and stakeholders consultations, the police have exhibited its commitment to eradicate the canker of political vigilantism in the country. A police officer who decided to remain anonymous notes that:

The GPS is a professional institution that works within the confines of the rule of law in Ghana. The outfit is trying its best to eradicate the threat of political vigilantism. As a means of performing its mandate, the service has a massive campaign against political vigilantism. For example, there is a billboard situated at Pedu Junction near the Central Regional Command of the GPS aimed at creating awareness that political vigilantism is a threat to the democracy and security of the society. The GPS also has its door opened to every stakeholder who wants to engage the service on practical ways to address political vigilantism in the country (Police Officer 1, personal communication, September 10, 2020).

However, it faces challenges in its quest to address the issue of political vigilantism in the country. Despite the GPS being an independent body, the service's challenges mainly arise from external influences, especially the political class. A participant because of this opines that:

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Ghana has one of the best security establishments in West Africa. This has been variously shown by the superior conduct of Ghanaian contingents in international missions. Why vigilantism persists is not a question of lack of security might or willpower to deal with vigilantes. It is not also just a lack of political will but rather the political elite group exploits the opportunistic way the operational independence of the police. It is a function of poor accountability measures to exercise state power in Ghana, especially by elected officeholders and those they appoint to serve the populace (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

Another participant claims:

The problem the Ghana Police Service faces is mainly from the political class or people at the top. These vigilante groups enjoy the support of their various political parties that render their arrest and prosecution a bit difficult. These vigilante groups have been radicalised to the extent that nothing puts fear in them, not even the mention of the GPS. There has been a rampant disregard for security agencies by the political class and their vigilante groups. Unless the Police Service is allowed to act independently as expected, it will be difficult to eradicate the menace of political vigilantism (Retired Security Officer, personal communication, August 27, 2020).

Academic 1, a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, buttresses this by stating:

Unfortunately, the political class have, on several circumstances, rendered the state security impotent. If you are a police commander

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and you arrest politicians of the ruling party, you should know that you are on your way out of command. That is, you will be forced to resign. If the state security, particularly the GPS, will be allowed to act professionally, political vigilantism will be adequately dealt with. Therefore, it is about ensuring that state security is given the needed freedom and non-interference to work. As long as the political elite groups or individuals are standing on the personnel in the GPS, there is little they can do. There is no tenure of job security for the IGP and other ranks in the service. The executive arm of government exercises much power that is sometimes abused, especially in scenarios where a police officer is not doing things in conformity with the dictates of the political class (Academic 1, personal communication, August 24, 2020).

The participants' views corroborate the statement made by the Director of the Transformation Programmes Office of the Police Service, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Dr Benjamin Agordzor, in 2018. He addressed a symposium in Accra on Wednesday, October 31, 2018, organised by the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) to explore how stakeholders could encourage efforts to eliminate the threat of political vigilantism. He believes that, unless the laws governing the recruitment of their representatives and their activities are reformed, the GPS and the other security agencies cannot be professional in their attempts to root out the threat of political vigilantism. He emphasises that the provisions of the 1992 Constitution that gave the President (head of the executive branch of the State of Ghana) the power to appoint, among other things, the heads of the various

security agencies threatened the desire of security personnel to be professional in all circumstances.

The Place of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

According to CODEO Official 1,

Non-state actors provide an independent eye into the activity of the major stakeholders, political parties and the electoral commissions by extension to the police service, the National Peace Council and the National Commission for Civic Education to make sure that established rules, laws, regulations and principles are strictly adhered to; loopholes and non-conformity are reported for strict action. The government and its agencies are considered state actors. Non-state actors include civil societies, non-governmental organisations, and private firms that have a role in political vigilant issues (CODEO Official 1, personal communication, July 22, 2020).

The notion of civil society has become more common over the past twenty years. This is mainly due to successive democratisation waves, beginning with Latin America, Central and Eastern European countries, and spreading across the developing world, including Africa (Arko-Cobbah, n.d). Stakeholders in governance have concluded that a high level of democratic governance is guaranteed by state institutions, policy interventions, and civil society. This study focused on two civil society organisations: CDD-Ghana, the central body for the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) and the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA). These CSOs have been at the forefront of the drive against political vigilantism in Ghana and the West African sub-region at large.

