UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ELECTORAL CONFLICTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF ODODODIODIO AND AWUTU-SENYA EAST CONSTITUENCIES (2016-2020)

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A thesis in the Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences Education submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Social Studies) in the University of Education, Winneba

JUNE, 2022

DECLARATION

I, CHARLES OHENE-AMOH, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE……………………………………………………….………….

DATE…………………………………………………………….………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
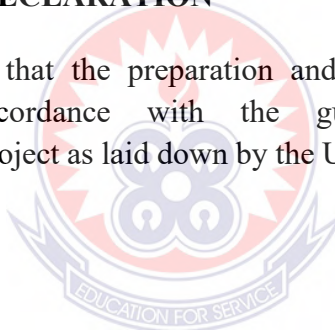
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Date…………………………………...…………………………………

DEDICATION

To Vera Afra Amoh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACHPR:	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ADRDM:	American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man
ASE:	Awutu-Senya East
AU:	African Union
C.S.O:	Civil Society Organisation
CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
CDD:	Centre for Democratic Development
CHRAJ:	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CODEO:	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
DCE:	District Chief Executive
EC:	Electoral Commission
EMB:	Election Management Body
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GHC:	Ghana Cedis
GoG:	Government of Ghana
GPS:	Ghana Police Service
HOC:	House of Chiefs
I.D card:	Identification Card
IGP:	Inspector General of Police
I.M.F:	International Monetary Fund
ICCPR:	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDEG:	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA:	Institute of Economic Affairs
IPDC:	Inter-Party Dialogue Committee

MCE: Municipal Chief Executive

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

MP: Member of Parliament

MUSEC: Municipal Security Council

N.D.C: National Democratic Congress

N.G.O: Non - Governmental Organisation

N.P.P: New Patriotic Party

NADMO: National Disaster Management Organization

NCCE: National Commission for Civic Education

NCSS: National Council of Social Studies

NHIS: National Health Insurance Scheme

NPC: National Population Council

NPC: National Peace Council

NYEP: National Youth Employment Programme

PWDs: Persons with Disabilities

REEWARG: Regional Election Early Warning and Response Group

REWS: Regional Early Warning System

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

U.N: United Nations

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UEW: University of Education, Winneba

W.H.O: World Health Organization

WANEP: West Africa Network for Peace Building

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ABSTRACT

Ghana has held several successful elections since 1992. However, the country still faces many threats of widespread violence due to the recurring nature of micro-level electoral violence and the presence of vulnerabilities such as political patronage, exclusionary politics, a winner-takes-all electoral system, and ethnic cleavages. Electoral violence in Ghana continues to be at the forefront of Ghanaian political discourse. This study examined electoral conflicts and human rights abuses associated with electoral violence in Ghana from 2016 to 2020 in the Odododiodio and Awutu-Senya East constituencies. The Institutional Functionalism Theory of Violence, the Theory of Electoral Violence, and the Political Approach to Human Rights underpinned the study. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, employing a multiple-case study design. A total of 175 respondents formed the sample. Structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. The data was analysed using content analysis. Results were presented using graphs and direct speech marks. The findings of this research identified the high migration of foreigners to Awutu Senya East, vigilantism, the politicisation of electoral crimes, and a lack of trust in state institutions as some of the major drivers of electoral violence. Deaths, insults, threats, physical assault, injuries, and destruction of property are reported as some of the human rights abuses that are perpetrated during the election violence in these constituencies. This study emphasised that with careful oversight, a human rights-based approach can be employed to strengthen international principles and the 1992 constitution of Ghana to respect, promote, and protect the human rights of individual victims in electoral conflict. There is a need to properly grasp the human rights' role in redressing the powerlessness experienced by those seeking to exercise their civil and political rights and those trying to provide them across all electoral conflict settings.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Multi-party elections gained popularity in Africa during the 1990s. This was the era when a country's ability to get foreign financial support, particularly from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was inextricably linked to democratic practice. Political freedoms had been lost in many African nations before this period, and civil war, revolution, and coups d'état had replaced popular, open, and free elections as the basis of political authority. During this period, nearly every African country maintained a legal prohibition on multiparty politics, which negatively affected development (Gibbon, Ofstad, & Bangura, 1992). Multiparty political systems and the adoption of other democratic ideals therefore became prerequisites for IMF and World Bank loans and assistance following the end of the Cold War. With this, the IMF and World Bank sought to enhance good governance by democratising African countries and reducing poverty. This policy worked effectively; by the end of 2000, the number of countries organising regular multi-party elections had quadrupled compared to the era of the Cold War (Randall, 2014). The practice of democracy, therefore, grew rapidly in Africa during the 2000s and 2010s, with the percentage of African countries holding democratic elections rising from 7% to 40% (Alemika, 2011). For instance, the year 2018 saw general elections in at least 15 African countries (Mbaku, 2018).

The demand for democratisation by the IMF and World Bank as understood by African leaders in their context was different, and therefore, almost 80% of the elections conducted were won by incumbent parties, and nearly two-thirds of these were considered by international observers not to be free and fair (Bob-Milliar, 2014). International election observers brought to light that most of the multi-party elections conducted in

Africa after the Cold War flouted democratic standards. However, free, and fair multi-party elections are a key feature of democracy. It confirms the legitimacy of a government and allows most of the citizens to willingly accept being under the rule of those who have been elected. It is difficult for governments whose legitimacy to rule is constantly called into question to govern effectively (Saba, 2015). It is also through multi-party elections that citizens in a country can exercise their political right of either endorsing or rejecting a particular political regime and participate fully in the politics of the nation. Article 21 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of governments as expressed in periodic and genuine elections". Once a country opts to practise democracy, the obligation to conduct elections periodically to elect political leaders is non-negotiable (Randall, 2002). In the view of Höglund, elections have become part of the international peace-building strategy, which strongly links the peace a country enjoys to the quality of democratic development it has attained (Höglund, 2009). As an instrument of inclusion and participation, elections can also provide powerful momentum for conflict resolution in war-torn environments or societies divided through violence (Heger, 2015).

In this perspective, elections are viewed as a sanctioning device that encourages elected leaders to operate in the best interests of the people. Competitive electoral mechanisms, which are at the heart of the electoral process, are one crucial condition that impacts political accountability (Reilly, 2002). Citizens' principal instrument for holding their governments responsible is the ballot. Elections would generate no incentives for politicians to advocate for or implement measures in the public interest if a large percentage of voters did not express their views. As a result, elections are used to select good policies and political leaders (Bekoe, 2010). Elections that are free, fair, and competitive are an important aspect of democracy and define citizenship. The

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consolidation of democracy necessitates periodic elections in which a country's inhabitants elect representatives (Benoit, 2004). Elections, according to Geys (2006), serve three important purposes in democracy. These purposes include using the prospect of not being reappointed to discipline elected officials, selecting competent candidates for public office, and reflecting the preferences of a wide range of voters. Globally, the outcome of elections differs. Some are peaceful, others are not. For example, the outcomes of elections in some Asian countries, like the Philippines, India, Pakistan, and Malaysia, were characterised by violence, leading to abuses such as injuries, loss of life, and property damage. In the Philippines, comparing incidences of violence across years gives little sign of hope as the number of violent incidents keeps increasing in successive elections (Patino & Velasco, 2004). The United States of America, which operates an advanced democracy, was not left out of electoral violence in its 2020 elections.

Academic research on electoral violence identifies several factors that increase the risk that some actors with a stake in an election will choose to employ violent tactics. According to Austin and Bagwell (2021), some of these factors took root in the 2020 American presidential election and are gradually becoming an emerging feature of American politics: the militarization of protest, counter-protest, and repression. The latent opportunity for electoral violence in the United States may increase in future elections as other forms of "armed politics" become more commonplace.

Some countries on the African continent are not exempt; Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Chad, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire have experienced serious election violence. In the case of the Nigerian Federal Elections in 2003, at least 900 people were killed, and several were injured. As a result of disagreements over the election results, approximately 600 people were reported to have been killed in Kenyan presidential election violence in December 2007 (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Cote d'Ivoire experienced great

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levels of electoral violence in 2010. This violence included, among other things, violence used to drive people from their land and reallocate it to other groups to gain support in the election.

Ghana is conferred with the accolade of a relatively peaceful and stable country. This image is reflected in Ghana's being the second-most peaceful country in Africa and the role the country has played in past peace-building processes in many of the conflicts in the sub-region (Economic Intelligence Unit [EIU], 2010). Notwithstanding this praise as a politically stable country, the country has been witnessing a series of long-standing ethnic and communal conflicts, some of which have resulted in violent confrontations leading to the loss of lives and property (Brukum, 2007). Almost every region in Ghana has witnessed violent conflicts of some type. Some are inter- or intra-ethnic conflicts, most of which are over land and chieftaincy.

Since 1992, Ghana has held eight (8) major consecutive general elections. These elections have been widely praised as free and fair by both domestic and foreign election observers. Election-related violence, however, is not wholly absent. There have been eyewitness accounts and several reports of election-related violence in Ghana in each of these elections (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016; Harish & Toha, 2019). Incidences of violence and mob actions during the 2016 and 2020 elections were reported in Awutu-Senya East, Tamale Central, *Techiman* South, *Zabzugu-Tatale, Odododiodio,* and *Ablekuma* constituencies (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016; CODEO, 2020). In the 2016 elections, cases of violence were recorded in some areas of the Upper West Region, which were noted to be relatively peaceful during previous general elections. At Busa, a community in the *Wa* Municipality, for example, violence erupted, leading to the burning of a motorbike and the injuries of 11 people (Elections Report, 2016).

The right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to vote and to stand for election, is at the core of democratic governments based on the will of the people. Genuine elections are a necessary and fundamental component of human rights-protecting and promoting. The right to vote and be elected in transparent, periodic elections is fundamentally linked to several other human rights, the enjoyment of which is crucial to a meaningful electoral process. These prerequisite rights include the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly; the right to freedom from discrimination; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and the right to freedom of movement.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as many other treaties and declarations, affirm and guarantee the right to participate in government. The African, European, and American human rights systems have all acknowledged this essential right, with summits like the 1967 Arusha Conference on Popular Participation in Africa reinforcing this recognition. International standards on elections involve three central rights: the right to take part in government; the right to vote and to be elected; and the right to equal access to public service. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, recognises the integral role that transparent and open elections devoid of violence play in democracy. The UDHR also states that the will of the people should be the foundation of government authority. The relevant standards in Article 21 (1, 2 and 3) read as follows:

> 1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. 3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal

and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

The right of a citizen to participate in the politics of his country is a universal human right. The universality of human rights means that human rights are inherent to all human beings everywhere, including Ghana. The human rights abuses associated with electoral violence are many and violate most of the human rights protocols Ghana has ratified. Beyond the immediate human, material, and societal costs that such violence imposes on an already impoverished society, when electoral violence happens, it can also affect neighbouring states through the large-scale displacement of people, the creation of a humanitarian crisis, and the increasing circulation of arms in already volatile regions. Even though electoral violence has not instigated a civil war or mass violence in Ghana as experienced elsewhere, Aning and Danso (2012:12) note that:

> Elections in Ghana are invariably plagued by localised violence that threatens the peace, security, and stability of the country. Confined though they are, these acts of violence have accompanied every election, at least under the Fourth Republic. They usually occur before, during, and after elections and are characterised by threats, intimidation, physical assault, vandalism of electoral materials, as well as the use of hate speeches and incendiary language. Election-related violence is routinely employed by the political class as an operational strategy or counter strategy to obtain an electoral advantage.

Aning and Danso (2012), in the above statement, confirmed that some acts of violence have accompanied every election organised in Ghana. Various forms of violence during elections have been recognised as human rights issues; violations comprising torture, intimidation, insults, destruction of properties, violence against women, and murder occur in some countries in Africa during elections. Governments and other key stakeholders in elections are to ensure that their policies and practises during elections adhere to the

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human rights principles that have been ratified. During elections, human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of movement, personal liberty, secret voting, and the right to free, fair, and peaceful elections must be well protected. Adequate protection from harm during elections should be the birthright of every person in Ghana. However, the sad fact is that they are not, and the ability of societies to achieve such goals will vary widely from constituency to constituency (Bob-Milliar, 2014). General elections in Ghana are frequently marred by violence, which takes the form of, among other things, open fights, riots, threats, intimidation, and vote box snatching and stuffing. These occurrences increase anxiety and tension, which ultimately damages the credibility of the election. In Ghana, party-affiliated vigilante groups, or party foot soldiers, frequently engage in election violence. Some politicians use it as a scheme to secure an undue advantage in elections by causing fear and intimidation in their opponents' strongholds (Von, 2019). Even though the expression of election violence in Ghana is low in intensity in comparison with the massive destruction of valuable human, natural, and capital resources experienced by some African countries, it is necessary not to ignore these cases. Ghana's democratic consolidation and human rights records will be marred if the underlying issues are not addressed with a sense of urgency.

This thesis approaches election-related violence from a human rights perspective by taking a critical view of the underlying causes and the human rights implications of the problem. This study has therefore interrogated the extent to which human rights abuses are associated with electoral violence in the constituencies under study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ghana has successfully organised eight presidential and parliamentary elections since reestablishing constitutional democracy in 1992. However, electoral violence persists throughout Ghana's election cycle, endangering lives, and property. The institution of

elections is virtually ubiquitous in the contemporary world. Citizens currently have the option to choose their leaders in national elections, except for a small number of governments, including Brunei, China, Eritrea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and South Sudan. Even during times of armed conflict, elections are held; for instance, since the start of the Afghan War in 2001, there have been eight elections (Birch, Daxecker, & Höglund, 2020). The use of elections to choose leaders should, in theory, offer a nonviolent alternative to the use of force to settle disputes over competing claims to rule and should be a method that gives citizens more control over how they are ruled. However, these expectations frequently fall short of reality (Aning, 2001; Gyampo, 2008; Birch et al., 2020; OHCHR, 2021). Numerous elections, particularly those held in democracies that have not yet fully developed, are prone to high levels of violence before, during, and after the election (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997; Gyampo, 2008; Bob-Milliar, 2014).

Election violence has the potential to ruin years of peacekeeping and development efforts, weaken democratic institutions, and even spark civil war if it causes enough casualties to satisfy the threshold for civil war. Following the 2010 elections in Côte d'Ivoire, post-election violence resulted in more than 1,000 civilian deaths, one million internal displacements, and 100,000 refugees in neighbouring countries (Straus & Taylor, 2012). Given the substantive relevance of electoral violence as a problem and to ensure that peaceful elections in Ghana, in which human rights are protected, are held, among others, Chapter 5 of the 1992 Ghana Constitution was dedicated to the promotion and protection of citizens' human rights. Several international and regional instruments and protocols have been ratified by the government of Ghana to serve as guiding principles during elections. Ghana has ratified the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 1966 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

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Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW), and the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC). As a member of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African Countries (ECOWAS), Ghana has ratified the 1981 African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights (ACHRPR) and the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. It is also a signatory to the African Union's African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, 2007. The Republic of Ghana's Constitution of 1992 incorporates most of the provisions of these international documents. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is reprinted in Chapters V and VII of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

Even though Ghana is a signatory and has also rectified most of the international and regional human rights instruments, in addition to its own domestically formulated ones that seek to prevent the occurrence of election violence, tensions, and violence remain protracted in Ghana's electoral cycle. Notably, clashes over the electoral process, intimidation, political vigilantism, the killing of innocent political activists, and issues of verbal abuse, among others, are recurrent fault lines that continue to resurface and worsen in every subsequent election (CODEO, 2009; Aning, 2001; Gyampo, 2008; Bob-Milliar, 2014; Chambas, 2016).

The electoral process in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies has been characterised by violence, which is progressively assuming an unprecedented magnitude with multiple negative human rights implications for democratic stability and consolidation. The political party that won power in the 2016 general elections teased supporters of the defeated party; they seized public toilets, toll booths, offices, and institutions of the state, such as the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), and the National Disaster Management Organisation

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(CODEO, 2020). In the Awutu-Senya East constituency, the personal properties of individuals were destroyed, and guns were fired to cause fear and panic among the electorate. In the Odododiodio constituency, two people were killed when guns were fired into the crowd (CODEO, 2020; WANEP, 2020).

These examples evoke probing questions as to what the human rights implications of electoral conflicts are. These questions become sharper when viewed against the fact that there has been no focused research on this area of study in the two constituencies. Studies on the electoral conflict situation in Ghana, such as Kendie and Osei-Kufour (2016), Gyimah-Boadi (1997), Bob-Milliar (2014), Gyampo, Graham, and Bossman (2017), Chambas (2016), and Aning and Danso (2012), have mainly focused on the electoral conflict actors, causes of electoral conflicts, their effects on livelihood, and providing solutions to mitigate the conflicts in the areas where they occur. Given the substantive relevance of electoral violence as a problem, academic researchers need to have a clear understanding of its prevalence, causes, and dynamics, as well as what can be done to prevent it (Birch, 2007).

Previous studies have shown how variables in the electoral procedure and election type increase the likelihood of violent elections (Collier, 2009; Aondowase, 2015; Ansah, 2016; Von, 2019). Although the evidence is still conflicting (Birch, 2020), several accounts imply that violence is more common in competitive election contests (CODEO, 2009; WANEP, 2020; Collier & Vicente, 2014). Regarding this, some research has indicated that violent crime is more common among voters in opposition strongholds, while others have found the opposite (Wilkinson, 2004; Boafo-Arthur, 2008; Straus & Taylor, 2012; Tamboly, 2020). Research also investigates how electoral institution design affects outcomes (Snyder, 2000; Rutten & Owuor, 2009; Smidt, 2020).

Most of the research on the effects of election violence on political behaviour and attitudes has been done at the individual level. This focus on the micro level contrasts with studies on causation, which have favoured more structural and aggregate explanations. The greatest corpus of research on electoral violence (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000b; Bekoe, 2010; Aning & Lartey, 2009; Bob-Milliar, 2014) focuses on how behaviour is affected, particularly turnout. The national level has been given priority in studies on the factors that contribute to election violence. This means that while we are aware of how societal or institutional factors acting in aggregate might lead to electoral violence, we are not aware of how these same factors function locally inside constituencies.

To date, few empirical studies exist on the holistic diagnosis of the relapsed electoral conflict situation, considering the impact it has on the human rights of the people at the constituency level. The inability to recognise these important factors when looking at electoral conflicts in Ghana has created a gap that has resulted in difficulty in finding solutions to the problem, leading to the increasing level of electoral conflicts that have bedevilled most of the constituencies in Ghana during elections.

What is the worth of democracy and multiparty politics if they still result in violence that leads to the destruction of life and property? What argument can we advance in favour of democratic consolidation in Ghana when elections end in violence and human rights abuses, as was witnessed in Odododiodio and Awutu Senya East constituencies in the 2016 and 2020 general elections? Without getting full grips on the underlying causes of this violence, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for any person or institution to come up with appropriate solutions to the negative tendencies that seem to have negative effects on the smooth conduct of elections and the democratic peace we enjoy in Ghana.

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This study, therefore, set out to fill this gap by analyzing the human rights implications of electoral conflicts in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies of Ghana.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which electoral violence has undermined human rights in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies in Ghana between 2016 and 2020.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research sought to:

1. Explore the underlying causes of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies in Ghana from 2016 to 2020.

2. Find the types of human rights abuses that are involved in electoral violence.

3. Explore how electoral violence impacts human rights in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies.

4. Assess the responses of institutions with the responsibility to check electoral conflict from 2016 to 2020.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following major research questions were posed:

1. What are the underlying causes of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

2. What type of human rights violations were involved in electoral violence in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies from 2016 to 2020?

3. How does electoral violence impact the human rights of inhabitants in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

4. What are the responses of institutions charged with the responsibility of ensuring peace during elections in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study rests on the fact that it calls attention to the possible social, economic, and political problems that elections might pose to governments and populations in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ghana in particular. It primarily emphasises the importance of paying closer attention to how elections contribute to human rights abuses in developing countries due to the increase in violence during election years.

While there are several studies (both quantitative and qualitative) on how electoral violence affects government expenditure in developing countries, none of them has focused on the extent to which the violence affects the human rights of ordinary citizens. makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge in the discipline.

This research also aims to analyze the underlying causes of electoral violence and how it has undermined human rights in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies. The study has also contributed to existing knowledge and literature on the human rights implications of election violence in Ghana. This research could be a source of information for traditional authorities, conflict resolution experts, peace, and human rights educators, CSOs, and NGOs, among others, regarding the sustainable management of electoral conflicts. This research provides information to help stakeholders develop a new communication strategy with the media as it reports on elections. This research could serve as a source of reference for students, academics, and researchers in future research. The outcomes of the study are useful sources of information for policymakers in dealing with ways to reduce electoral violence in Ghana's electoral process. It finally provides evidence of the effects that winner-takes-all politics, the level of education, media

sensationalism, and the culture of impunity have on voter turnout and violence during elections in the Ghanaian context.

Finally, this thesis is an advocacy instrument to ensure that all parties involved in violations and abuses of human rights and international human rights laws during elections put an end to them and take corrective measures to better protect the population. Appropriate recommendations are made at the end of this report, including a recommendation to the Government of Ghana to take appropriate steps to punish all violations and abuses that occur during elections.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

This study examines the causes of electoral violence and the human rights violations that result from them. It also examines the types of violations that occur during elections. It critically examines how institutional failures account for electoral violence's persistence. This study was not designed to interrogate the relationship between electoral violence and human rights abuses in the entire country of Ghana, and it is not a comparative study between the two constituencies under study. The study areas in the Central and Greater Accra regions of Ghana were randomly selected among five other regions, not necessarily because of time, space, or financial constraints. Furthermore, the study did not focus on the phenomenon of inter-state or international electoral violence and did not seek to present details on all aspects of human rights either. Rather, its focal point was only the specific human rights that were abused relative to electoral conflicts in the areas under study. The study was mainly focused on the 2016 and 2020 elections. The country started experiencing widespread electoral violence in the 2016 general elections (CODEO, 2020). In 2016, the country was under the leadership of the NDC government, and in 2020, it was under the leadership of the NPP. This provided a reasonable political jurisdiction for the analysis of this thesis.

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1.7 Definition of Terms and Concepts

The Encarta Thesaurus (2018) defined concepts as expansive, abstract ideas or the most basic understanding of an issue. Concepts can, therefore, have diverse meanings and be understood and used differently in various domains. Therefore, there is a need to explain and operationalize the terms and concepts used in this study to avoid any ambiguity.

1.7.1 Violence

Violence means any act or inducement directly or indirectly aimed at harming or influencing a voter physically, emotionally, or psychologically in such a way that it affects their genuine or legitimate choice in an election. Political violence differs from electoral violence. To understand electoral violence, it must be considered a subset of political violence, as indicated in Figure 1. Electoral violence, on the other hand, has certain distinguishing characteristics that set it apart from other forms of political violence. According to Fischer (2002; Randall, 2014; Mocht'ak, 2015), electoral violence differs from other types of political violence in terms of timing and goal. Electoral violence is intended to influence electoral outcomes. Furthermore, in contrast to electoral violence, coups, rebellions, and repression all occur without regard for election processes and outcomes. In this study, electoral violence and electoral conflict are used interchangeably.
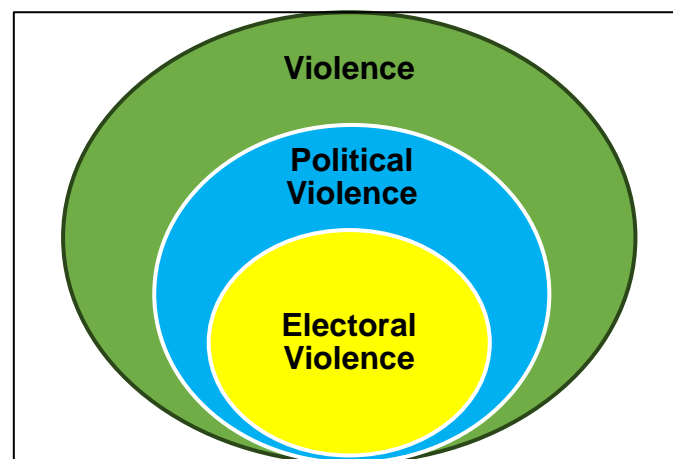
Figure 1: Violence, Political Violence, Electoral Violence
Source: Adapted from Mocht'ak (2015)

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1.7.2 Electoral violence

In this study electoral violence is:

> Any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an impending electoral contest or an announced electoral result through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced protection, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination (Fischer, 2002:12).

1.7.3 Conflict entrepreneur

A conflict entrepreneur is a group or individual who promotes conflict for profit. They exist inside or outside the government. Usually, a conflict entrepreneur engages in or directly benefits from illegal economic activity that promotes violence or undermines efforts for good governance and economic development.

1.7.4 Vigilantism

In this thesis, vigilantism is defined as when people "take the law into their own hands" to protect or advance their interests. In this way, all vigilantism is political because it always involves the use of (illegal) power against others who are perceived to be a threat to those interests (Gyampo, Graham & Bossman, 2017).

1.7.5 Early warning and early response

A conflict early warning system (CEWS) is a risk analysis apparatus that provides forecasts of political violence to increase public awareness and prevent or mitigate the occurrence of electoral conflict.

1.7.6 Adoption

The process by which a state agrees to international law; regarding treaties, adoption usually refers to the initial diplomatic stage at which a treaty is accepted; to become effective, after adoption, a treaty usually must be ratified by the legislature of Ghana.

1.7.7 Human Rights Watch.

A prominent international human rights NGO that originated as a series of US-based watch committees.

1.7.8 Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation is the art of turning animosity, hatred, and domination into a spirit of collaboration, creativity, and peaceful coexistence.

1.7.9 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The first and most fundamental human rights standard was approved by the United Nations in 1948. Its thirty articles elaborate on a wide range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The UDHR is considered the cornerstone of international human rights law.

1.8 Relevance of Human Rights, Peace, and Conflicts in Social Studies

The focus of Social Studies is essentially on man, society, and the environment (UEW-Online, 2020). This subject aims to equip individuals with knowledge and understanding for peaceful relationships and living (NCSS, 1992). Social studies is part of the school's general education programme that is concerned with the preparation of citizens for participation in a democratic society. For Onyabe (1980), human rights education has a clear and present role within contemporary social studies education. The two are closely related and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and scope rather than in goals and practises (Tibbitts & Fritzsche, 2006). While social studies education focuses on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation in the civic, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural spheres of society, human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives. According to the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS, 1992), the following position on the nature of social studies has been adopted: Social

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studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.

Peace and Conflict Studies is a social science area that explores violent and nonviolent actions as well as the structural factors that follow conflicts (including social conflicts) to better understand the processes that lead to a better human state (Ezeoba, 2012). Peace studies (irenology) is an interdisciplinary effort aimed at preventing, de-escalating, and resolving conflicts in peaceful ways to make society enjoyable for mankind (Galtung, 2002).

Human Rights, Peace, and Conflict Studies are therefore covered in the Social Studies curriculum. They are useful lenses for examining practically any social issue. For example, human rights are a component of social studies that can be used to assess if our social orders are fulfilling societal objectives. Many societal concerns have human rights implications (Ezeoba, 2012).

In Social Studies, cultures and practices that may involve the violation of human rights are central (Advocates for Human Rights, 2016). Social Studies support the universal values of equal justice, democracy, and human dignity, which are social concerns. Therefore, a study conducted on electoral conflicts and human rights abuses is relevant in Social Studies.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The details of the five chapters that make up this thesis are provided below.

1.9.1 Chapter One: Introduction

The background of the research is presented in this chapter, which serves as the introduction to the full thesis. It discusses the context of the study, the formulation of the

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research problem, the study's goals and objectives, the research questions, the operational definition of words, and the significance of doing the investigation.

1.9.2 Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter gives the theories underpinning the study. It also provides a theoretical explanation for the causes of election violence, human rights violations, and the implications of electoral violence on human rights. The chapter also provides a description of the literature on the theoretical impact of election violence, focusing on institutionalism.

1.9.3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This presents the research method of this thesis and explains the methodology, that is, the research design, study area, data sources, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations, and fieldwork challenges. Finally, issues relating to validity and reliability, researcher positionality, and limitations of the research are discussed.

1.9.4 Chapter Four: Data analyses and discussion

Chapter Four describes and analyses the data from the field, discusses the findings, and thereafter analyses the theoretical assumptions. Also, several cases from the Odododiodio and Awutu Senya East Constituencies are examined to strengthen the arguments made. The analysis was presented using Vašák's categorization of human rights to enhance discussions about human rights abuses.

1.9.5 Chapter Five: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

This chapter summarises the thesis, draws valid conclusions from the findings, and makes recommendations for policy formulation. It also outlines directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher justified the need for this study by outlining the background, the problem under study, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. In this chapter, the theoretical and conceptual issues underpinning the study are discussed. The concept of human rights, electoral violence, human rights violations, sources of electoral violence, and the implications of electoral violence were discussed. Literature is also reviewed on institutional responses to electoral violence, the institutional and constitutional framework of elections in Ghana, and a review of the reviewed literature.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The literature on the causes and implications of electoral violence remains disjointed (Alemika, 2011; Smidt, 2020). Against this background, the researcher has incorporated an existing theoretical framework from the literature to serve as the theoretical framework for this study. Therefore, the theory underpinning this research includes the Institutional Functionalism Theory of Violence, the Theory of Electoral Violence, and a Political Approach to Human Rights. The first two (the Institutional Functionalism Theory of Violence and the Theory of Electoral Violence) are on electoral violence, and the political approach to human rights was used to frame the human rights abuse component.

2.1.1 Institutional functionalism theory of violence

Herbert Spencer, in his proposition of this theory, drew an analogy between societies and living organisms and observed that an organism such as a human being is composed of several parts, including the brain, heart, lungs, and liver, each of which must work in

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harmony and contribute to the whole body's function, so is human society. He further observed, for example, that each part of society has a specific role to play in maintaining the whole. These various components must work together for societies to grow and develop, as the "whole" cannot function without one of the components. According to Spencer, the parts are interdependent for survival (Merton, 1968).

The key proposition of the functionalists in their theories is that society everywhere is composed of specialised structures called social institutions. These institutions may include the family, religion, the education system, health structures, the economy, and politics. According to the functionalists, these structures will have to work in harmony to maintain society (Witmer, 2003).

The theory of institutional functionalism explains the instability or delicateness of a country and its citizens' political participation. According to Osborn (2008), political disorder is more likely to occur in societies marked by high levels of political participation but with slow or weak processes of political institutionalisation. To him, institutional functionalism draws a direct correlation between fragile states and the phenomenon of violence. Thus, violence is likely to erupt when the state fails to meet popular demands, leaving the masses in grinding poverty. For example, a fragile state would have the problem of non-functioning state institutions that are supposed to protect human beings and property. Hence, weak institutions have a direct correlation between a weak state and the eruption of violence, especially when such violence coincides with competitive multiparty elections.

According to Nathan (2000), cited in Biegon (2009:6), violence may occur as an expression of anger, frustration, and fear. Such violence is more real if the state lacks institutions for addressing grievances and is even more apparent in periods of elections

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that offer the possibility of changing the status quo. Vallings and Moreno (2001), cited in Biegon (2009), have asserted that fragility can occur when poverty or economic decline are combined with the presence of weak state institutions that cannot manage the very real grievances caused by, for example, inequitable distribution of resources or unequal access to formal institutions. Essentially, this means that in fragile states, political institutions are not strong enough to effectively manage the natural conflicts that occur in society. This "fragility" or weakness will be most evident at any time that the state undergoes processes of economic, political, or social change. When the former President of the USA, Barack Obama, visited Ghana in 2009, he stated that elections alone do not promote democracy but rather the building of strong and independent institutions (Newport, 2012). The institutional functionalism theory emphasises that violence could be triggered when there is a breakdown of institutions such as the judicial system, law enforcement agencies, and Electoral Commissions that are mandated to address the grievances and concerns of the people (Witmer, 2003).

In Ghana, election-disputed cases are normally reported to the Electoral Commission (EC), the police, or the judicial service for redress. Electoral violence is likely to occur if these institutions fail. The National Peace Council (NPC) is a state institution mandated to harmonise and coordinate conflict prevention, management, and resolution and build sustainable peace through networking and coordination. It must function properly to ensure peace during elections.

2.1.2 Electoral violence theory

Proponents of the Theory of Electoral Violence include Jeff Fischer, Bekoe Dorine, and Höglund Kristine. These scholars of security and conflict first became interested in elections following work on democratization and its conflict-inducing risks that implied

a potential relationship between elections and violence (Snyder, 2000; Mansfield & Snyder, 2005).

Fischer (2002:3) defines electoral violence as 'any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or to otherwise influence an electoral process." The definition of electoral violence is broadened by Sisk as "acts or threat of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arises in the context of electoral competition (Sisk, 2012:13). Electoral violence covers a range of different manifestations and outcomes, but the concept is unified by its coercive component.

The phrase "greed versus grievance" or "greed and grievance" refers to two baseline arguments advanced by armed conflict scholars on the causes of civil war. However, the argument has been extended to other forms of war, such as violent conflict in general, rebellion, electoral conflict, and insurgency (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

"Greed" is a key component in the argument that combatants in armed conflicts are motivated by a desire to improve their situation and conduct an informal cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the rewards of joining a rebellion outweigh the risks of not joining. The term "grievance" refers to the claim that people rebel over issues of identity, such as ethnicity, religion, social class, and so on, rather than economics. In practise, even supporters of strong versions of these arguments admit that the opposing argument has some influence on how a conflict develops (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000b).

Whether the cause of war is attributed to 'greed' or 'grievance,' the perception of a certain deprivation is a common factor (Straus & Taylor, 2012). If it is economic deprivation, the inequality is "vertical," and the cause of war is "greed." If the deprivation is caused

by ethnicity, age, religion, or gender, it is referred to as "horizontal inequality," and the cause of the war is referred to as "grievances."

According to Bekoe (2012), post-election violence has devastating effects on lives and properties. For instance, the post-election violence after the 2010 polls in Côte d'Ivoire led to more than 1,000 civilian deaths, one million internally displaced people, and 100,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. Recent elections in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe were similarly accompanied by high levels of conflict. Violence, even at levels below those witnessed in the most egregious cases, undermines the democratic character of elections by substituting free choice with coercion and by deterring participation (Bekoe, 2012). When force intrudes into electoral processes, something is seriously amiss with democratic institutions.

Research from the African context suggests that harassment and intimidation are more common than lethal violence even though lethal violence is generally better covered and less subject to underreporting in the media-based sources that underlie many of the cross-country sources capturing electoral violence (Von Borzyskowski & Wahman, 2019). However, they agreed with the findings of Bekoe (2012) that, violence associated with elections can generate significant casualties and form part of an escalatory process toward civil war (Ron, 2001; Reilly, 2011). A survey of relevant facts indicates that a substantial proportion of elections across the globe witness at least some violence. The Countries at Risk of Election Violence data estimate that over three quarters (78%) of elections in countries deemed to be at risk of violence experience at least ten violent events, while the Electoral Contention and Violence data report more than three violent events in over 50% of elections, and deadly violence in approximately 30% of elections (Fischer, 2012).

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Straus and Taylor (2012) have classified electoral violence into the timing, motives of the players in the conflict, and the action itself. A difference is drawn between the perpetrators of electoral violence, that is, between the incumbent regime and the parties challenging the electoral results. According to Jama (2012), the incumbent maintains power based on recourse to force. A distinction is made between the time frame in which the violence occurs and whether the violence is induced in the pre- or post-election period. Pre-election violence is influenced by the desire for parties to change voter preference in the elections. Post-election violence is used to alter the final electoral results.