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is an independent, non-partisan network of Ghanaian election observers, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, and professional bodies. It was established in 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to mobilise Ghanaians to participate effectively in the electoral process and to supplement the efforts of Ghana's electoral commission to ensure open, free, fair, and peaceful elections (CODEO, 2020).

The FOSDA is a non-profit organisation set up to investigate the roots of these conflicts and improve the human security and development capacities of African institutions and civil society organisations. It was founded in 2001 by a diaspora community concerned with the conflicts in West Africa at the end of the 20th century. The FOSDA offers a platform for exchanging theoretical and practical information and experience to enhance human security (FOSDA, 2020) and is committed to conducting research and delivering training on issues concerning the growth of the West African sub-region.

The activities of CSOs such as CODEO-Ghana in preserving peace and security in Ghana have been tremendous. According to the participants interviewed for this study, CSOs have played the role of the collective intellectual. This means that they make an in-depth analysis of matters that are of concern to the people. A participant opines that:

> The contribution of CSOs to be the development of peace and security in Ghana, and to a large extent, Africa is immeasurable. Their fundamental work of exposing the flaws in the state when it occurs and

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their demand through consultations and dialogues with state actors to take action has helped keep the country's social fabric. Civil society advocacy is vastly nuanced by research-based evidence with expert knowledge that is very useful to various stakeholders. Evidence-based arguments by CSOs such as CODEO Ghana and IMANI Africa has enabled society to appreciate what constitutes a vigilante act. These actions help name and shame elites in veils who patronise vigilantes to disrupt electoral processes in their vicinities and reduce the system's fear and panic (Conflict and Security Analyst 1, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

Three principal innovations influenced the establishment of the CODEO. Firstly, by the late 1990s, the country was preparing for its third successive general election in which it did not contest the incumbent president. To complement the work of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, Ghana needed a neutral and knowledgeable non-party civic body to monitor the polls' conduct to help ensure that the elections were peaceful, fair, and neutral. Second, the CODEO was established in response to Ghanaian civil society's demands for answerable and responsive governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, political participation and inclusion, and, most importantly, free, fair, and transparent elections. Thirdly, the CODEO was inspired by the vision and mission of CDD-Ghana, an organisation dedicated to promoting democratic growth and citizen participation in decision-making in Ghana.

It has been at the forefront of the quest for security and development in Ghana and the West African sub-region in general. With regard to the issue of security, is CDD Ghana's fight against political vigilantism in Ghana. The

issue of elections across Africa is one of the areas of interest for the civil society organisation. As a non-state actor and a stakeholder, a civil society group is tasked with tracking elections and enlightening electorates to understand the electoral processes better. Thus, they engage in the act of civil policing. In support of this, CODEO Official 1 (Team Leader Security Sector Governance and Local and Urban Governance – CDD Ghana) notes that:

> The role of civil society organisations in the electoral process is what we call civil policing. They track the conformity to regulations. They enlighten the citizens as to what they should do. They should know to make informed decisions. On the election, they do PVT to ensure they have data that indicates who has won. Therefore, the electoral commission report comes, and it differs, to forestall any conflict in the country. They will have to release it for us to know that there is a problem. Moreover, because the stakeholders know that civil policing is in process, their behaviour and actions are curtailed. Civil society organisations do not have the mandate to conduct elections or normal police service with guns and protecting people. Nevertheless, they have the mandate to make sure that these institutions do their work as required (CODEO Official 1, personal communication, July 22, 2020).

A participant from the FOSDA also notes that:

> Over the last ten years, the civil society group (FOSDA) has been working with young people trying to divert their attention and energies into productive stuff. This has been the strategy for diverting young people from engaging in acts such as vigilantism because similar cases have been happening in Sierra Leone, Liberia and other countries.

Civil society has also been working with policy advocacy to improve young peoples' participation in policy-making processes not to feel left out. Civil society also ensures that young people are mainstreamed in development and government policies and actively empowering young people to participate in governance and decision-making processes. Doing these things will turn the youths' focus on developmental rather than violent and destructive issues such as political vigilantism (FOSDA Official 1, personal communication, August 25, 2020).

These two statements emphasise the role of a non-state actor in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security. The CSOs, over the years since its formation, has actively established themselves as an independent watchdog to the activities pertaining to the security and development of Africans. Their activities range from issuing reports on the activities of vigilantism to the organisation of workshops and seminars for political parties on pertinent security issues. For example, the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) report in 2017 catalogued several vigilante groups whose activities threatened the democracy and political security of the citizenry. These included the Azorka Boys, Bolga Bull Dogs, Invincible Forces, Bamba Boys and the Kandahar Boys. Other groups identified included Aluta Boys, Nima Boys, Salifu Eleven, Zongo Caucus, Veranda Boys, Supreme, Mahama Boys, Delta Force, etc. (CODEO, 2017). They have issued reports concerning the growing acts of political vigilantism in Ghana and have engaged event stakeholders to find an amicable solution. It also gave a report on the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency By-Election marred by acts of political vigilantism (CODEO, 2019). Periodic reports are a

crucial feature of the operations of CSOs across the world. These reports go a long way to achieve their mandate of enlightening the populace on governance and development issues.

The response from CODEO Official 1 of CDD-Ghana also corroborates Gyampo, Graham and Bossman's (2017) assertion on civil society organisations. Gyampo, Graham and Bossman (2017) note that civil society organisations play a role in policing the electoral processes in Ghana. They perform two essential functions: track and enlighten electorates. As it provides a crucial connection between people and the state, civil societies such as CODEO and FOSDA are an essential part of democratisation and the protection of the political security of the citizenry.

As suggested by CODEO Official 1 of CDD Ghana, the roles corroborate the scholarly work of Gyekye-Jandoh (2017). In her article, *The Role of Civil Society in the Democratisation of Ghana: A Case Study of the 2008 General Election*, Gyekye-Jandoh (2017) outlines the roles of CSOs as educational, cooperative, communicative and operational. She argues that the CSO's educational role is to inform the general public about their civil rights and obligations, government functions and to provide education to clarify and encourage democratic principles and concepts of trust and free and fair elections. The cooperative position is where CSOs broaden public engagement and involve the disadvantaged in politics, she added. They work to assist the government in adopting policies that would support both the government and the people.

According to Theodora Anti of the FOSDA, most civil society, including her organisation, works with youth peer mentors to other young

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people in their communities. Sometimes, they work with those they have access to reach out to those who follow political parties and act as vigilantes with the hope of advising them to abstain from violence and other related acts. Civil society organisation also creates an atmosphere that can be used to strengthen the cohesion and decision-making of society. For civic engagement, knowledge is critical and encourages its growth. When individuals become more educated, they are more likely to engage in policy debates and publicly express their opinions and concerns.

However, the activities of CSOs in tackling political vigilantism as a threat to political security faces some challenges. These challenges include; lack of cooperation from other stakeholders, financial constraints, temptations from politicians who often tag the leaders of these CSOs as belonging to a particular political regime, failure of the police to crack the whip on these vigilante groups, among others. A participant notes:

> This organisation is trying its best to provide civil policing to the citizenry. The civil society organisations are major stakeholders and are committed to this fight. The electoral commission and the police service are all committed. However, the problem is political parties. Police service and civil society organisations do not benefit from the activities of vigilante groups. The electoral commission is even a victim of vigilante activities. There is no way stakeholders like CSOs would not like vigilantism to end.

> Nevertheless, the people who form, fund, and utilise the service of vigilante groups are those expected to be committed to the road map and educate their people involved in vigilante activities. They give lip

services and make the work of the CSOs difficult. Their cooperation is just on paper, but in reality, they enjoy the benefits of these vigilante groups (CODEO Official 1, personal communication, July 22, 2020).

Another participant shares a different opinion and asserts:

CSOs are relentless in their efforts to promote peace, stability and development in Ghana and West Africa at large. This task goes with colossal resource investments. Still, CSOs are non-profit organisations that cannot even generate funds. We hugely depend on donor support from internal and external forces and work with what we have. This affects the extent to which we wished we could make an impact amongst the people. Civil policing and education entail a lot, but we remain committed to helping eradicate political vigilantism. Due to these financial constraints, politicians sometimes tempt the CSOs with huge financial remuneration of which we decline. (FOSDA Official 1, personal communication, Aug 25, 2020).

The views of the participants corroborate the challenges facing CSOs in Ijon's (2017) work. Ijon (2017) maintains that in their quest to work, Civil Society Organisations face many obstacles in Africa. They are confronted with aggressive political environments that date back to the colonial times to the governments that took over Africa's colonial masters. They do not have a suitable atmosphere for the CSOs to work in. For CSOs to have a smooth running of their operations, the climate for CSOs to work in Africa is not pleasant. In particular, this is for CSOs who are outspoken, critical of the ruling governments and question the ruling elites' powers and authorities. In the case of political vigilantism in Ghana, the political parties that form the

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elite class are the major beneficiaries of this canker. They are seen as only providing lip services in their efforts to end political vigilantism in the country. The aggressive political environment poses a challenge to some operations of CSOs, as noted by the participants.