However, according to Staffan Lindberg's theory on elections, African states will become more democratic if they simply keep having elections, regardless of the degree of freedom and fairness of the election results (Lindberg, 2006, 2009). Larry Diamond argued in favour of Lindberg in the foreword to his book, Democratisation by Elections: A New Mode of Transition, by stating that "Even when elections were not free or fair, the process of repeated, competitive elections tended to generate drive for better democratisation (Lindberg, 2006, quoted in Diamond, 2009: xiii–xiv). For Lindberg (2006, 2009), even deficient elections were worth holding and engaging in because they could advance real democratic change in the future. Lindberg argued that even ferocious elections could provide a procedural means to achieve a breakthrough to genuine democracy, with opposition victories or at least improved quality of elections, and in deepening democracy concerning political rights and civil liberties.

Finally, the protagonists behind this theory recognise four key levels of electoral violence: no incident of violence recorded, atrocious harassment, and the use of the police to "break rallies; party supporters fighting; street brawls; opposition newspapers being confiscated; and limited short-term arrests of opponents." Violent repression among these includes "long-term, high-level arrests of party leaders; the consistent use of violence and

intimidation; and the limited use of murder and torture," according to Straus and Taylor (2009). However, the introduction of electoral processes often creates incentives for elites to manipulate ethnic or religious cleavages for electoral benefits (Wilkinson, 2004; Schwartz, 2009). Such manipulation can trigger communal violence that serves electoral ends but with long-lasting effects on inter-communal relations and the potential for renewed violence outside of the electoral arena.

The theory is significant for the study in that it explains the meaning of electoral violence from several pedagogic perspectives. The reason and mode of electoral violence are being discussed. The theory best explains the phenomenon of electoral violence in Africa and why competitive democratic elections degenerate into violence. The recourse during the pre-election and post-election times is because the goal of the parties competing in the elections is to win.

2.1.3 Political approach to human rights

Protagonists of the Political Approach to Human Rights, such as Beitz and Rawls, often point out that the central role of human rights in political practice is a relatively recent event. Beitz, for example, notes that modern human rights practice started after World War II with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Beitz, 2009). He does, however, agree with many theorists of the moral approach that human rights have a tradition that started long before the adoption of the Declaration.

The first antecedent of current human rights practices recognised by Beitz is the Peace of Westphalia Treaty of 1648. This treaty not only laid down the foundation of the modern state system, but it was also significant in limiting the powers of states through a collective guarantee of religious tolerance, giving Protestants and Catholics equal status (Gross, 1948). While the Peace of Westphalia varies significantly from current human

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rights practices in scope and aim, it is the first example of a legal treaty that acknowledges state sovereignty while at the same time defining some basic principles that limit state sovereignty.

According to Follesdal (2017), the preconditions for a dignified human existence have often been described in terms of freedoms: freedom from torture, freedom of movement, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. The United States former President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, summarized these preconditions in his famous "Four Freedoms Speech" to the United States Congress on January 26, 1941:

1. Freedom of speech and expression

2. Freedom of belief (the right of every person to worship God in their way).

3. Freedom from Want (economic understandings that will ensure every nation is free from starvation); and

4. Freedom from fear (worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation would be able to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour.

Roosevelt implied that a dignified human existence requires not only protection from oppression and arbitrariness but also access to the primary necessities of life, which are deliberately implemented by those in authority to ensure that the rights of people are protected from violations. According to Lauren (2011), this can be ensured by implementing a human rights-based approach in all policies of the state. Critically, a human rights-based approach seeks to deepen understanding of the relationships between rights holders and duty-bearers to help bridge the gaps between them (Lauren, 2011). Taking a human rights-based approach is about using international human rights

standards and best practices to ensure that people's human rights are put at the very centre of policies and practice. A human rights-based approach to elections, therefore, empowers people to know and claim their rights (Bayefsky, 2003). It increases the ability of organisations such as the Electoral Commission and the Ghana Police Service to fulfil their human rights obligations. It also creates a solid accountability mechanism so people can seek remedies when their rights are violated.

Competitive elections in democracy and human rights are universal aspirations and ideals that governments that claim to be legitimate should always respect (Bayefsky, 2003). This can be done when a human rights-based approach is implemented in elections. A human rights-based approach is about empowering people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling rights.

This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that impact their human rights. It also means increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights and make sure they can be held to account (BASW, 2005). It seeks to analyse and redress inequalities, discriminatory practices, abuses, and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress (Brysk, 2009).

Before 1997, most UN development agencies followed a "basic needs" approach; in this, they identified the basic requirements of beneficiaries and put in measures to improve service delivery or advocated for their fulfilment. Currently, governments are encouraged to fulfil the rights of people rather than the needs of beneficiaries. It is an important distinction because an unfulfilled need leads to dissatisfaction, while a right that is not respected leads to a violation (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2011). A human rights-based

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approach also seeks to reinforce the capacity of duty bearers, usually governments, to respect, protect, promote, and guarantee these rights. The goal of ensuring that every human being has full enjoyment of their human rights implies that no one should be subjected to violations of those rights. Preventing human rights violations is thus an important component of the United Nations' efforts to protect and promote human rights for all (Crawford, 2010).

Governments and other duty-bearers often need assistance to develop the capacity, the resources, and the political will to fulfil their commitments to human rights. This approach deals not just with outcomes but also with how those outcomes are achieved (Carver, 1990). It recognises that people are actors in their development rather than passive recipients of services. Informing, educating, and empowering them is therefore crucial. Their participation is central, not only to ensure they have ownership over the programme but also to sustain the programme's progress (Crawford, 2010). A rights-based approach develops the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and encourages right-holders to claim their rights.

In elections, governments are supposed to develop the capacities of the staff of the Electoral Commission and resource them. Governments have three levels of obligation: to respect, protect, and fulfil every right (Brysk, 2009). Respecting a right means refraining from meddling with the enjoyment of the right. Protecting a right means preventing other parties from interfering with the enjoyment of rights. To realise a right, one must take active steps to put in place laws, policies, institutions, and procedures, including the allocation of resources, to enable people to enjoy their rights (Bayefsky, 2003). Details of a human rights-based approach will vary depending on the nature of the organisation concerned and the issues it deals with.

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2.1.4 Theoretical application and conclusions

The Electoral Violence Theory is significant to the study in that it presents the meaning of electoral violence from several scholastic perspectives. The main reason why actors in a competitive election resort to violence is explained by the theory of electoral violence. The theory best explains the phenomenon of electoral violence in the *Odododiodio* and *Awutu-Senya* East constituencies and why competitive democratic elections in these hotspots degenerate into violence.

The theory of electoral violence provides a set of prospective causal variables for understanding and explaining electoral violence, grounded on the variety of arguments currently in the literature. It is important to state that this theory is not exclusive to the subject. Currently, the available literature on electoral violence is scanty, and there is yet to be a comprehensive theory that explains the phenomenon in its entirety. The researcher, therefore, chose to unravel the discussion on the work of Höglund (2009) and add potentially relevant insights from other authors who researched electoral violence, such as Bekoe (2012), Collier and Vicente (2012), and Weidmann and Callen (2013). The work of Höglund (2009) somewhat explains the causes of electoral violence, while the works of other scholars help to identify which elements are most relevant in the general electoral violence context, which is the focus of this thesis. The researchers, by using these theories, sought to provide a comprehensive assemblage of fragmented literature on electoral violence in the system. Matching and applying all the theories will determine how they interrelate and connect in the empirical realm. It could happen that, based on these connections, a new, relevant, and more insightful theory can be created. This new theory will offer sharper analytical insights into the phenomenon of electoral violence. The theory of a Human Rights-Based Approach is about enabling people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability of individuals and institutions who are

responsible for respecting, protecting, promoting, and fulfilling human rights. Application of this theory in this study means giving electorates greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that influence their human rights during elections. It also implies increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights and make sure they can be held to account.

A human rights-based approach entails ensuring that both human rights standards and principles are incorporated into policymaking, such as elections and the day-to-day operations of state institutions. Applying the theory of electoral violence to the theory of institutional functionalism, it explains that when the electoral institutions and other stakeholder institutions become defective or problematic, frustration and aggression will take place, leading to electoral violence. However, if there is a strong human rights-based approach to election management, violations, and abuses will be curtailed or greatly reduced.

In conclusion, the Theory of Electoral Violence has helped us understand the conditions for the conduct of peaceful democratic elections. It explains the stages that competitive democratic elections go through to produce political leaders. It also explains that electoral violence can lead to severe human rights violations. The critics of this theory contend that the several elections that are organised in Africa and some emerging democracies do not conform to the electoral theory (Saba, 2005). They said that these elections in evolving democracies are characterised by violence, fraud, manipulation of results, and physical attacks. These critics argue that for elections to be free, fair, and transparent, strong democratic tenets such as the rule of law, respect for human rights, judicial independence, strong security forces, an impartial electoral commission, and tolerance of dissenting views among citizens must be in place.

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2.2 Reviewing Election Violence

Electoral violence is a subcategory of political violence. Political actors use coercive acts against people and infrastructure during elections to deliberately affect the process and results. The electoral cycle is divided into three parts: the pre-election period, the election period, and the post-election phase (see Figure 2). This method depicts the critical, different, yet interconnected procedures that must be completed before voters can vote and results can be validated. The election cycle also demonstrates the enormous number of actors involved in the electoral process who play critical roles in one or more phases of the process (International Crisis Group, 2010). Voter registration, for instance, directly impacts who has the right to cast a ballot on Election Day and is, therefore, critical to participation in the poll. However, given the importance of voter registration, this exercise could become a flashpoint if it is not conducted professionally and fairly; segments of society will feel deprived of their fundamental rights and may decide to use violence to prevent elections from taking place. A chaotic voter registration system can also have repercussions on Election Day if citizens cannot find their names on the voter lists and are turned away from polling places, which can lead to violent riots.
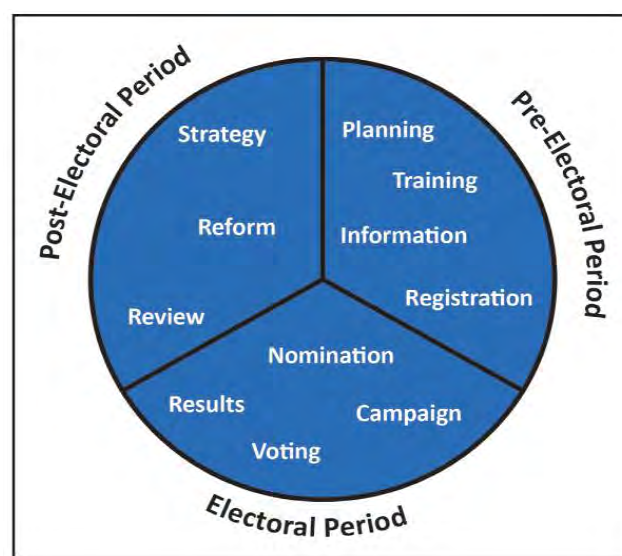
Figure 2: Electoral Cycle

Source: International Crisis Group (2010)

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Electoral violence may take place throughout the electoral cycle. This includes election announcements, party primaries, and voter registration, and it may be promoted by both state and non-state actors. Low levels of violence are sometimes difficult to detect, especially if they do not involve bodily harm or physical destruction of property. Election violence can take many different forms and have many varied effects (Fischer, 2012).

Elections guarantee an orderly transition of power and a change of government. They are indispensable in any democratic process and provide a means of managing political competition and conflict in a peaceful way (Abbink & Gerti, 1999). Because of this, in the early 1990s, there was a noticeable emphasis on democratisation as a path to lasting peace in foreign policy circles. As a result of the realisation that political oppression and discrimination frequently serve as the primary impetus for group armed behaviour, the idea of promoting peacebuilding alongside democratisation emerged (Omotola, 2010). When the political process fails in this regard, elections can be the spark that leads to violent conflict, which can result, in the worst case, in significant loss of life, as has occurred in several places all over the world. On numerous occasions across the African continent, electoral processes intended to provide citizens with a peaceful method of selecting their representatives have devolved into sources of contention and bloodshed (Chambas, 2016). According to Chambas (2016), the causes of election violence are multifaceted and vary from country to country. However, some common factors can be identified that exist in all countries that have experienced electoral violence. The presence of some of these factors, singularly or in combination, means that the risk of election violence could be higher, but that does not mean it is inevitable (Abbink & Gerti, 1999).

For Chambas (2016), electoral violence appears to be more likely in the following contexts: the context of transition; weak or inadequate state structures; social divisions and inadequate power-sharing arrangements; and economic inequalities. The context that

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explains the transition a country is embarking upon will determine whether an election will be violent or not (Chambas, 2016). Several contexts will serve as a platform for transition, and the electoral system is one of the most significant political institutions that define the strategic context of electoral competition. When a country is transitioning from dictatorship to democracy, the risk of electoral violence is high because the structures to support peaceful elections are new and lack experience (Omotola, 2010). Similarly, suppose a country is transitioning from war to democracy. In that case, elections are seen as the means to implement the peace agreement, raising the risk of violence higher than in a country that is already democratic, where elections are being used to renew the government's mandate or change government (Lyons, 2005). In such situations, demobilisation may not be complete, the societal division may run deep, and the economic and social effects of the war or authoritarian rule often remain strong (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2009; Chambas, 2016).

According to Snyder (2000), most state institutions, especially those that manage elections in democratic states, are independent and are only subject to the Constitution and other legal frameworks. This is a provision that makes such elections peaceful. If these institutions are impartial in their work and exercise their powers without fear or prejudice, the likelihood of election violence occurring is low (Burchard, 2015). However, a country starting a democratic system of governance may have an inexperienced election management body and weak or inadequate state structures, which may be reflected in a variety of ways, including a poorly developed political party system, weak democratic institutions, including a dysfunctional judicial system, and high levels of systemic corruption, which increase the probability of electoral violence (Chambas, 2016). According to Levi (2015:7):

The trustworthiness of the state influences its capacity to generate interpersonal trust, and the amount of socially and economically productive cooperation in a society affects, in turn, the state's governance capacity. Trust in the state has additional consequences for governance as well. It affects the degree of compliance with governmental demands and regulations. The destruction of trust may lead to widespread antagonism to government policy and even active resistance, and it may be one source of increased social distrust.

The above statement means that anytime representatives of the government fail to uphold human rights and discriminate against individuals and groups, it could have disastrous effects on elections.

For Levi (2015), the major sources of cynicism in democracy are when government institutions act incompetently, and break promises they make to the citizens. Citizens are likely to support the activities of the government only if they believe that it will act or is acting in their interests. According to Burchard (2015), countries that practice a two-party system are less likely to experience severe political violence than countries that practice a multi-party system.

For instance, the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana is considered exemplary for its independence (Agyemang, 2013). Nonetheless, the Commission has been marred by tensions and distrust from groups throughout the country because of corruption allegations and the politicisation of aspects of its work (DeGraft-Aidoo, 2015). This lost image must be redeemed immediately if the state is to maintain its credentials as a country that holds peaceful elections. In some cases, the security forces may be overly politicised, ethnically biased, or simply unprofessional. These elements may enhance insecurity, compromise law and order, and encourage the proliferation of small arms and the hiring of militias by political actors, raising the potential for violence during elections (Abbink & Gerti, 1999). Individuals and groups will comply and reciprocate the act by voting

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peacefully if state institutions can adopt fair procedures and demonstrate a credible commitment to electoral management.

The belief in government fairness requires the perception that all relevant interests about the elections are appropriately considered and that the election will not be rigged. Inadequate power-sharing arrangements and economic inequalities in a country raise the likelihood of election violence. Societies that lack policies and institutions that promote power sharing are also much more likely to encounter obstacles in the democratic process (Chambas, 2016).

The system of winner-takes-all in politics is malevolent in the modern world, as nearly all advanced democracies and emerging ones have rejected its use (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2009). Winner-takes-all was introduced to America by the British during the colonial period, and it was virtually unknown in other developed countries such as Sweden and Norway (Fair Votes, 2009). The problem the 'winner-takes-all' system produces is the current political conflict being experienced by several developing countries. It leads to conflicts because losing an election means losing everything for several years. According to Fair Votes (2009:21), *winner-takes-all is a term used to describe single-member districts and large election systems that award seats to the highest vote-getters without ensuring fair representation for minority groups*.

In the United States, these are typically single-member district schemes or at-large block-voting systems. Under winner-takes-all rules, a slim majority of voters can control 100% of the seats, leaving everyone else effectively without representation (Fair Votes, 2009). Winner-takes-all politics results in violent and divisive electoral campaigns that fail to address citizens' needs and challenging issues. This practice could make the winner of an election ignore an entire constituency if they have not voted for the party (Fair Votes,

2009). Under the principle of winner-takes-all, there is no motivation for politicians to reach out to communities that fail to vote for them or build cross-party support. Politicians therefore adopt negative campaigning strategies to win elections.

Chambas (2016), therefore, argues that arrangements to balance power adequately amongst diverse groups in a country and to ensure their participation in decision-making must be promoted in all countries to ensure electoral peace. To him, the absence of or insufficient power-sharing arrangements will lead to instability and increase sentiments of exclusion and discrimination among the populace. In a similar vein, societies that lack policies and institutions that promote power sharing are also much more likely to encounter obstacles in the democratic process (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2009). Arrangements to balance power adequately among diverse groups and to ensure their participation in decision-making may be absent or insufficient. This could lead to inherent instability and enhance sentiments of exclusion and discrimination, thus raising the stakes for seeking redress by influencing the electoral process by other means, such as through violence (Jama, 2012; Chambas, 2016).