In addressing the temptation from the political class, Ijon (2017) also notes that the leaders of the CSOs are still tempted to join the governing regimes. To weaken their front, governments in Africa have often tried to lure some of the leaders of the CSOs, especially those who are loud and very loyal to their governments. To silence them, some of the leaders are awarded large contracts and given massive sums of money. This is true not only for Ghana but also for other African countries, as Wanyande (2009, p. 16) stated that after the 2007 Kenyan elections, the government deliberately nominated John Githongo of Transparency International (TI) as permanent secretary and presidential advisor on governance and corruption issues, as well as Njoki Ndugu to parliament. Both men were vocal in their criticism of Kenya's government. The purpose of these appointments was to break those CSOs' fronts. These temptations by the political class, coupled with the financial constraints facing the CSOs, leaves them at the mercy of nature.

According to the majority of the participants interviewed for this study, despite remaining a major stakeholder, financial instability hinders the operations of CSOs in addressing the canker of political vigilantism. Ijon (2017) supports this claim. He notes that CSOs in Africa face a daunting problem of financial instability. As they do not have the funds to implement them, many CSOs cannot implement their programmes and projects. Project and programme support is not constant, and donors who finance much of

Africa's CSOs and their services have an agenda of their own and may not fund projects on their agenda. Many CSOs fail to survive because they do not have the financial security to secure financial support and enforce their programmes and projects. The economic instability inversely makes them susceptible to external forces.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results and discussion of the analysis. The data was analysed to meet the demands of the study's objectives; each research objective was analysed alongside its corresponding data. The first section explored the sources and motivation for acts of political vigilantism. This was done by soliciting the participants' understanding of political vigilantism. Some of the sources raised comprised; unemployment and vulnerability of the youth, poor trust and confidence in state institutions and the mistrust amongst the political parties. The research also looked at the link between political vigilantism and political security, considering how the former poses a threat to the latter. This threat has implications for the West African sub-region and Ghana's global image. Ghana is touted as a haven and hub of peace. Political vigilantism provides a fertile ground for the threat of terrorism in the West African sub-region. Terrorists tend to capitalise on the weaknesses of states to attack them. Political vigilantism potentially weakens the security of Ghana. Besides, violence leads to the displacement of people. The implications for Ghana is also felt in the area of diplomacy as political vigilantism potentially erodes the soft power of Ghana and has a negative impact on the Foreign Direct Investments the country enjoys.

The study further assessed the role of some state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security. The state actor discussed in the study was the National Peace Council of Ghana (NPC). The NPC was instrumental in the drawing of the Roadmap to end political vigilantism in Ghana. Assessing their role as state actors will further strengthen its mandate. CODEO Ghana and FOSDA that are Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), were assessed as non-state actors.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings and main conclusions of the study. It also provides recommendations for consideration of the government and other stakeholders in addressing the threat of political vigilantism to political security and recommendations for future research. The purpose of this study has been to assess the role of state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana.

Summary of Research

The study set out four objectives. The first objective was to explore the sources and motivation of acts of political vigilantism. The second was to assess political vigilantism as a threat to political security in Ghana. The third and fourth objectives examined the implications of political vigilantism on the West African sub-region and Ghana's global image in general and the role of state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism in Ghana specifically.

To find answers to the research objectives, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with fifteen participants. These included officials at the National Peace Council of Ghana, the Ghana Police Service, civil society organisations, namely the Foundation for Security and Development (FOSDA) and Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO Ghana). Furthermore, the study also drew upon interviews of key resource persons such as security analysts, academics and members of vigilante groups. These respondents were

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selected because they are key players and stakeholders in the field of political vigilantism and political security in Ghana.

Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the respondents. These sampling methods were necessary because they enabled the study to sample respondents based on their qualities, contributions, knowledge and expertise in the area of political vigilantism and political security. The Content Analysis approach was used to analyse the data from the respondents. This approach allowed the study to examine or analyse the data concerning the role of state and non-state actors in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security. A qualitative method was also employed to collect the data for the study.

Key Findings

The study found that political vigilantism is regarded and associated with some degree of negativity in the Ghanaian context. Activities of vigilante groups are considered illegal and often take the form of violence that threatens the democratic credentials of a state and the political security of the people. Ghana, which is considered a peaceful state in West Africa, is under threat caused by the activities of vigilante groups. Their existence is of much relevance to the political class who rely on such groups for favours. This is best explained with reference to the concept of clientelism. Political vigilantism occurs because of system failures on the path of stakeholders involved. State and non-state actors play an integral role in tackling the canker of political vigilantism. The activities of state actors have been critical to the existence and survival of countries. In the Twenty-first century, civil society

groups that are considered non-state actors have been critical to promoting peace, security and development in their respective countries.

The findings from this study highlighted some of the sources and motivations for acts of political vigilantism. Unemployment and vulnerability of the youth are major causes of acts of political vigilantism in Ghana. Because of this high rate of unemployment in Africa, the youth, which forms a significant proportion of the working class of the economy, are susceptible to the whims and caprices of the political class. There are usual mistrust and mutual suspicion between political parties in Ghana. This mutual suspicion and mistrust have further created low confidence in the state institutions and security agencies such as the National Peace Council, the Electoral Commission of Ghana and the Ghana Police Service. Due to the zero-sum game, politicians and their followers, especially these vigilante groups, have misconstrued the change of government to mean the takeover of government. To win an election at all costs, political parties rely on vigilante groups for their security. They do their biddings, causing fear and panic among the people and forcefully ejecting government appointees from their offices, seizing public toilets.

However, the study also found that political vigilantism is not always about violence. Vigilante groups mobilise people at the district and community level for political participation and representation, community engagement in development activities, and security for political elites and political party activities. Other roles include liaising with political elites to cite development projects within local communities and creating employment opportunities for members of their group, relatives and friends. In Africa, for

example, vigilante groups such as the Tomboloma of Mali and the Kamajors of Sierra Leone sometimes play a crucial part in counterinsurgencies, and they sometimes help keep the social fabric of the state together by supplementing the effort of security agencies and by providing security at the local level.

Not only has political vigilantism become a threat to the democratic credentials Ghana has achieved in Africa, but it has the potential of eroding or serving as a threat to the political security of its citizenry. The constant rumbling of vigilante activities has created an arena of fear whereby people are afraid to participate in their political activities freely. Acts of political vigilantism have regularly characterised election events (be it before, during or after). The fear and panic created even to express a personal opinion through the polls gradually destroy Ghana's democratic and security tenets. It is also in sharp contrast to political security goals that are about ensuring the political freedom of a person.

The study further demonstrated the implications of political vigilantism on the West African sub-region and Ghana's global image. The West African sub-region faces a security threat in the form of terrorism. The threat of terrorism stares Ghana in the face, and unbridled acts of political vigilantism provide a fertile ground for terrorist organisations to target the country. The porosity of borders and the proliferation of weapons across the region, coupled with acts of political vigilantism, pose possible threats of terrorism. Furthermore, there is a spill-over effect in the form of migration. Because of the political unrest in some places in the West African sub-region, Ghana is also considered a haven for refugees from other African countries. If there is electoral violence in Ghana due to political vigilantism, there would be a spill-

over effect that could lead to the migration of Ghanaians into its neighbouring countries. This could lead to uncertainty and a massive exodus of people seeking refuge in the country, including foreigners.

Political vigilantism in its extreme form could erode Ghana's soft power in regional and international affairs. Increased events of vigilantism give Ghana bad reports in the media and world politics generally. Countries across the globe constantly endeavour to maintain a good relationship with other relatively peaceful and stable countries. This helps boost investors' confidence from such countries to extend their businesses to areas where they are assured profit. The rippling effect of political vigilantism could also negatively impact the country's local and international trade and tourism and its Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) that the country is so heavily dependent on.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that state and non-state actors play an integral role in addressing political vigilantism as a threat to political security. The emphasis of the study was the National Peace Council of Ghana, the Ghana Police Service and civil society organisations, namely the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO-Ghana) and the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA). These state and non-state actors, through their mandate, are continuously finding ways and means such as the use of mediation and dialogue to tackle the canker of political vigilantism. Initiatives implemented by them help foster the drive to find an amicable solution to address political vigilantism fully.