Elections can be violent if they occur close to a regime change (Lyons, 2005). Such a situation can motivate rebellion before an election if the opposition party feels that they have little or no real chance of winning. Again, violence can occur after an election if the opposition notices that the incumbent won the election unlawfully (Gleditsch, Hegre, & Strand, 2009). Excessive economic inequality and corruption can produce high levels of discontent and clear grievances among marginalised groups (Chambas, 2016). Corruption is one of the greatest obstructions to the development of a country. High levels of economic inequality often go hand in hand with unemployment among young people feeling disenfranchised, who are susceptible to recruitment with the intent of fomenting violence or threatening opponents (Agyemang, 2013).

The relationship between economic inequalities and armed conflict is well-examined and documented (Ross, 2004; Hegre & Sambanis, 2006). Fischer (2012) claimed that countries that depend on primary commodities or natural resources tend to have weaker state capacity to manage conflict, given their level of development. Natural resources (primary commodities) are also known to increase the opportunities for sponsoring rebels and their activities, thus increasing the risk of violent conflict (Collier & Hoeffler 2004). There is a relationship between economic development and democracy. The main argument has been that economic disparity has harmful effects on the prospects of democratisation and can lead to electoral violence.

Collier (2009:14) observed that in the conditioning phase, electoral and economic factors interact with Africa's postcolonial reality to create an enabling environment in which violence thrives. Poor economic conditions have been implicated in the incidence of violence and civil war. Lower levels of per capita income and a negative economic growth rate in terms of GDP increase a country's risk of violence. Electoral competition in poor, newly democratising states with weak institutions is often violent. Economic inequality and poor economic prospects breed an atmosphere of grievance in the electorate, which can then be exploited by conflict entrepreneurs (Collier, 2009).

The economic condition can have effects on both individual and national levels. High youth unemployment rates are one strong indicator of poor economic conditions, particularly at the individual level (Abbink & Gerti, 1999). High unemployment among the youth in a country provides a steady supply of young unemployed men and women who can be mobilised and radicalised by unscrupulous politicians to carry out acts of violence. Politically recruited youth gangs were implicated in the post-election violence that occurred in Kenya in 2007 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 (Fischer, 2012). Further than at the individual level, a nation's declining economic fortunes can be a threat to the existing

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peace. This makes choosing violence to achieve a desired electoral outcome more likely, as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe (Bekoe, 2012). High levels of economic inequality and poor economic prospects increase the risk of electoral violence.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework creates a synergy between the main variables of a study. The framework that informs this research seeks to explain how factors such as youthful unemployment, weak state institutions, and the winner-takes-all system connect to create political tension in the country. This could trigger electoral conflict and lead to human rights violations if it is not managed well by institutions during an election period.
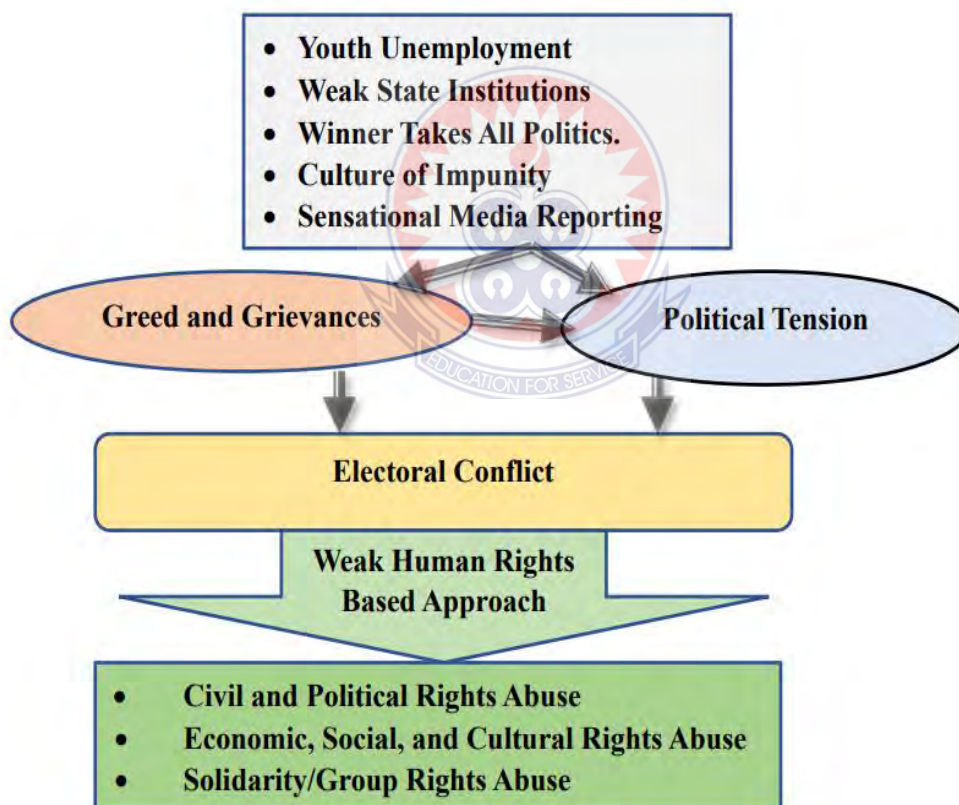
Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source: Author's Construct (2020)

As illustrated in Figure 3, the framework shows how the variables interact leading to human rights abuses during elections. Greed and grievances cause political tension which

precedes electoral violence after the underlying causes have been experienced in the country over a period (Snyder, 2000). Political tension is the feeling that is produced in a situation when people are anxious and do not trust each other, and when there is a possibility of sudden violence or conflict erupting. The objective of electoral violence distinguishes it from the family of political violence; it is intended to influence the behaviour of voters and candidates as well as distort election results due to greed or grievances.

The theory of institutional functionalism which underpins this thesis explains that the malfunctioning of a state institution could trigger electoral violence. For instance, high youth unemployment because of the state's inability to create employment, a culture of impunity, and sensational media reporting because of state institutions responsible for ensuring proper use of the media space and punishing offenders of the law are some of the underlying causes of electoral violence in Ghana. Poverty in Africa is extremely concerning, and this allows the unemployed majority to be manipulated to perpetuate all forms of electoral violence. Violence during an election can take many forms, including the use of thugs to snatch ballot boxes, voter intimidation, disruption of the electoral process using weapons at polling stations, vandalism of electoral materials, or any other form of physical assault.

Greed and grievances are the sources of violent conflict, according to Collier and Hoeffler (2000b). He clarified that greed and grievances are the most common causes of violent disputes. If the government is unable to provide a solution to the problem, citizens' grievances are redressed through acts of violence and rebellion. Empirically, many disturbances during elections seem to be related to greed and grievances. Electoral violence can be planned or perpetrated on the spot. Many causes contribute to such behaviour, including greed; the desire to obtain more and the urge to succeed in a way

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that is unacceptable. Election violence can also result from the reactions of groups that are purposefully or persistently oppressed, cheated, and disenfranchised by their opponents and those in positions of power. Therefore, losers in elections who later resort to violence to seek redress always raise allegations of the purposeful subversion of democratic and electoral procedures.

Electoral violence occurs during the election period when a party in a strong or weak position discovers that the opposing party is unilaterally establishing the rules of the game for its benefit. The most common trigger events are voter registration, the establishment of the electoral administration, and election results. State institutions mandated to ensure peace in the country sometimes fail to put in place measures to strengthen democracy, maintain peace, and eliminate violence, including electoral violence. All three generations of human rights explained by Karel Vasak could occur during electoral conflicts. First-generation human rights consist of civil and political rights. Second-generation human rights, on the other hand, consist of social, economic, and cultural rights. Third-generation human rights go beyond individual rights and focus on collective concepts such as the community or people.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, issued by the UN General Assembly in 1948, states that the cornerstone of freedom, justice, and peace in the world is the equality and inalienable rights of all people. The rights-based approach considers both the results and the processes that lead to those results. It acknowledges that individuals are active participants in their growth rather than only passive users of services. A rights-based approach develops the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and encourages rights holders to claim their rights. Governments are required to respect, safeguard, and uphold all rights on three different levels. Respecting a right means not interfering with how that right is used. To defend a right is to stop third parties from obstructing its

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exercise. To ensure that people may exercise their rights, laws, regulations, institutions, and procedures must be put in place. Before an election, it is important to ensure that the relevant legal framework (e.g., the Constitution, electoral law, legislation on political parties, and procedure and courts) can function independently and/or impartially (UNOWAS, 2017).

2.4 Typologies of Electoral Conflict

Electoral violence involves more than physical violence. Its dimensions include structural violence and psychological violence (Aondowase, 2015). This involves threats, tampering with electoral institutions and laws, and offensive advertisements that put fear in people to manipulate the results of an election (Snyder, 2000). An electoral process is an alternative to violence as a means of achieving governance. However, when an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised, and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the established norms to achieve their political objectives.

Electoral conflict and violence become tactics in political competition (Fischer, 2004). Even electoral processes that are fair, responsive, and honest can be similarly victimized. In either scenario, stakeholders use conflict, violence, and threats as means to determine, delay, or otherwise influence the results of an election. Under this reasoning, when electoral conflict occurs, it is not a product of an electoral process; it is the breakdown of an electoral process. According to Fischer (2004), electoral conflict takes on different forms depending on when it occurs in an election timeline. He gave the following categories of election conflicts:

1. *Identity conflict:* Conflict during the registration process, when immigrants or other conflict-forced migrants cannot establish or re-establish their officially recognized identities.

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2. *Campaign conflict:* Rivals seek to disrupt the opponents' campaigns, intimidate voters and candidates, and use threats and violence to influence participation in the voting.

3. *Balloting conflict:* Election Day violence when rivalries are played out at the polling station.

4. *Results conflict:* This is a dispute over election results or the inability of judicial mechanisms to resolve disputes in a fair, timely, and transparent manner.

5. *Representation conflict:* This occurs when elections are organised as "zero-sum" events and "losers" are left out of participation in governance.

According to WANEP (2013), the electoral violence triangle can be used as a tool to analyse the link between the three identified categories of violence that could mar an electoral process. As shown in Figure 4, these three basic classes of electoral violence are adapted to election dispute analysis to include (i) physical electoral violence, (ii) psychological electoral violence, and (iii) structural electoral violence. It is because of this that victims of structural or psychological electoral violence may react with direct violence by resorting to forceful disruption of the election procedures (Lauren, 2011). The electoral conflict triangle explains the three basic classes of electoral violence.
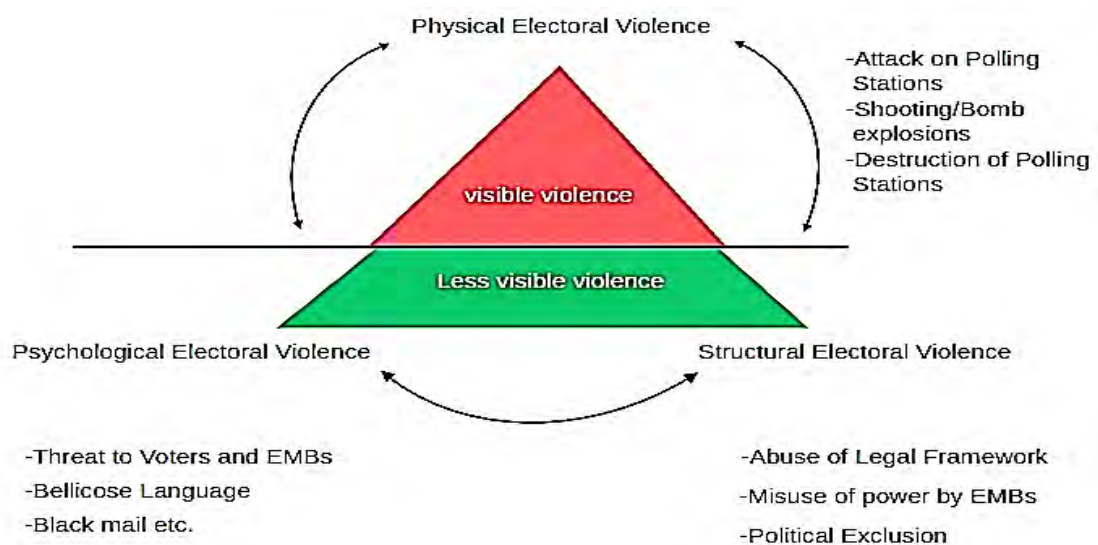
Figure 4: Electoral Conflict Triangle
Source: Adopted from WANEP (2013)

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2.4.1 Violence before the day of the election

The violence that comes before the election is usually prompted by disagreements over the electoral process, especially when a political party or individual sees that it favours others more than them. This may lead to physical assaults on individuals during campaigns and the killing of political antagonists or people perceived as threats to one's political goals (Höglund, 2009). Election Day is usually peaceful given the intensity of security patrols and presence.

The problem usually arises after the polls have ended. According to Wilkinson (2004), *"violence tends to escalate after elections to manipulate the counting and outcome of the elections."* This takes the form of snatching a ballot box and destroying electoral results. This happens when the losers or losers of the election are not willing to accept the election results, either because the polls were considered not to be free and fair or because of perceived or real fraud in the voting and counting processes. According to Omotola (2010), some electoral violence is carried out intentionally, especially when the incumbent or the opposition knows very well that they will lose the elections. Hence, not all perceived allegations are true. For instance, in situations where opponents claim to share votes in other strongholds but turn out against them, there is the tendency to make allegations of fraud or intimidation.

In the opinion of CADA (2016), election threats come in different forms and may include intimidation, registering minors and foreigners, multiple registrations, etc. during the voter registration exercise. Occasionally, election officials and journalists become the targets of intimidation and harassment. Attacks on election rallies or candidates, intimidation of voters to force them to vote, or staying away from voting are examples. Physical attacks on election materials, such as snatching and destruction of ballot boxes, can affect the integrity of the election.

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Other acts of electoral violence are armed clashes among political parties; violent clashes among groups of rival supporters; defacement of posters; physical attacks on the property of antagonists; targeted assaults against specific candidates or political parties; and attacks on candidates and their supporters who have either won elections or been defeated (Snyder, 2000). Violent street protests before or after elections and efforts by security officials to maintain or reinstate order, the use of tear gas on protesters, firing bullets on protestors, attacks by protestors on property or the police, escalation, and perpetuation of ethnic or sectarian violence to influence an electoral result may be termed electoral violence (Abbink & Gerti, 1999).

The most noticeable form of electoral violence involves acts of physical harm against people or property (Snyder, 2000). Assassination is one of the serious forms of electoral violence; it is the murder of a prominent person or political figure by a surprise attack, usually for payment or political reasons (Fischer, 2002). Kumar (1998) defined an assassination as a prearranged, targeted killing of a specific person. The term is especially used in cases where the target was an influential or prominent public figure and when the motive was ideological or political.

Human Rights Watch (2010) observed that murder has been used to influence election results. For instance, between November 1, 2006, and March 10, 2007, Nigeria recorded cases of assassinations that were linked to the presidential elections. The press and other sources reported at least seven attempted assassinations and four assassinations of Nigerian politicians, party officials, and other prominent individuals who were linked to various electoral campaigns. Seven of those ten assassination incidents were connected to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries. Ensuring protection, especially in the most volatile contexts, with a focus on the sections of the population that are in the most vulnerable situations should be the priority of state institutions.

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2.4.2 Violent Acts Against Political Objects

The second is violent acts against political objects, posters, buildings, and structures, as well as people known to be active members of a political group (Harder, 2002). Examples are the deliberate destruction of vehicles, campaign materials, party offices, or ballot boxes.

This may prevent targeted individuals, groups, and communities from exercising their franchise and voting in a free and fair manner. Bob-Milliar (2014) asserted that reports of ballot box stealing and stuffing were prevalent in national elections conducted in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. While ballot box stuffing is the process of putting pre-cast ballots into the boxes before the scheduled voting, stealing ballot boxes is when ballots cast in the election are taken away by supporters of one of the competitors in the election. Party foot soldiers at the grassroots were involved in the stuffing and stealing of ballot boxes (Ansah, 2016).

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) investigated and found that there was serious violence, such as intimidation, harassment, and abuse of the voting processes, in the Ashanti, Greater Accra, and Northern regions during the 2016 general elections (CODEO, 2016).

2.4.3 Phases of Electoral Conflict

There are four typical stages, plus a fifth that explains the electoral conflict's outcome. As illustrated in Figure 3, at the extreme top of the framework are some remote sources of electoral conflict. This is the latent stage. The parties involved are unaware that an electoral conflict is developing during its latent stage. The fight has not started yet, but due to previous and present practices and problems in the nation, like winner-takes-all politics, corruption, youth unemployment, economic hardships, and weak state

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institutions, it could prepare the ground for electoral violence. The latent stage can swiftly develop into violent conflict, depending on the emotions of the parties involved.

At the perceived stage, one or both sides of the conflict become aware that it is happening. This follows the latent stage. At this stage, tension will start rising in the political environment. It is characterised by frequent hate speeches, defacing political party posters, and suspicion.

The country experiences tension and anxiety during the perceived stage of the conflict. The political climate in this nation is becoming more tense, leading to the 'felt' stage. Supporters of political parties will begin organising their vigilante units for assaults. The conflict can be triggered by the slightest political error that any stakeholder commits. People may be concerned about what may happen if it escalates and war starts. When the populace realises that tension has risen in the nation, they could get anxious and start hoarding food and basic items they could use in the event of a conflict. At the manifest stage, it is time to witness an open, violent conflict, and everyone is aware of it. There are open exchanges of violence, and people could be injured through that. It is best to talk to the other party as clearly and openly as possible while trying to keep emotions in check. The most important part of this stage is to listen to the other side.

After the four stages of conflict comes the aftermath stage, which describes what happens because of the conflict if there is a weak human rights-based approach. Human rights abuses, destruction of properties, and weakening of the practise of democracy are some of the results of electoral violence in countries with weak human rights practices.

2.4.4 Violence relates to threats and intimidation

The third form of electoral violence relates to threats and intimidation, which are types of coercion that can have just as powerful an effect as acts of violence. Threats can put fear

in electorates, which can prevent them from going out to vote on election day. Threats of violence, specifically in places where there is a history of previous electoral conflict, can have a strong impact on citizens' participation in elections as well as actual physical violence (Snyder, 2000).

Threats may also include targeting supporters of political parties with intimidation threats to harm them if they campaign or vote for specific candidates, or even threats of physical violence to candidates for advocating certain issues like equality, fairness, and human rights. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2010), electoral conflict can manifest itself in acts of personal intimidation, as in the case of the Kosovo Municipal Elections (2000). In the Kosovo Municipal Elections, the government in Belgrade threatened to discontinue state pensions for Serbs in Kosovo if they participated in those UN-supervised elections. For Strassel (2016), intimidation, threats, harassment, and blackmail have become the usual practices of modern politicians because they work. Incumbent parties always want to shut up conservatives. They do this by using three main methods. They first harass their political opponents, then investigate and prosecute the alleged wrongdoing, and finally blackmail their political opponents to gain an advantage in elections. In Ghana, intimidation and threats are used to scare away voters in places where a political party has fewer advantages.

2.5 The Concept of Human Rights

Human rights and their protection are crucial to every society, and creating awareness of human rights is inevitably a universal need that has also attracted the attention and concern of individuals, groups, institutions, governments, and international bodies (Cranston, 1973). Human rights are the product of a philosophical debate that has erupted for over two thousand years within European societies and their colonial descendants (Shiman, 1993).

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This argument has focused on an exploration of the ethics or moral standards of political organisation and behaviour that are independent of contemporary society. In other words, several people have been unconvinced by the notion that what is right or decent is simply what a particular society or ruling elite feels is right or good at any given time (Arat, 1991). This unease has led to a quest for enduring moral obligations that bind societies and their rulers over time and from place to place.

Butler (2012) notes that the notion that an individual, by his or her humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is new (Butler, 2012). The roots of human rights can be traced to earlier traditions and practices in many cultures. It took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience (Brysk, 2009).

People acquire rights and responsibilities through their affiliation with a group, whether it be a family, religion, nation, class, or society. Most such groups or societies have had traditions like the golden rule of "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*" (Shiman, 1993). The Bible, Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Quran, and the Analects of Confucius are five of the ancient written sources that address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities (Crawford, 2010).

Documents declaring individual rights, such as the Magna Carta (1215), the English Bill of Rights (1689), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791), are the written precursors to most of today's human rights documents (Cranston, 1973). However, many of these documents, when initially translated into policy, barred women, blacks, and members of certain social, economic, religious, and political groups (Ajulo, 1993). Nevertheless, oppressed people throughout the world have drawn on the principles these documents express to support revolutions that assert the right to self-determination.

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Current international human rights law and the formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 have significant historical antecedents. Efforts in the nineteenth century to outlaw slavery and reduce the effects of war are prime examples of human rights laws (Almond & Harry, 1993). In 1919, countries came together to establish the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to supervise treaties protecting employees' rights concerning their safety and health. Concern over the protection of certain minority groups was elevated by the League of Nations at the end of World War I (Butler, 2012).

Nevertheless, this organisation for international peace, created by successful European allies, never achieved its goals. The League stumbled because the United States declined to join and because the League failed to prevent Japan's invasion of China and Manchuria (1931) and Italy's attack on Ethiopia (1935). It finally died with the commencement of the Second World War in 1939. The idea of human rights emerged stronger after World War II (Cranston, 1973). The extermination by Nazi Germany of over six million Jews, Sinti and Romani, homosexuals, and physically challenged people horrified the world. Trials were held in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II, and officials from the defeated countries were punished for committing war crimes, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity (Almond & Harry, 1993).

After this, governments devoted themselves to instituting the United Nations, with the main objective of strengthening international peace and preventing conflict. People wanted to ensure that no one was ever wrongfully deprived of his or her life, freedom, food, shelter, or nationality again (Alston, 2005). The spirit of these evolving human rights principles was documented in the 1941 State of the Union address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. President Franklin spoke of a world founded on four essential freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from want and fear (Twiss, 2004). The calls came from across the globe for human rights standards to

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safeguard citizens from violations by their governments. These voices played a critical role in the San Francisco meeting that drafted the United Nations Charter in 1945 (Alston, 2005). The UDHR (1948), generally referred to as the international Magna Carta (1215), extended the revolution in international law ushered in by the United Nations Charter, namely, that how a government treats its citizens is now a matter of legitimate international concern and not simply a domestic issue. It claims that all rights are interdependent and indivisible.

The UN Charter's Preamble eloquently asserts the following: *Recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.* The global effect of the UDHR (1948) has been considerable. Its principles have been incorporated into the constitutions of most of the more than 185 nations now in the UN. Although a declaration is not a legally binding document, the Universal Declaration has attained the status of customary international law because people regard it as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations (Alston, 2005). The theory and practise of human rights have had a chequered history in Africa. This is because human rights norms have not only received varying levels of recognition and denunciation during the various periods of the continent's history but have also been the subject of intense controversy in recent years (Zeleza, 2004). A useful starting point in exploring this historical trajectory is to examine the controversy as to whether human rights are exclusively Western concepts or values that are equally applicable in other societies. While some writers have argued that human rights are unknown in Africa, others reject this contention and argue that African societies have conceptions of human rights. Supporting human rights in most African states was however not a priority until stringent measures were placed by the UN to promote them (Commonwealth, 2016).

2.5.1 Karel Vašák's generations of human rights

Karel Vasak, a Czech jurist, articulated the three categories of human rights in writing for the first time in 1979 (Vašák, 1979). This categorization of human rights enhances discussions about rights, particularly those that involve law and the role that governments play in promoting human rights. He termed these rights first, second, and third-generation human rights.

2.5.1.1 First-generation human rights

It is generally accepted that the origins of modern-day human rights lie in the 17th and 18th centuries. It became clear that all strong leaders needed to be held to some standards of accountability (Shiman, 1993). It was commonly agreed that giving citizens some protection and control over those who rule them was the best way to achieve this. As a result, they were dubbed political and civil rights. Vašák (1979) called these groups of rights first-generation human rights.

First-generation human rights, sometimes known as "blue rights," primarily concern freedom and taking part in political life. They seek to shield the individual from the excesses of the state and are inherently civic and political. First-generation rights encompass civic and political freedoms, including the right to free expression and the right to conscience, as well as freedom from torture and arbitrary detention. In other words, first-generation human rights demand that governments keep their distance from the person; they are "non-derogable," which means that they establish clear-cut standards over which governments cannot err (Lauren, 2011).

The right to life, equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, property rights, the right to a fair trial, and the ability to vote are only a few examples of first-generation rights.

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2.5.1.2 Second-generation human rights

Second-generation rights are social, economic, and cultural in nature. They cover the rights to housing, health care, and education at a decent standard, as well as the rights to minority languages. Second-generation rights are those connected to the social and economic features of life. Second-generation rights require governments to take affirmative action; they are incremental and discretionary because they have a direct financial bearing upon the provision of government services (Follesdal, 2017).

After World War II, nations started to recognise second-generation human rights, which are connected to equality. Fundamentally, they are social, cultural, and economic phenomena. They ensure that all citizens receive the same conditions and treatment. The right to work in a fair and advantageous environment, the right to eat, the right to live in a safe place, the right to have access to health care, and the right to receive social security and unemployment benefits are all secondary rights. They were protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was expanded upon in Articles 22 to 28, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, just like first-generation rights (Lauren, 2011).

2.5.1.3 Third-generation human rights

Most recently, third-generation rights have shifted focus from the person (first-generation rights) and the communities in which they live (social, economic, and cultural rights) to the natural world, such as the right to a clean and healthy environment and the right to species biodiversity (Follesdal, 2017). The 1972 Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and other pieces of broadly aspirational "soft law" all reflect third-generation human rights, which go beyond the simple civil and social rights. Also known as solidarity human rights, they are rights that try to go beyond the

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framework of individual rights to focus on collective concepts, such as community or people (Shiman, 1993). Several human rights scholars claim that a fourth generation of human rights is likely to emerge. These human rights would include those that cannot be included in the three generations of human rights stipulated by Vašák (1979). Rights concerning technological development, information and communication technologies, and cyberspace will find space in this group (Follesdal, 2017).

2.5.2 Human rights-based approach to electoral conflicts

During armed electoral conflicts and internal disturbances such as political protests, civil rioting, or state repression, people and properties are often subjected to violent attacks, obstructed access, interference with businesses, and looting. Protestors may be arrested or intimidated by state security apparatuses (Alexander, Inglehart, & Weltzel, 2012). According to Abdul-Gafaru and Crawford (2010), election violence has a direct effect on the realisation of political and civil rights because it prevents the people from holding their leaders and rulers answerable at periodic intervals. It also prevents them from replacing the government of the day if it does not perform according to the laws of the state. According to Lindberg (2006), it also interferes with the right of citizens must elect qualified representatives who will help solve their social and developmental needs. If democracy is to aid development, it must be a human-centred type of democracy in which leaders are elected through credible, violence-free elections.

Effective application of a human rights-based approach by government institutions requires adequate knowledge of the policies and rules that are good for the country, hence the appointment of state officials who are competent to promote and protect human rights. It requires skilled leaders and a professional civil service with structures and norms that promote adherence to rules and duties (Omotola, 2010). Alexander et al. (2012) averred that elections are tests of a country's ability to protect human rights. Institutions must be

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established to promote, protect, and resolve human rights issues that occur during elections.

Table 1: The Three Generations of Human Rights

TYPES OF RIGHTS	EXAMPLES	GENERATION
Civil and Political Rights (Individual Rights)	• Right to Live • Equality before the Law • Freedom of Speech • Freedom of the Press • Freedom of Religion • Right to Vote	First-generation Human Rights. Classical Freedoms (Article 2-21 of the UDHR)
Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (Individual Rights)	• Right to Work • Right to an Adequate Standard of Living • Right to Education • Right to Health • Right to Housing	Second-generation Human Rights. Basic Social Rights (Article 22-28 of the UDHR)
Collective Rights (Group Rights)	• Right to Development • Right to a Safe Environment • Right to Clean Water	Third-generation Human Rights (Solidarity Rights) (Article 1,28,55 of the UDHR)

Source: Constructed from UDHR (1948) and Vasak (1979)

Table 1 shows the three generations of human rights, examples of each and where they fit in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Apart from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), there have been other well-defined standards, principles, rights, and rules that governments commit to for conducting elections with integrity. These principles are fundamental, but all of them are dependent on the rule of law, without which standards, principles, legal frameworks, and indeed rights themselves cannot be substantiated. A human rights-based approach is therefore needed in all elections to curb abuses.

2.6 Legal Frameworks for Elections

The term "legal framework for elections" refers to a country's mix of election-related legislation and rules. The applicable articles of the constitution, the electoral law, and

other legislation affecting elections, such as a law on political parties, make up the legal foundation for elections. It also comprises any regulations that are linked to the electoral law or other related laws, as well as any applicable instructions and regulations issued by the appropriate EMB. The legal foundation for elections varies a lot from one country to the next.

To establish mechanisms for implementing the UDHR, the UN Commission on Human Rights proceeded to produce two treaties: The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Optional Protocol. Together with the Universal Declaration, these documents are universally referred to as the International Bill of Human Rights (Shiman, 1993). The ICCPR focuses on such issues as the right to life, freedom of speech, religion, and voting (Alston, 2005). Electoral violence occurring in a country is likely to directly infringe upon the rights outlined in this document. The ICESCR (1966) also focuses on such concerns as education, food, health, and shelter. Indirectly, electoral violence influences the enjoyment of these rights. Together, these covenant*s* trumpet the extension of rights to all people and prohibit discrimination. As of 2017, over 130 nations had ratified these covenants.

In addition to the covenants in the International Bill of Human Rights, the United Nations has adopted more than 20 principal treaties further elaborating on human rights. These include conventions to prevent and prohibit specific abuses like torture and genocide and to protect especially vulnerable populations like refugees (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951), women (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979), and children (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, as amended by Act 527 of 1996, is the supreme law of the Republic of Ghana. Ghana has signed or agreed to all the major regional and international commitments and instruments relating to human rights and the conduct of elections. These include:

- The Commonwealth Charter (2012)

- The AU African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (2007)

- ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1996)

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The Constitution of Ghana guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, and participation in elections. The key documents providing the legal and regulatory framework for the conduct of elections are:

- The Constitution of Ghana (1992, as amended by Act 527 of 1996)

- Presidential Elections Act (1992)

- Representation of the People Act (1992)

- Public Elections Regulations (CI 94 of 2016)

- Public Elections: Registration of Voters Regulations (CI 91 of 2016)

- The Electoral Commission Act of 1993

- The Political Parties Act of 2000

- Representation of the People (Constituencies) Instrument (2004)
- Political Parties' Code of Conduct (2012)

In Europe, the Americas, and Africa, regional documents for the protection and promotion of human rights extend the International Bill of Human Rights. For example, African states have created their own Charter of Human and People's Rights (1981), and Muslim states have created the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990). The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America since 1989 have powerfully demonstrated a surge in demand for respect for human rights. Popular movements in China, Korea, and other Asian nations reveal a similar commitment to these principles (Wanyande, 1997).

2.6.1 The 1992 republican constitution of Ghana

Ghana is a constitutional democracy with a strong presidency. Since the introduction of the Constitution of Ghana in 1992, fundamental rights, namely the human rights of every human being, have been recognised. It is the responsibility of the government of Ghana to enforce and uphold these human rights. However, to reach this point, the Republic of Ghana underwent a series of changes in human rights. The 1992 Ghana Republican Constitution draws its inspiration from the International Bill of Human Rights, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Regional Human Rights document, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. These documents provide scores of rights and responsibilities that all Ghanaians must benefit from and adhere to, which will lead to peaceful co-existence. It teaches fundamental human rights, the tenets of good citizenship, and the necessary punishment that will be meted out to those who violate them. Articles 12 to 33 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantee the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the protection of rights to life, protection of personal liberty, respect for human dignity, protection from slavery and

forced labour, equality, and freedom from discrimination. This, however, forms just the outline or summary of the fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

The Republic of Ghana's 1992 Constitution established the courts as the primary venue for filing and resolving complaints of violations of fundamental human rights. The High Court is the judicial venue of first instance for the redress of human rights issues. Appeals from decisions of the High Court lie with the Court of Appeal, and from there to the Supreme Court. Sometimes, however, actions for breaches of human rights may be brought directly to the Supreme Court. Where the applicant to the Supreme Court is dissatisfied with its decision, he or she has the option to apply for review by the same Supreme Court, which is stipulated by Article 33(1) of the Constitution.

The 1992 Constitution entrusted the burden of protecting rights to the High Courts. Article 33(1) in the 1992 Republican Constitution states, "Where a person alleges that a provision of the Constitution on fundamental human rights and freedoms has been, is being, or is likely to be contravened about him, then, without prejudice to any other action that is lawfully available, that person may apply to the High Court for redress."

The High Court may, under Clause (1) of this Article, issue directions, orders, or writs, including orders like habeas corpus, certiorari, mandamus, prohibition, and quo warrant, as it may consider appropriate for enforcing or securing the enforcement of any of the provisions of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which the person is entitled.

2.6.2 Rights of the voter

The rights of every Ghanaian citizen are entrenched in Chapter Five of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. A right is a legal claim. It refers to the things or activities to which a Ghanaian citizen is lawfully entitled, without fear of prosecution, discrimination, or any form of hindrance. Article 42 of the 1992 constitution states that:

> Every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for public elections and referenda (P.38).

This right is guaranteed by the Constitution and cannot be denied to any potentially qualified citizen. The register must be certified, published, and made available to the political parties at least 30 days before the elections. According to the electoral laws of Ghana (2008), every person who has satisfied the requirements laid down by the law is eligible to vote and be voted for. However, a voter will only be able to exercise that right if he or she has a valid voter's card, his or her name is on the Register of Voters, and he or she turns up at the polling unit between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Election Day. To be a candidate, one must fulfil the legal requirements, which vary depending on the type of elective office involved. A person must put themselves forward as a candidate for an elective office.

Voters have the right to mark their ballot papers (make their choices) in secret. The voting exercise in an election situation in most developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, is sometimes fraught with danger and bitter conflict (Agyemang, 2013). To avert assaults and open attacks, polling booths often provide privacy and security for voters. A voter has the right to attend the campaigns of political parties during the build-up to the general elections to receive information about the programmes they intend to implement if voted into office. This will enable the voter to decide which candidate to vote for (Kohn, 2008). A voter has a right to be informed about the details of the election, such as the time, date, and procedure. A voter also has the right not to be injured or beaten as he exercises his constitutional rights. Article 21 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: *Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives*.

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2.6.3 Electoral laws and punishments

It may be said that the extent to which election violations are eradicated from the electoral process is, in some ways, the success story of any democratically and constitutionally structured election. To this purpose, democratically minded entities devote money, time, and other resources to help emerging democracies strengthen their election processes, which include the removal of electoral offences as a regular feature.

The election rules in Ghana provide that any suspect who is captured and found guilty by a competent court of law may be punished, imprisoned for a period, or both. A person may also be barred from voting in public elections or holding public office for a period if they commit certain crimes. When a candidate's agent commits an electoral infraction and it can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the agency did so without the candidate's knowledge or approval, the candidate is held liable. Electoral offences are not limited to the agent or candidate; they can be committed by anybody at any time. Most serious election-related offences are referred to the High Court for resolution. According to the Electoral Laws of Ghana (2008), when an offender is found guilty of an electoral offence, the following are some of the penalties that can be imposed.