However, these state actors face challenges. These challenges comprise financial constraints, lack of collaboration from stakeholders' especially

political parties and their respective vigilante groups, logistical inadequacies, blatant interference from the political class and the lack of commitment from the political class. The biggest hurdle is the political parties that directly and indirectly benefit from the activities of vigilante groups. The people who form, fund and utilise the service of vigilante groups are those expected to be committed to the end by disbanding and educating the people involved in vigilante activities to desist from such acts.

Conclusion

The participants noted that the menace of political vigilantism poses a threat to political security, and Ghana is building a culture of impunity in this regard. State and non-state actors, considered stakeholders in political vigilantism issues, play a key role in addressing the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. Political vigilantism occurs because of the frustrations people develop over time due to the system. Therefore, sources and motivation for acts of vigilantism raised by the participants help to give a deeper understanding of the root cause of political vigilantism. Among these sources are; unemployment and vulnerability of the youth, mutual suspicion and mistrust among the political class, and the lack of confidence in state institutions such as the Ghana Police Service and the Electoral Commission of Ghana. The youth's absence of employment and vulnerability makes them susceptible to the whim and caprices of political parties and their various vigilante groups.

Political vigilantism attempts to threaten the political security of people, especially before, during and after elections. The acts of mayhem exhibited by vigilante groups potentially create an atmosphere of fear.

Participants in the research that comprised security analysts and officials from state actors such as the National Peace Council of Ghana and the Ghana Police Service alluded that there seem to be little or no political will to address the threat of political vigilantism to political security. This lack of willingness on the path of the political class becomes a hindrance to the effort put in by state and non-state actors in tackling political vigilantism as a threat to political security. There is a little political will to ensure that established rules and regulations regarding the disbandment of political vigilantism are strictly enforced. And there is no political will for political parties to disband their vigilante activities because there are mutual suspicions that when party A disbands its group, party B might not do so, and vigilante groups might attack party A from party B and vice versa. This is the mutual suspicions that make the political parties rely on their vigilante groups. It takes a willing and determined government to break this system without considering whether the culprit is a political member or is in a position of influence.

Political vigilantism has implications on security issues and Ghana's global image. The menace of political vigilantism provides a fertile ground for the possibility of terrorism and migration of people in Ghana and the West African sub-region. The threat of terrorism stares Ghana in the face, and the rise of political vigilantism only provides a fertile ground for it to thrive. There is an urgent need to prevent the possibility of a terrorist attack that could distort the peace and security of the country. Ghana sits on a time bomb looking at the political unrest and terrorist attacks in the West African sub-region in countries such as Burkina Faso and Mali. The porous nature of borders in the region even makes the threat more visible. The country battles

the influx of illegal migrants and the proliferation of ammunition primarily in the hands of untrained and unauthorised people. There is also the negative impact of political vigilantism on diplomacy as it potentially erodes the soft power Ghana enjoys. The country is seen as the hub of peace and haven for people who boost countries' confidence and their respective multi-national corporations to maintain strong relations. Strong relations mean high investments in the country that is a significant boost for FDIs, technology transfer and creation of jobs.

The study finds that civil society organisations, security analysts, academics, and security and state institutions are committed to tackling the mayhem of political vigilantism. State actors, specifically the National Peace Council of Ghana and the Ghana Police Service, remain resolute in their role and effort to tackle the threat of political vigilantism. For example, through its mediation and dialogue processes, the NPC drafted the Roadmap to End Political Vigilantism in Ghana and drafted Act 999, the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act of 20. The Ghana Police Service has embarked on a massive campaign to educate the public on the threat of political vigilantism to democracy and, in this case, political security.

The study argues that despite the roles state and non-state actors play to mitigate political vigilantism, the reoccurrence of political vigilantism continues to be a threat to political security in Ghana. It explores the sources and the motivations for acts of political vigilantism. It addresses the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. It also analyses the implications of political vigilantism on security issues and Ghana's global

image. Lastly, it discusses the roles of state and non-state actors in mitigating the threat of political vigilantism to political security.

Recommendations

Out of the objectives and findings of the study, some recommendations are made. To mitigate the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana, conscious efforts should be made to restore the trust and confidence in state institutions and security agencies. There seems to be little or no trust in state institutions such as the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the National Peace Council, and security agencies like the Ghana Police Service, particularly during elections by the political actors. This has made the parties, especially in opposition, rely heavily on vigilante groups and their related activities for security and other engagements. They perceive the state institutions and security agencies to be biased in discharging their constitutionally mandated responsibilities. Therefore, the myths and realities that constitute the independence of state institutions *as* institutions vis-à-vis the independence of persons manning them *as* human beings should be looked at.