A person found guilty of giving false information to obtain registration as a voter faces a fine of not more than 100 Ghana Cedis or a sentence of not more than two years in prison, or both if convicted. For five years after his sentence expires, he will be prohibited from registering to vote or voting in an election (Electoral Laws of Ghana, 2008). ·

A person found guilty of forgery, defacing, or destroying a nomination paper or any literature relating to the electoral process is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 100 Ghana Cedis or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both. Anyone found guilty of illegally possessing, printing, or attempting to print electoral literature or

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material faces a fine of 100 Ghana cedis, imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both (Electoral Laws of Ghana, 2008). ·

A person convicted of willful multiple voting or impersonation faces a fine of not more than 100 Ghana Cedis or a sentence of not more than two years in prison, or both. Interfering with a ballot box, ballot paper, or other sensitive election material without authorization is punishable by a fine of 100 Ghana Cedis or a year in prison. Anyone found guilty of bribery, intimidation, threats, or undue influence will be fined 100 Ghana Cedis (Ghc) or sentenced to a year in prison. A person found guilty of obstructing or interfering with a voter's right to vote faces a fine of 100 Ghana Cedis or a year in prison. A person convicted of intentionally disclosing information about a candidate (Electoral Laws of Ghana, 2008). A person found guilty of defacing, mutilating, or removing any notice that is exhibited under lawful authority by the Electoral Commission is liable to a fine not exceeding 25 Ghana Cedis or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both. Any person found guilty of publishing or causing to be published false words written or spoken by song or statement pays a fine of Ghc 100 or is sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years, or both. Any person found guilty of having organised a group of people to use violence, intimidation, abusive and insulting behaviour, or language against political opponents pays a fine of Ghc 100 or is imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years or both (Electoral Laws of Ghana, 2008).

2.6.4 Violence and electoral malpractices in Ghana's elections

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2019), corrupt electoral practices are not limited to bribery or voter intimidation. They include broadcasting scandalous rumours and false campaign propaganda, interfering with election machinery by filling ballot boxes with fraudulent ballot papers, counting or reporting the vote dishonestly, and disregarding electoral results by incumbent officeholders, for instance, by mobilising the military or

party vigilantes to thwart an election loss (Fischer, 2002; Bob-Milliar, 2012a). These acts led to violence involving supporters of both the ruling party and the opposition, in which several acts of human rights violations were recorded (Austin & Bagwell, 2021).

2.6.7 Elections in Ghana in 2016 and 2020

The 2016 election was characterised by provocative insults and verbal attacks on political figures from the opposite camps by the two main political parties (NPP and NDC). According to Ansah (2016), the activities of staunch supporters of political parties, who are referred to as "foot soldiers," created violence during the 2016 elections in Ghana. Party foot soldiers' activities include using illegal means to seize income-generating community facilities such as toll booths, municipal parking lots, and pay toilets from appointed custodians, who are identified as supporters of the party that lost the elections.

Olusola (2018) also indicated that there were a series of accusations and counteraccusations by political parties concerning cheating and buying of votes before, during, and after the 2016 general elections in Ghana. In highlighting some of the key challenges of the 2016 Ghana elections in their report for the National Peace Council, Kendie and Osei-Kufour (2016) also reported cases involving violent demonstrations, burning of properties, and attempted snatching of ballot boxes in some polling areas. Campaigning in 2016 featured heated political rhetoric and some isolated incidents of severe political violence. Three South African nationals were arrested and deported before the 2016 elections by the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI); they charged that they had been involved in using weapons to train personal bodyguards for the flag bearer and running mate of the opposition party (CDD, 2017). The BNI and the police suspected that they were not only training bodyguards but also men who could be used for other purposes.

After the 2016 elections, there was a wave of intimidation perpetrated by the winning party's supporters. They claim that they faced a similar situation when the NDC won power in 2008. Right after the inauguration of the new president, there were several reported cases of attacks in some areas against supporters of the newly formed opposition NDC. Among these were some youths of the governing NPP who were on a rampage, locking and completely taking over some state institutions illegally in Tamale, Kumasi, and Accra (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016). The "invincible forces", as they were called, claimed that they were exacting vengeance for what they went through at the hands of the NDC when it won power in the 2008 elections (WANEP, 2016). They besieged offices like the passport office in Accra, the National Health Insurance offices, the Rattray Park in Kumasi, the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), and the National Disaster Management Office (NADMO) in *Sagnerigu* district.

These by-force office takeovers led to a series of violent clashes and tensions around the country between supporters of the ruling NPP and the opposition NDC. In *Ejura,* in the Ashanti region, for instance, at least four people were shot following a clash between members of the NPP and the opposition NDC over school feeding in one of the public schools; also, in *Begoro*, in the *Fanteakwa* district of the Eastern region, tension erupted between the two groups of supporters in the wake of the sacking of all municipal, metropolitan, and district chief executives by the new President; also, at *Agbogbloshie* in Accra, the timely intervention by the Ghana Armed Forces prevented what could have been a bloody confrontation between supporters of the NPP and NDC (CODEO, 2016).

The violent aspects of Ghanaian politics remained unchanged in the December 2020 elections. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the 2020 elections and the potential to raise the pandemic's risk to voters, some violent occurrences occurred, casting doubt on the country's much-touted democratic and peaceful election status. Before the

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election, the political environment was filled not only with insults, provocative utterances, and verbal attacks on political figures, as seen in previous elections but also with physical confrontations and intimidation between the ruling NDC and the opposition NPP, posing a threat to the country's peace and stability. Notably among these events is the killing of a top NPP politician who also happens to be a member of parliament for the *Mfantsiman* constituency in the Central Region, Ekow Quansah Hayford, on his return from a political campaign in his constituency in October 2020. Electoral officers were attacked at some polling centres during voter registration in 2020. The result of such an unfortunate scenario could be a temporary halt to the registration or voting process, with applicants abandoning the centre. Any act of omission and/or commission on the part of an individual or a group of people, whether they belong to a political party or not, that may result in acts such as those described above violates the law, and they are deemed to have committed an electoral offence (Electoral Laws of Ghana, 2008).

Five people were killed in election-related violence in the 2020 general elections (CDD, 2021). Many violent incidents were recorded that might have affected the integrity of the election. It is on record that the Electoral Commission, after the declaration of presidential results, changed the results seven times on its official website to see Akufo-Addo as president-elect. However, the EC maintained that the change in the figures did not affect the outcome of the elections. The 1992 constitution of Ghana, like those of other African nations, has provisions aimed at achieving democracy. The Constitution outlines the requirements for citizens to participate in elections as well as the structures of an integrated democratic state. The establishment, membership, qualifications, terms of office, conditions of service, duties, and independence of the electoral commission, which oversees the day-to-day operations of the Electoral Administration, are outlined in Articles 43 to 46 of the 1992 Constitution. Ghana held eight significant consecutive

elections from 1992 to 2020, which were praised by democratic countries, organisations, and individuals. These elections have been praised as being free and fair.

2.6.7.1 Summary of incidents in the 2020 general election

According to WANEP and NPC (2020), generally, the 2020 elections were conducted in a conducive environment except for a few incidents, some of which are listed below:

1. It was recorded at Alhaji Salam Grinding Mill in the Bawku Central constituency, Upper East Region, and DA JHS *Twimine*, Awutu Senya West constituency in the Central Region, that there were improper detachments of some presidential ballot papers, which led to the exclusion of one of the candidates' names and party logos. Both EC officials involved in these incidents were identified and detained by the police.

2. There were recorded cases of some verification machine failures in polling stations, such as the Methodist Primary 1A Polling Station in the Shama *Abuesi* constituency.

3. In the *Suburi* Naa Palace polling station in the *Bimbilla* constituency of the Northern Region, the presiding officer was unable to account for a ballot paper. This led to the refusal of the political parties' agents to endorse the result.

4. In some areas, voting was stopped temporarily due to rainfall. The affected areas included *Adidome* Farm Institute in the Volta region, *Dadeaso* in the Western region, and some parts of the Eastern and Ashanti regions. However, upon consultation among party agents and EC officials, alternative venues were located for voting and counting to resume.

5. There were reported cases of power outages at some polling stations, which affected the counting process. Some of these areas included *Sefwi Juaboso* in the

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Western North Region, Collation Centres in the *Domeabra*, and *Ayawaso* East Constituencies in the Greater Accra Region.

6. In *Obrakyere,* in the *Awutu Senya* West constituency, two people attempted to snatch a ballot box during the counting. The people involved were arrested and detained by the police.

7. There were reported gunshots outside a polling station at *Kasoa* in the Awutu Senya West Constituency, injuring a journalist and a polling agent.

8. In the *Odododiodio* Constituency, one person was arrested for attempting to vote twice.

9. In the *Asokore* Mampong District of the *Asawase* Constituency, the police arrested and seized the mobile phone of a voter for taking pictures of his or her thumb-printed ballot paper.

10. There were incidents of physical and verbal abuse among voters in queues and around polling stations. For example, in Sibi North *Jato Kparekpare* of the Nkwanta North District, there was a recorded incident of physical violence and verbal exchanges between voters in the queue, which temporarily disrupted the voting process.

11. In the D.A. Junior High School (JHS) *Kyekyewere* and *Dadwen Kyekyewere* in *Adanse* North of the Fomena Constituency of the Ashanti Region, five strong muscular men, also known as "macho men," armed with knives disrupted voting proceedings for about 30 minutes. The military intervened and arrested the perpetrators.

12. Security officials arrested a lady at the Forestry 'A' polling station in *Juaboso,* Western North Region, for impersonating an agent of another political party.

2.6.8 Enforcing electoral laws and regulations

Enforcing electoral laws and regulations can reduce or place legal limitations on the use of violence in elections. It can also regulate the mandate and powers of election management bodies and who may stand in elections. Electoral laws that are not perceived to be fair by most voters, such as laws designed to the advantage of the political party in power, can undermine the credibility of the entire procedure (UNDP, 2011).

Electoral laws must lay down all the rules and regulations that must be followed by all political parties and can also stipulate an electoral code of conduct for individuals. These laws can include agreements on the avoidance of insults, hate speech, and other deeds that may call for violence and difference. The laws must be enforced against the latter, and there must be appropriate penalties for lawbreakers. Without satisfactory measures or enforceable sanctions against those who break election laws, a culture of impunity is likely to set in, which will undermine the best efforts to mitigate violence.

Another way to prevent electoral conflict is to establish an effective early response system. Early warning seeks to predict the eruption of violent conflict or to sense the early escalation of electoral violence, to avert the outbreak or the further intensification of violence to save lives and property (Kumar & Kuroda, 1992). Efforts have already been made by several stakeholders in the field of elections to create an early warning system for conflict situations in Africa. Early warning, in this context, consists of an information system that can provide information and indicators that will be used to predict the advent of conflict.

WANEP (2000) defines early warning as information that can provide a timely alert to stakeholders about a potential conflict. According to Nhara (1996), an early warning system can also provide a beneficial management tool and offer an ongoing learning

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process for all those who are to utilise such a system. The early warning system, when well established, can help security officers get information on possible occurrences of electoral conflict before it starts so that preventive measures can be put in place to avert it. According to Kumar and Kuroda (1992), the reason for such a system will also be to collect information and data on the religious, economic, social, political, cultural, educational, resource use, and military situations as they are presented in AU member states.

2.7 Causes of Electoral Conflicts

In the long run, democracy is often regarded as the answer to political violence and civil unrest. However, according to Hoglund (2009), democracy can generate violent conflicts. Electoral conflict is one of the conflicts generated by democracy. Electoral violence does not occur in all societies, and even in those that do, it varies in its form and intensity.

According to Young (2016), there is a difference between a trigger and a cause of a violent conflict. A trigger starts the conflict that is primed to happen, while a cause is the reason for the violence or conflict. A trigger is, therefore, the immediate cause of an action, and a cause is the remote or fundamental cause of action. This part explains several triggers and sources of electoral violence.

2.7.1 "Winner-takes-all" politics

Many peace practitioners and civil society organisations have expressed concern about what has been described as "winner-takes-all" politics (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997). Cretz (2015) told countries that practice "winner-takes-all" to reconsider the system which, to him, has marred most West African countries' democratic credentials. Dennis (2007:14) asserted that:

Winner-Takes-All" (WTA) politics, an extremely divisive and partisan sub-culture that excludes all other Ghanaians who are not part of the ruling party from national governance and decision-making in a manner that polarizes the nation and dissipates the much-needed talents and brains for national development. One palpable feature and result of WTA politics is the feeling of marginalization and exclusion from the governance process by those who are not part of the ruling party or government.

According to Dennis (2007), "winner-takes-all" is when there is a capture and control of all levels of political power in a country upon winning a general election. It also means controlling all public offices and resources by the winner of a national or presidential election (Nwolise, 2007). It is characterised by the complete sidelining of all opposition political parties from the governance of the country (Omotola, 2010; Hoglund, 2009; Bekoe, 2012). Such a practice in politics has been identified by political scientists as one of the main factors responsible for the growing polarisation of important national issues that require consensus (Fischer, 2002; Bekoe, 2010).

The US ambassador, Cretz (2015), averred that the system of winner-take-all, if not reformed or changed, will continue to produce high stakes in general elections, which could lead to electoral violence. This could lead to heightened tensions in a country already at risk of national insecurity. People feel deprived of their basic needs once they lose an election and will therefore take all measures to win it. Whenever a country operates under the winner-takes-all system, the only motivation of political opposition parties is to get power at all costs and control the affairs of the country. The incumbent political party's motivation will also be to hold on to power at all costs (Douglas & Helmi, 2003). This is not healthy for a stable and continuing democracy. The system leads to personal attacks waged on political opponents during the primaries of major parties.

According to Orji (2013), while competition for positions within and among political parties is to be expected and encouraged, it is unacceptable when such competition results in violent attacks, injuries, and sometimes the loss of lives. According to Bekoe (2010), the high incidence of political violence, which is increasingly becoming a common feature of African democracy, is due to the general poor socio-economic conditions in the country, which make losing elections a major problem.

Considering the widespread poverty in Africa, mainly due to the high incidence of unemployment, politics has become a means of improving one's socio-economic fortunes. This makes political parties use all means possible to win elections (Gyampo, 2012). Therefore, when it is perceived that there is theft or damage to electoral materials such as ballot boxes and papers by partisan security agents, it easily triggers electoral violence. According to Bob-Milliar (2012a), electoral violence is therefore more likely to arise when an election is seen as having the potential to bring about significant shifts in the balance of power.
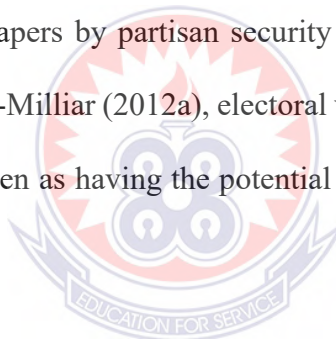
2.7.2 Culture of Impunity

The term "culture of impunity" is used to describe the situation in which a social group has the mentality that they can do whatever they want and still be exempt from punishment. In other words, it is when people misbehave and think they will not be held accountable for their misdeeds or actions (Solita, 2012). This is another cause of electoral violence in most countries (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). The main reasons for the existence of a culture of impunity in a society are the weak state institutions, the politicised judicial system, and the security forces. If perpetrators of electoral violence are sure they will go unpunished, they are likely to repeat the act or intensify it, and others who were previously afraid to commit such acts will join (Nnamdi-Okafor, 2015).

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The ineptitude and malfunctioning of the security forces and the judiciary in a country give people the impetus to perpetuate electoral violence (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). The ineffectiveness of state institutions, especially the judiciary and police service, is a key factor that encourages electoral violence in a country (Aning & Lartey, 2009). Apart from that, the free movement of electoral violence perpetrators in society, their remaining in influential economic positions, and the political promotion or positions they receive as rewards make the act of electoral violence attractive. The ability of those who engage in electoral violence to protect themselves from prosecution and punishment produces not only an incessant loss of trust in the justice system for survivors but also a continuing psychological threat to future elections (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2007).

Pre-election violence is frequently connected with intimidation, destruction of political symbols, and killings. In most cases, the police service fails to get to the cause of these acts and punish the offenders to serve as deterrents to future miscreants. This failure on the part of the security services creates a culture of impunity and serves as a motivation for the recurrence of misconduct and violence in our society (Aning & Lartey, 2009). Using violence in electoral campaigns is at least as old as democracy itself (Holland, 2003). However, such violence is not being met with strong criminal codes in Africa (Frimpong, 2012). Weak criminal codes create a culture of impunity and make violent acts very attractive. In a state like this, burning down public or political opponents' houses, cars, and posters can easily trigger electoral violence.

2.7.3 Rigging

Ibrahim and Aturu (2009:12) appropriately defined election rigging as "physical illegalities committed with a corrupt, fraudulent, or sinister intention to influence an election in favour of a candidate by means such as illegal voting, intimidation, bribery, treating undue influence and other acts of coercion applied to voters, alteration of results,

and fraudulent declaration of a losing candidate as the winner (without altering the recorded results)." According to UNOWAS (2017), rigging is a criminal act that consists of subverting an entire electoral process through massive, organised fraud with the active participation of electoral body officials.

For Höglund (2009), the objective of electoral rigging is to frustrate the democratic ambitions of electorates or citizens who have voted or would have voted into office someone other than the rigged individual. Ibrahim and Aturu (2009) identified three phases (forms) of election rigging: pre-election, election day, and post-election rigging. Pre-election rigging involves manipulation of the entire electoral system. Another form of pre-election rigging is the manipulation of the voter register. In Ghana, we have a history of the illegal acquisition of voter's cards by some parties, and its purpose is to create conditions for the over-registration of certain persons and groups and simultaneous under-registration of other persons and groups, while favoured groups have their votes multiplied and others are disenfranchised (Amaramiro, Nwocha, & Onyebuchi, 2019). This involves buying over electoral officials and/or getting party supporters appointed as electoral officers so that they will tamper with the electoral process to produce a desired outcome. Again, nominations during party primaries and gerrymandering are other forms. Interestingly, many candidates are denied the right to contest elections because they are prevented from contesting for their party's nomination.

2.7.4 Political vigilantism

To be vigilant is simply to be watchful and awake. Being watchful and fully awake to ensure nothing untoward happens has nothing to do with violence. However, in many developing democracies, vigilantism is commonly summarised as "taking the law into one's own hands" (Gyampo, Graham, & Bossman, 2017.p2). The use of strong-built men and vigilante groups by politicians to protect ballot boxes and party candidates has

become an evolving phenomenon in the electoral system of Africa. They are used by politicians as bodyguards for party candidates (Nnamdi Okafor, 2015). These strongly built men are sometimes given the role of threatening electorates, especially in areas considered fiefdoms or strongholds of opposing parties, and they are also used to cause confusion at polling stations and disrupt the electoral process where a politician perceives defeat (Gyampo et al., 2017). Political party foot soldiers' engagement is based on the notion of reciprocity. The foot soldiers perceived politicians and public officeholders as rich, powerful, and in control of state resources from which they could benefit if the party won elections (Daddieh, 2001).

Foot soldiers and other vigilante groups expect that political power, once achieved, must be convertible into tangible goods. For example, when a group of NPP supporters and foot soldiers felt neglected when their party was in power in 2008, they organised a press conference to register their grievances with the Kufuor administration (Bob-Milliar, 2012a). A quote, as cited in Bob-Millar (2014), from the press conference organised by the NPP supporters, is important in this section because it captures the political and socio-cultural intentions for party foot soldiers' activism:

> After the party has stayed in power for almost seven years, the foot soldiers have been forgotten, and none of the foot soldiers have seen a change in their lifestyles. Right now, there are troubles in our marriage homes where some of us cannot pay our children's school fees, and even most of us are thrown out of our homes because we cannot face our responsibilities. We want the NPP government to come out and address these issues; other than that, we will not involve ourselves in any critical party activities within the constituency (NPP Foot Soldiers' Conference, cited in Bob-Milliar, 2014:9).

It is significant to note that the activities of political vigilante groups have been displayed in all eight elections and three transitions that Ghana's fourth republican democratic

dispensation has undergone. Both the NPP and the NDC have their vigilante groups in all 16 regions of Ghana, sometimes with different names. The two (2) major political parties in Ghana, the NPP, and the NDC, have trained well-built men who help them before, during, and after elections in Ghana. The NPP has the "Delta Force" "Invincible Forces" and the "Bolga Bull Dogs" vigilante groups, while the NDC has the "Azorka Boys" (Gyampo et al., 2017).

According to Bob-Milliar (2014), these vigilante groups commit illegal acts such as seizing state property, assaulting opponents, forcibly evicting state officials from their apartments, and other human rights violations. This they do to secure an undue advantage over their opponents.

2.7.5 Economic hardship

Rich nations are expected to be more violent than poor ones because the rich ones have more to fight over. However, the econometric evidence suggests the opposite (Collier & Vincent, 2012). Collier's research shows that wealth reduces the likelihood of electoral conflict and civil war (Collier, 2000a). Government policies that induce conflict may be those that include deliberate decisions to weaken state institutions that fight wrongdoing so that leaders can easily enrich themselves through corruption (Humphreys, 2003).

The World Bank data suggests that a country that is poor with a per-capita income of just $250 or below has a high predicted probability of civil war occurring at 15%, even if it is considered an "average" country (Collier, 2000a). Less developed nations lack basic amenities such as roads, water, and electricity, which make life horrendous and increase the chances of civil strife during elections. According to the World Bank (2017-online):

> The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Ghana was worth 42.69 billion
> US dollars in 2016. Ghana's GDP represents 0.07 per cent of the world
> economy. GDP in Ghana averaged 10.21 USD billion from 1960 until

2016, reaching an all-time high of 47.81 USD billion in 2013 and a record low of 1.22 USD billion in 1960.

According to the World Bank data, Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita income for 2016 was $1,340.4, Cote d'Ivoire had $1,314.7 and Senegal had $913.0. This shows that Ghana and many African countries are yet to reach the per capita income of $5000 or more to have less than a 1% chance of experiencing civil struggles, which could be triggered by-elections. The figure below shows the relationship between a country's per capita income (GDP) and the possibility of violent conflict erupting.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000b) also suggested that countries whose source of wealth largely depends on the exportation of natural resources such as agricultural products are more prone to civil violence than those that are industrialised. This means the probability of electoral violence occurring in poor and developing countries is higher than in rich and developed countries.
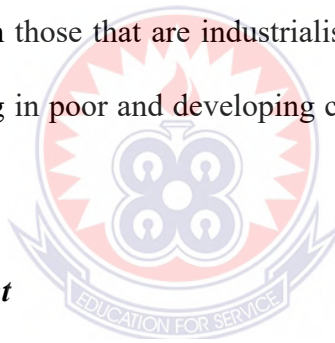
2.7.6 Youth unemployment

The term "youth" refers to young people, especially young men, or boys. It refers to young people collectively. Freshness and vitality are common characteristics of young people. (Urdal, 2004). Youth unemployment is linked to electoral violence (Cramer, 2010). There is a very prevalent notion that youth unemployment and underemployment are among the crucial sources of insurgency or civil war (Urdal, 2004).

Electoral violence is usually carried out by unemployed youth. The existence of many unemployed youths in a country, especially young males, increases the possibility of electoral violence (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The conception by scholars that unemployment and underemployment are sources of violence and violent conflict is generally recognised in international development (Collier, 2000a). Every rational being

seeks to fulfil this security need, and any attempt to withdraw it is met with some resistance. Unemployment can trigger participation in insurgencies, drive people to radicalism, and stimulate people to join violent gangs, which is one of the reasons behind violence. The assumption that there are intentional calculations of the benefits to be received before a person joins an armed group is a fact. Youth who are gainfully employed will hardly engage in violence, especially electoral violence (Gyampo, 2012). Unemployed people in a society, especially young men, and women, are those most likely to be involved voluntarily in violence (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

According to Akande and Okuwa (2009), the problem is seen in the informal sector of the economy as underemployment, when workers do not use all their skills, education, or availability to work because of limited employment opportunities. This leads to declining real wages, reduced incentives in all sectors of the nation's economy, and a reduction in the quality of education and training given to the citizens in our educational institutions across the country. Unemployment raises the crime rate in a country and creates several attendant psychological, social, economic, political, and security challenges.

2.7.7 Weak State Institutions

According to Frimpong (2012), ineffective governance, weak state institutions, and corruption can initiate electoral violence in a country. Using a public office for private gain is corruption. Corruption covers a range of acts, including embezzlement, bribery, extortion, illicit influence, and asset stripping. Corruption can accrue to groups or individuals (Rose-Ackerman, 2001). For Transparency International (2016), a corrupt act is the abuse of public office or an entrusted power for personal or private gain. Extreme poverty and perverse inequality can be linked to countries with high levels of corruption. Corruption is known to be one of the most destructive acts that serve as an impediment to socio-economic development. Corrupt individuals take away resources meant for

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national development and deprive a large population of their share of the national cake (Afesorgbor, 2016). This leads to resentment among the population, and one of the ways they vent their anger is by engaging in electoral violence.

According to Carola (2016), good governance occurs when a government is committed to making decisions that are inclusive, effective, and transparent. It is a commitment on the part of the government to do the best with the available resources within the context of the challenges. Yap-Kioe (2009) outlined eight characteristics of good governance: it is participatory, transparent, responsive, consensus-oriented, accountable, effective, efficient, equitable, and follows the rule of law. According to Hegre (2015), good governance ensures that corruption is minimised, the opinions of minorities are considered, and the voices of the vulnerable and marginalised in society are heard in decision-making. It is also reactive to the present and future needs of the people. Bad governance lacks all these qualities, and it is regarded as one of the root causes of all skirmishes within society, including electoral conflicts.

Structural violence could occur if the people view government institutions and individuals in government as corrupt (Hoglund, 2009; Jama, 2012). Anytime the populace is preoccupied with this notion, they become desperate to use any means to retaliate and punish the political authorities by making them unpopular. One of these acts is electoral violence.

People see an election period as a moment to vent their grievances about corrupt practices going on in a country. This is because it is mostly during electioneering periods that those politicians come to the people to solicit votes. The claim that many politicians use embezzled public revenues to finance political violence to perpetuate their ambitions persists in the media, and many Ghanaians believe it is true (Frempong, 2005).

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Strong state institutions are very important elements that can minimise electoral violence. Strong institutions aid good governance. Institutions that have prime responsibility for maintaining violent-free elections include the Electoral Commission, the Ghana Police Service, and the National Peace Council (Bekoe, 2012; Bob-Milliar, 2014; Gyampo, 2012). When such state institutions are not sufficiently resourced, they become weak and ineffective in providing adequate security during elections (CADA, 2012). This condition gives rise to politicians and other people resorting to the use of strong-built men, vigilante groups, and other unprofessional and illegal methods to protect their political candidates and votes, which, in most situations, leads to electoral violence. Sometimes, politicians do not trust the state security system because they cannot act professionally in the performance of their duties during elections. They sometimes allow themselves to be manipulated by any group of people in authority, especially politicians (Gyampo, 2012). The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) is the head of the Ghana Police Service. The IGP is appointed by the President of Ghana by the Constitution (The Republican Constitution of Ghana, 1992). This could affect his neutrality.

2.7.8 Sensational media reporting

The role of the media in promoting violence, especially in serving as a platform for expression for political parties, governments, and voters, has been discussed across the case studies (Von, 2019). The media has been one of the main sources of electoral violence recently, playing a dramatically negative role in the electoral process in some countries (Osborn, 2008). The unprofessional conduct of journalists was cited by Aondowase (2015) as a factor that causes tensions during electioneering periods. On the other hand, some of the challenges faced by the media during the post-election period in Kenya that inflamed passion have been blamed on poor and unprofessional journalism (Heger, 2015). Many electoral observers pointed to the negative role the media played

during the 2007 Kenyan general election, which led to the outbreak of violence, resulting in the killing of 1,133 people, and making more than 600,000 Kenyans refugees (Anderson & Lochery, 2008).

Post-electoral conflict analysts described radio presenters as being unable to control discussion and calm tempers during studio discussions and phone-in programmes, mostly on the radio and TV stations that are affiliated with the party (Paris, 2004). According to Heger (2015), the poor salary of journalists is an aspect that facilitates corruption and manipulation of programmes to the advantage of those who can pay bribes. Poor remuneration and work conditions for journalists across countries have made it difficult for radio and TV station managers to ensure a free and fair broadcast of political parties' activities. Most political parties are opening radio and television stations as well as online communication channels for propaganda purposes (Arthur, 2010).

Dennis (2007) noted that during the 2006 general election in Uganda, the uncontrolled opportunities and platforms provided by newspapers, TV, and radio stations for parties and their supporters to express their views before, during, and after the election led to a violent conflict. This shows that the media can be either a tool of violence or peace during elections, depending on how it is used.

When the electoral atmosphere becomes very sensitive and emotional, voters sometimes lose their logical reasoning and believe and act on any sensational coverage by the media. The media need to exhibit a very high sense of professionalism to make a significant contribution to the sustenance of democracy in Ghana (CADA, 2012).

2.7.9 Proliferation of small arms

The rapid spread of small arms is one of the causes of the rapid spread of violence. Before the 2016 elections in Ghana, several arms were seized by the police from citizens who

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were party faithful. Several arms were seized in areas such as Kumasi, northern Ghana, and areas around the Volta region. In the same vein, several arms and security uniforms, notably those for the police and the army, were seized in the country during the 2016 elections (Small Arms Commission, 2016). Some well-built youths were arrested on the day of the 2016 elections for carrying arms and improperly dressing in security apparel. Small arms proliferation contributes significantly to human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law and standards in areas of armed conflict (Annan, 2016). According to the Small Arms Commission (2016.p10):

> Efforts to enhance public security by collecting and securely disposing of small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition have a long history but have gained increased prominence over the past two decades in the context of broader programmes for the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-combatants, security sector reforms, and armed violence prevention and reduction. The illicit trade in arms and light weapons has not only contributed to the proliferation of conflicts in most countries, including Ghana, but also to the illicit transfer, storage, diversion, and misuse of small arms and ammunition, which have been major contributors to pre- and post-election related armed conflicts in most parts of the world.

According to Human Rights Watch (2010), countries that have experienced war typically have widespread access to illicit firearms, which contributes to high rates of criminality and makes a peaceful transition to democracy more difficult. In such countries, the probability of electoral violence is very high because people have easy access to weapons. The ready accessibility of weapons in a country erodes prospects for development, weakens security, contributes to social fragmentation, and makes the recourse to violent conflict more likely and more destructive (Aning, 2001). Anytime elections are held when the conflicting parties have not properly disarmed, there is the possibility that the election

will generate violence (Arap Moi, 2000). Moi wrote that the unrestrained flow of small arms in a region undermines peace and increases violence and criminality. According to Hoetu and Applerh (2012:3):

> Supporters of political parties tend to arm themselves against one another as a response to the suspicion that their opponents may be armed and violent. Small arms are used to disrupt political party activities such as electioneering campaigns. This development causes some candidates to withdraw from the race or call for the postponement or even cancellation of elections.

The existence of weapons and easy access to them makes it easier for a return to hostility if major parties are not satisfied with the results of the elections. According to Fischer (2012), a country with a political system that is not well established and where the political parties advocate radicalism and extremism may have a greater propensity for violence during elections. The electoral conflict in Kenya in 2007 can be largely attributed to the availability of weapons in the country (Elischer, 2013; Mbaku, 2018). Before the Kenyan electoral conflict, East Africa was engulfed in weapons, mainly small arms, and many of those weapons spilt over into all countries in the region. In the 1970s, countries closest to Kenya to the north, namely Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda, experienced protracted periods of civil unrest and internal conflict. This led to a spillover of weapons into Kenya (Kimani, 2008; Barkan, 2013). Physical assault and assassination of individuals and groups before, during, and after elections can easily trigger electoral conflict when there is a spillover of weapons.

2.8 Impacts of Electoral Violence on Human Rights

Threats to national security, economic decay, human rights violations, terrorism, damaged international reputation, international sanctions, political disruptions, and military takeover of the country could be the implications of electoral fraud and violence

(Onwe; Nwogbaga; & Ogbu, 2015). The following explains the implications of electoral violence for a country that has experienced it.

2.8.1 Human security threats

Electoral violence negatively affects human security as it often leads to the loss of lives and properties (Frimpong, 2012). The Committee on Human Security (CHS), in its concluding report, defines human security as:

> Protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood, and dignity (CHS: 2003:4).

One major function of a modern state is to protect its territorial integrity, citizens' lives and properties, and the human rights of its citizens. The promotion and protection of human security have become central to the new development paradigm. This is because the manufacturing of weapons and ammunition does not bring peace, security, and political stability. Exterminating diseases, poverty, and hunger through sustainable development programmes is the solution to enduring national security (Jama, 2012). However, electoral violence, if not well managed, can lead to poverty, hunger, and the spread of diseases. The adoption and deployment of state security apparatuses of coercive force to deal with crises such as electoral violence on a national or international scale is important for any country seeking to promote human security (Muller, 2011).

Conversely, these security forces sometimes abuse the rights of citizens during this exercise. Human security, which involves protecting the citizenry from unemployment,

hunger, natural disasters, poverty, disease, arbitral killings, and peace, is compromised whenever there are electoral conflicts (Rutten & Owuor, 2009).

In the view of the Human Security Unit of the United Nations (2010), human security is not a single manifestation of a human problem, but one founded on a multi-sectoral understanding of insecurities. Human security, therefore, involves intimidation and embraces causes of insecurity concerning issues that are personal, environmental, economic, food, health, political, and community security.

During electoral conflicts, thousands of people may be killed or maimed; others may be destroyed, including civilian properties worth billions of dollars, during electoral violence (Mueller, 2008). Political, social, and economic insecurity have attendant costs of ensuring security and repairing damaged infrastructure after the violence.

These resources could have been put to alternative uses to better human and social development. Human Rights Watch (2009) reported that Kenya's post-election violence took place in January and February of 2008. The fighting resulted in 1,133 casualties, at least 350,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), approximately 2,000 refugees, significant, but unknown, numbers of sexual violence victims, and the destruction of 117,216 private properties and 491 government-owned properties, including offices, vehicles, health centres, and schools.

2.8.2 Impact on the right to education

According to Kagwiria-Kirimi and Njuguna (2014), thousands of Kenyan students did not start school at the start of the academic year in 2008. This was due to the 27th of December 2007 poll results, which plunged some parts of the country into violence. This disrupted the academic calendar of the country's educational system. Again, due to the massive displacement, many civilians were not living in their homes to access education.

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There was an evacuation of teachers and other educational staff all over the affected areas to safer areas. It led the schools in the affected areas to experience a shortage of teachers, which affected the academic performance of schoolchildren. According to UNICEF Kenya (2008), insecurity and distance from school were the two major factors, that were cited by both teachers and pupils as preventing them from participating in school during and after the electoral violence.

School buildings in countries experiencing electoral violence become one of the key targets because people seek refuge in them. Schools were key targets for hooligans and protesters during the electoral conflict in Kenya. Kagwiria-Kirimi and Njuguna (2014:14) explained further that:

> The bitter youths chanted slogans such as "No Raila, no school" and, in some cases, stormed schools and threw children and teachers out. The school represents the government to these youths and is therefore the easiest and nearest target for them.

UNICEF Kenya (2008) researched to assess the impact of electoral violence on children's education in the region. They found that the electoral violence displaced an estimated 600,000 Kenyans. Among these displaced people were schoolchildren and teachers. This means that schooling came to a halt, which harmed education (Muller, 2011). Electoral violence affects children's education in many of the same ways that it affects adults who are in school.