Key stakeholders such as the Ghana Police Service should be proactive in implementing and enforcing the rules and regulations to mitigate the threat of political vigilantism to political security in Ghana. Thus, there should be strict enforcement of the rules, in this case, the Vigilantism and Other Related Offences Act 999 in 2019 and the creation of the Roadmap and Code of Conduct for the Eradication of Political Vigilantism in Ghana. The study demonstrated the lack of awareness and ignorance of the newly passed law and the roadmap. The passing of the Act criminalised the activities of

vigilantism in the country. State security apparatus are encouraged to crack the whip on the illegalities of individuals or groups who engage in political vigilante acts.

Addressing the reoccurrence and threat of political vigilantism in Ghana requires a holistic approach from all stakeholders. Without a committed and holistic approach, it will be challenging for Ghana to deal with the repercussions that will occur. Broader consultations and an all-inclusive approach could be used as parts of the stakeholders will not get the impression that they are not getting a piece of the 'pie' to avoid any form of aggression from parties that may feel left out or their interest not properly being addressed. Ghana has a global image to protect as it is considered a haven and a peaceful place to invest. Unbridled acts of political vigilantism threaten the existence of this globally achieved status. Failure to tackle this issue could be detrimental to the safety and political security of the people and could have more tremendous implications on Foreign Direct Investments and Tourism. No investor or country will like to keep diplomatic and trading ties with a country where business cannot thrive.

State and non-state actors should continuously intensify their efforts in the sensitisation of the public through education on the implications of political vigilantism on the democratic credentials and security of the country. This could be done through taking an active interest, awareness creation and consensus-building. The media could supplement this effort by intensifying the campaign against vigilantism by providing state institutions such as the National Peace Council the platform to reach out to the masses. The onus falls on all stakeholders to be committed not only by giving lip services but in

actions as well to safeguard the country and Africa at large for generations yet unborn.

Recommendations for Further Researchers

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of state and non-state actors in tackling the threat of political vigilantism to political security. In the course of the readings and fieldwork for this study, the researcher came across some themes and areas where further research will be useful. The media and academia remain an integral part of nation-building. The peace and development of a country are much dependent on the media and academia as they are the agency of news dissemination. Their contributions to the discourse on political vigilantism cannot be ignored; hence the researcher calls for further research in this area.

Further research could also be conducted on the porosity of borders and its implications on political vigilantism across the West African sub-region. Furthermore, the implication of political vigilantism on the diplomatic ties of Ghana or other African countries is an area further researchers can analyse.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of Interviewees

Academic 1, Senior Lecturer – UCC, Cape Coast. Interviewed, 24-08-2020.

CODEO Official 1, Team Leader Security Sector Governance and Local and Urban Governance of CDD Ghana, Accra. Interviewed, 22-07-2020.

Conflict and Security Analyst 1, Peace, Conflict and Security Analyst, Accra. Interviewed, 27-07-2020.

Conflict and Security Analyst 2, Conflict and Security Analyst, Accra. Interviewed, 20-07-2020.

FOSDA Official 1, FOSDA, Accra. Interviewed, 25-08-2020.

Human Security Analyst 1, Human Security Analyst, Accra. Interviewed, 29-07-2020.

NPC Official 1, Ag. Regional Executive Secretary of National Peace Council, Cape Coast. Interviewed, 14-08-2020.

NPC Official 2, Programmes Manager of NPC, Cape Coast. Interviewed, 19-08-2020.

Police Officer 1, Cape Coast. 10-09-2020.

Retired Security Officer, Cape Coast. Interviewed, 27-08-2020.

Vigilante Group Member 1, Kumasi. Interviewed, 22-07-2020.

Vigilante Group Member 2, Kumasi. Interviewed, 15-08-2020.

Vigilante Group Member 3, Accra. Interviewed, 14-08-2020.

Vigilante Group Member 4, Kumasi. Interviewed, 15-08-2020.

Vigilante Group Member 5, Accra. Interviewed, 25-07-2020.

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Security Experts and Academics

1. How do you understand Political Vigilantism?

2. What, in your opinion, is/are the source(s) and motivation(s) for acts of Political Vigilantism?

3. What is your understanding of Political Security?

4. What is the relationship between Political Vigilantism and Political Security?

5. How does political vigilantism play out as a threat to Political Security?

6. How do the acts of political vigilantism have implications on security issues and Ghana's global image?

7. What are the effects of political vigilantism on Ghana's international image?

8. What is the role of state actors in addressing the menace of political vigilantism in Ghana?

9. What roles do non-state actors (including vigilante groups) play in tackling political vigilantism?

10. How prepared is Ghana's security apparatus ready to tackle political vigilantism?

11. What is your take on Act 999 (Anti-Vigilantism and Other Related Offences Act) and the Roadmap to End Vigilantism by the National Peace Council?

12. Do you see a commitment by stakeholders to tackle the canker of political vigilantism?

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Civil Society Groups (CODEO Ghana and FOSDA)

1. What is your understanding of Political Vigilantism?
2. What is a vigilante group?
3. What are sources(s) and motivation(s) for acts of Political Vigilantism?
4. What is your understanding of Political Security?
5. What is the relationship between Political Vigilantism and Political Security?
6. How does political vigilantism play out as a threat to Political Security?
7. How do the acts of political vigilantism have implications on security issues and Ghana's global image?
8. Do acts of vigilante groups affect electoral behaviour in Ghana?
9. In your opinion, are stakeholders doing enough to tackle the canker of political vigilantism?
10. What are your thoughts on Act 999 (Anti-Vigilantism and Other Related Offences Act) and the Roadmap to end vigilantism by the National Peace Council?
11. Why are civil society groups (non-state actors) considered stakeholders?
12. What role does civil society groups play in the fight against vigilantism?
13. Do you think stakeholders are committed in their efforts to end political vigilantism?

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Appendix D

Interview Guide for National Peace Council of Ghana

1. What is your understanding of Political Vigilantism?

2. What is a vigilante group?

3. What, in your opinion, is/are the source(s) and motivation(s) of Political Vigilantism?

4. What is your understanding of Political Security?

5. What is the relationship between Political Vigilantism and Political Security?

6. How does political vigilantism play out as a threat to Political Security?

7. What are the motives behind the operation of vigilante groups in Ghana?

8. What is the mandate of the National Peace Council?

9. How effective is the National Peace Council?

10. What is your take on the National Peace Council's Roadmap to End Political Vigilantism?

11. Will the roadmap be enough to address the menace of political vigilantism?

12. Are the state actors and non-state actors doing enough to address this canker?

13. What are the effects of political vigilantism on Ghana's international image?

14. Does political vigilantism have any implication on security in the West African region?

15. What are the achievements and challenges your outfit has encountered in your drive against political vigilantism in Ghana?

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Ghana Police Service

1. What is your understanding of Political Vigilantism?

2. What, in your opinion, is/are the source(s) and motivation(s) for acts of Political Vigilantism?

3. What is your understanding of Political Security?

4. What is the relationship between Political Vigilantism and Political Security?

5. How does political vigilantism play out as a threat to Political Security?

6. How do the acts of political vigilantism have implications on security issues and Ghana's global image?

7. Is Ghana's security apparatus (Ghana Police Service) ready to tackle political vigilantism?

8. What is the core mandate of the Ghana Police Service in issues concerning political vigilantism?

9. How does the Ghana Police Service deal with possible external manipulations from the elite regarding vigilante issues?

10. What are some of the steps taken or being taken by your outfit to address this issue?

11. Has the Ghana Police Service been successful with these steps?

12. Are there any challenges?

13. If yes, can you elaborate on that?

14. In your opinion, are stakeholders doing enough to tackle the canker of political vigilantism?

15. If yes, kindly give me your reason? If no, do the same?

Appendix F

Interview Guide for Vigilante Group Members

1. How do you understand Political Vigilantism?
2. Are there examples of vigilante groups in Ghana you are aware of?
3. How long have you been part of this vigilante group?
4. Who/What is to be blamed for the influx of vigilante groups in Ghana?
5. What motivated you to join this vigilante group?
6. What are the benefits and challenges you face as a member of a vigilante group?
7. How does your political party benefit from the activities of your group?
8. Are you aware that political vigilantism is illegal in Ghana (Act 999)?
9. What would you consider quitting this vigilante group?
10. Do you see a commitment by stakeholders (including your party and vigilante group) to tackle the canker of political vigilantism?

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