2.8.3 Refugee problem and displacement of persons

Electoral violence can cause internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugee problems. To the UNHCR (2017:9) an IDP is:

> An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has been forced to flee his or her home for the same reason as a refugee but remains in his or her own country and has not crossed an international border. Unlike refugees, IDPs are

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not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid. As the nature of war has changed in the last few decades, with more and more internal conflicts replacing wars among countries, the number of IDPs has increased significantly.

UNHCR (2017:9) defines a refugee as:

Someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal, and religious violence are the leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

A record of 65.6 million people around the world have involuntarily left their homes. These include nearly 22.5 million refugees who were forced out of their homes due to civil war (International Rescue Committee, 2004). The total number of persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR in Ghana at the end of June 2016 was 18,457. This was made up of 2,048 asylum-seekers and 16,409 refugees from over 25 different countries. Most refugees in Ghana come from Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Sudan, and the Central African Republic, and most of them were displaced by electoral and ethnic conflicts (UNHCR, 2017). People are forced during an electoral conflict to move into internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugee camps where they may live for years in extremely difficult circumstances, waiting for normal life to resume, if even that will ever happen (Africa Watch, 1993). The Mali political conflict in 2012 displaced thousands of people within Mali (IDPs) and bordering countries such as Ghana. Due to the political violence, the United Nations estimated that almost 75,000 Malians were internally displaced and 100,000 were refugees as of June 30, 2013 (Mwangi, 2014). Life in the refugee camps negatively affects human development. Women and children are mostly the heads of families as the men are either dead or busy waging war. To the United Nations (2003:4):

> Armed conflicts have also created large numbers of households headed by women and/or children, who were subjected to the crimes of sexual violence that prevailed throughout the brutal national wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and, more recently, in Côte d'Ivoire.

According to O'Donnell (2006), refugees and internally displaced children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violence, child abuse, recruitment, disease, malnutrition, forced labour, and death. Children from refugee camps are recruited and used as child soldiers on a massive scale. These children are denied access to education and are therefore at a higher risk of dangerous jobs, deviant behaviour, recruitment into vigilante or militant groups, and early child marriage and teen pregnancy for girls.

2.8.4 Physical abuse

Electoral conflict leads to human rights violations. Human rights are often infringed upon the most during armed conflicts (Leoschut, 2008). Hence, over the years, experts in human rights promotion and protection have devoted much of their attention to the formulation of instruments and laws aimed at lessening human suffering during war and violent conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Therefore, three areas of modern international law try to offer protection to victims of violent conflicts and war. These laws are human rights law, humanitarian law, and refugee law. During the political conflict in Mali in 2012, human rights infringements and war crimes were reported throughout the country.

The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (Mouvement National de Libération del'Azawad (MNLA), led by Mahmoud Ag Ghali, committed widespread sexual violence and looting (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Amnesty International, 2013). Malian soldiers also took part in violent crimes, including 26 extrajudicial killings, 11

disappearances, and 70 cases of torture of alleged Islamist rebels. Islamist fighters were reported to have recruited children as soldiers and amputated civilians. They also destroyed important historical and cultural shrines in various places in Mali (Nwolise, 2007). Hence, Article 75 of Protocol I of the 1949 Geneva Conventions (1977), which deals with armed conflicts, regulates, and legalizes the rights of people who find themselves under the power of a group in a violent conflict to which they are not subjects. Article 75 is on the protection of basic human rights during armed conflicts. The first paragraph of Article 75 provides the same ban on discrimination as Article 2 ICCPR. Paragraph 2 of Article 75 reads:

> The following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever, whether committed by civilian or military agents: (a) Violence against people's lives, health, or physical or mental well-being, including murder, torture of all kinds, whether physical or mental, corporal punishment, and mutilation; (b) Infringements on personal dignity, including humiliating and degrading treatment, forced prostitution, and any form of indecent assault; (c) Hostage taking; (d) Collective punishments; and (e) Threats to commit any of the foregoing acts.

Human rights violations in Chechnya have been well documented during the political conflict. A report on Chechen asylum seekers in the UK gives evidence of the human rights abuses and related psychological fallouts that occurred in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The survey examined the depth of psychosocial abuses suffered by 256 displaced people during violent conflicts. Two-thirds of the respondents who answered the questionnaire agreed with the statement that the conflict has led to human rights abuses and has triggered mental disturbances among the population. Approximately all the respondents showed that they had family members whose human rights had been abused during the violent conflict and were having difficulty coping with

their disturbance (Fischer, 2012). Electoral violence can lead to false imprisonment and unlawful detentions of innocent voters (Larson, 2017).

2.8.5 Fear and panic

Electoral violence leaves deep psychological scars on both the young and the old. The psychological effects of electoral conflict and war-related shock could be severe. Many people, particularly children, are baffled by the reasons for the violent conflict. Loud noises from protests and gunshots, deaths, severe losses, and disruptions in the lives of people lead to high rates of despair and anxiety in conflict-affected areas. The impacts of these conflicts may exist for a long time when victims are exposed to further privations, intimidation, and violence in refugee camps. These experiences may make it challenging for children to socialize and form healthy relationships with others (Kimani, 2008). Adults and youth adopt several coping strategies to survive the impact of electoral conflict. Some survive by turning to drugs or alcohol, which is deviant behaviour in most societies. Children affected by such conflicts often become social misfits, and they therefore miss their social life. Girls who are raped during electoral violence or in refugee camps may be ostracized by society and lose future marriage prospects (Hochschild, 2010). Boys who have been forcibly recruited by rebels to become child soldiers are often not entertained by their communities because of the violence they have perpetrated on the communities and sometimes their own families. During war, children may lose their culture as it is reconstituted in refugee or IDP camps.

The impact of electoral violence does not respect age and status. However, there are specific impacts on children who live with them for a long time. Firstly, children's contact with the compassion, care, and attention of adults who love them is often limited or non-existent when electoral violence is not well managed at the onset. In times of electoral conflict, the loss of a parent or guardian or the separation of children from parents or

caregivers for whatever reason can have negative effects on the child's development (UNHCR, 2008).

2.8.6 The Human freedom and global peace indexes

Human rights and democracy are closely linked. Likewise, respect for human rights is essential for the will of the people to be respected in electoral processes (Twist, 2004). The Human Freedom Index (HFI) assesses the global state of human freedom using a wide metric that includes personal, civil, and economic liberty (Mihailo & Gamser, 2018). Human freedom is a social notion that recognizes people's dignity and is described as the absence of coercion. Freedom is intrinsically valued and plays an important role in human progress; it is worth carefully measuring (Alston & Goodman, 2013).

The Human Freedom Index is a tool for observing correlations between freedom and other social and economic phenomena, as well as how the many dimensions of freedom interact with one another more objectively. The HFI is the most comprehensive freedom index yet established for a group of countries with global significance. The index began ranking countries in 2008 (Mihailo & Gamser, 2018).

According to Mihailo and Gamser (2018), on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represents more freedom, the average human freedom rating for 162 countries in 2018 was 6.93. Among countries included in the 2018 and 2019 reports, the level of freedom scarcely improved (0.01) compared with 2017, with 87 countries increasing their ratings and 70 decreasing. Specific activities that violate citizens' rights may hurt a country's credit rating with the HFI. Electoral violence can have a detrimental influence on human rights when it involves government police or security forces, as well as private military and security organizations, who commit human rights violations. Investors usually consider the HFI

before they invest in countries. Countries with poor scores lose investors, which could negatively affect economic growth (Alston & Goodman, 2013).

Another effect violence in elections can have on a country is scoring low marks on the Global Peace Index (GPI). The Global Peace Index is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness. This report presents the most comprehensive data-driven analysis of trends in peace, its economic value, and how to develop peaceful societies. The Global Peace Index covers 99.7% of the world's population, is calculated using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources and measures the state of peace across three domains: the level of social safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization (Fischer, 2012). Electoral violence tends to negatively affect the score a country secures. A good global peace score makes a country attractive to investors.

Ghana has been ranked the second most peaceful country in Africa in the 2021 Global Peace Index report by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). The IEP is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress. A look at the snapshot of the global state of peace as captured in the report, Ghana is ranked 38th in the world out of the 163 countries reviewed. Ghana scored 1.715 which represents a two-point move upward from the previous Global Peace Index report (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2021).

2.9 Institutional Responses in Reducing Electoral Violence

Electoral violence is inherent in elections (Chambas, 2016). Hence, contesting an election, its conduct, or its outcomes should not be seen as a reflection of weakness in the electoral system, but as evidence of the strength and openness of the political system

(Petit, 2000). The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) (2016) studied the impact of eight common tactics on preventing electoral violence in five nations: Malawi, Honduras, Moldova, Thailand, and Bangladesh. The findings include:

- Broad trust and confidence in the fairness, impartiality, and general competence of the election management body and other related institutions, such as the security forces and the judiciary, in providing quality election administration and security, a fair and timely dispute resolution system epitomises the best route to peaceful elections.

- Effective international and domestic electoral monitoring of conditions before, during, and after balloting has been effective in preventing violence. introduction of electoral educational programs on issues that seek to ease citizen frustrations and their sense of marginalization through voter discussions with trusted institutions and political leaders.

- The mix of these factors is imperative in states that seek to experience peaceful elections. A level playing field for all contesting candidates participating in the elections and adequate measures to enfranchise all eligible voters, without overt or systemic discrimination, is one good way to reduce electoral violence.

While no voter register is 100% accurate, the importance of a credible voter register cannot be overstated (Chambas, 2016). Electoral violence usually happens between unrelated individuals who may or may not know each other, generally outside the home (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2009). Violence scares people out of participating in elections; therefore, there is a need for a national framework to prevent or minimise its occurrence before, during, and after elections. Electoral violence is preventable if adequate measures are put in place to curb it (Larson, 2017).

2.9.1 Security services

Supporting the EC, the security services, and other stakeholders in elections who are responsible for delivering quality election administration and security is one of the best routes to peaceful elections in any country (USIP, 2016). One of how this can be done is by having a good electoral system. The term "electoral systems" is used to denote a very specific list of norms and processes used in an election to determine how to indicate those who will occupy the vacant positions (ACE, 2016). According to Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis (2005:1).

> The choice of an electoral system is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy. In almost all cases, the choice of a particular electoral system has a profound effect on the future political life of the country concerned, and electoral systems, once chosen, often remain constant as political interests solidify around them and respond to the incentives presented by them.

The design of the electoral system has broad consequences for how groups in the country react to election results. Some electoral systems can contain conceptual ideas that embolden narrow and conflict-ridden interests, such as a winner-takes-all approach to elections (Benoit, 2004). There are better electoral systems that can contribute to encouraging extensive policy and ideological stages, where competing groups after elections have incentives to come together and pursue common benefits (Höglund & Jarstad, 2010). Providing electoral motivation to political parties during election campaigning so that they can cover a larger part of the country and reach out to all electorates can help reduce the occurrence of electoral violence, encourage candidates to be sensitive to their political speechmaking on potentially divisive issues, and force them to widen their political ideology and positions, which discourage violence. In the view of Fischer (2002:12),

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Electoral systems specifically designed to bring political actors from different groups together to negotiate positions that move beyond their narrower interests have a better chance of breaking down entrenched social cleavages that promote conflict.

Examining how different electoral systems are connected to the risk of electoral violence, Fjelde and Höglund (2014) averred that some states elect leaders using the "First Past the Post" system. This is a kind of majoritarian electoral system in which electorates elect individual politicians using simple majority rule. The United States (US), for example, has majoritarian elections: the candidate who gets the most votes in that electoral district wins, and total wins are added together to declare the winner of the election. According to Fischer (2002), in other countries, parliament is elected through proportional representation. Voters typically choose among lists of candidates presented by parties.

2.9.3 The National Peace Council (NPC)

The National Peace Council (NPC) is an independent statutory national peace institution established by an Act of Parliament (818). The NPC aims to raise awareness surrounding the use of non-violent strategies in response to conflict through networking, coordination, and campaigning. The National Peace Council consists of 13 members, representing various religious, social, and political groups (NPC, 2018). The election early warning system in Ghana, introduced by the NPC, is a classical one. The National Peace Council (NPC) of Ghana established National and Regional Election Early Warning and Response Groups (NEEWARG and REEWARGs). With technical and financial assistance from the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), the major goal of NEEWARG and REEWARGs was to serve as a platform for the detection and development of early responses to latent and manifest conflict situations (Shale, 2017).

According to Shale (2017), development partners have fully funded the Peace Council's activities at the national and regional levels. This had a huge impact during the 2016 elections when the NPC was able to jointly establish the early warning systems (EWSs) in the form of the National Election Early Warning and Response. The electoral system must take care of dispute resolution issues. It is an undeniable fact that electoral disputes are unavoidable in any transparent, democratic election or competition. Nevertheless, their early and efficient resolution, so that they do not turn into violent conflict and undermine confidence in the electoral process, is very important (Höglund & Jarstad, 2010). There should be an effective, independent electoral conflict resolution mechanism to resolve all disputes immediately. Mechanisms or measures to resolve electoral differences can be either formal, like complaint and appeal processes, or informal, such as joint committees sitting on cases between the disputing political parties and the electoral commission, or third-party mediation.

2.9.4 International and Domestic Election Monitoring

Another essential mechanism that advances the confidence of the public in elections and that can therefore help to prevent electoral violence is the monitoring and observation of elections. This is an effective mechanism to guard against manipulation because it serves as a warning to all stakeholders that the international community is watching the electoral process (UNDP, 2011). The objectives and importance of observers and monitors in elections must not be understated. International election observation is very significant to all stakeholders in elections because it is done for the benefit of the people of the country holding the polls and for the entire international community (Hyde, 2011). The UN Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for international election monitoring observers averred that:

International election observation has the potential to enhance the integrity of election processes by deterring and exposing irregularities and fraud and by providing recommendations for improving electoral processes. It can promote public confidence, as warranted, promote electoral participation, and mitigate the potential for election-related conflict. It also serves as a platform to enhance international understanding through the sharing of experiences and information about democratic development (UN Declaration of Principles, 2005:2).

Election observation can be international or domestic (Kelley, 2012). Civil society groups and other stakeholders in a country can form domestic groups to observe their elections without assistance from external bodies (Hyde, 2011). Domestic observer groups can easily recruit larger numbers than international observer bodies, and they also know the political culture, traditions, language values, and territory of the country better (ACE, 2016). Election observation by intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations and African Union can be very helpful when domestic monitoring teams and observer organizations do not have the needed human resources, financial strength, and logistics to organize efficient and effective observation and monitoring (Kelley, 2012). Again, international observer groups can effectively be incorporated or collaborate with domestic observer groups who stand tall in understanding the terrain and culture of the country to be monitored (ACE, 2016). Hyde (2011) believes that they are also very important when the neutrality of domestic observers is in question. Election observation has a wide range of objectives. However, the two core goals for all observations are to:

1. Provide an impartial and accurate account of the quality of elections to the public, the international community, and the media, including the degree to which the conduct of elections meets the standards set by the international community.

2. Exhibit the concern and interest of the international organizations and community in the host country's democratization and elections.

Election observation is a potential tool in promoting good governance and democracy, and it is a powerful tool to prevent electoral conflict (Kelley, 2012).

2.9.5 National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE)

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is an independent, non-partisan governance institution set up under Article 231 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The Commission works to promote and sustain democracy and inculcate in the Ghanaian citizenry an awareness of their rights and obligations through civic education (NCCE, 2019-online). Voter education is a strong tool for averting election violence and a good way to improve the integrity of an election.

Electorates need to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the electoral laws of their country so that they can perform their roles as responsible electorates in a manner that will make the elections free and fair (ACE, 2016). According to the United Nations (2015), the term "voter education" is generally used to describe the dissemination of information, materials, and programs designed to inform voters about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process for a particular election. Voter education involves providing information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when, and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints.

Electorates who are conversant with the electoral procedure hardly ever make fabricated speeches that might upset or disturb the electoral process. Electorates turn out to vote because they understand the importance of partaking in the electoral process. The

objective of voter education is to make information about elections available and accessible to all stakeholders (Hyde, 2011). If voter education promotions will achieve their objective, they should seek to achieve complete coverage of the electorate. Educating part of the electorate and leaving the other part will make the exercise ineffective (ACE, 2016). Education should reach out to deprived groups as well as mainstream electorates.

2.9.6 Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

In 1993, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) was established with the mandate of protecting the rights of citizens. As the national human rights institution, the Commission has a broad mandate to protect universal human rights and freedoms, especially those stipulated by the 1992 Constitution, which includes civil, economic, social, and cultural rights and can be found in Article 218 (a), (c), and (f) of the 1992 Constitution and Section 7 (1), (a), (c), and (g) of the CHRAJ Act. The Commission's human rights functions can be divided into two categories: promotion and prevention, and protection and enforcement. To protect and enforce fundamental rights and freedoms, the Commission investigates individual complaints of rights violations by persons and institutions. It is mandated to resolve these complaints through various methods, including mediation, negotiation, and formal hearings. However, literature on the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice shows that they investigate and publish findings on human rights abuses in Ghana.

2.9.7 Electoral Commission

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Electoral Commission (EC) Act 451 provide for the creation of the EMB as an independent or autonomous body. An Election Management Body (EMB) is the body legally responsible for managing some or all the

essential elements of an election in a country. According to Article 45 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the key responsibilities of the Electoral Commission are to:

- Compile a voter's register and revise it periodically as may be determined by law.

- Define and demarcate election electoral boundaries.

- Educate the electorate about the electoral process.

- All public elections and referendums must be conducted and supervised, and

- To perform such other functions as may be prescribed by law.

Article 42 of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana states that:

Every citizen of Ghana, at eighteen years of age or above, and of sound mind, has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for public elections and referenda (pg38).

The pre-election activities of the EC cover all events and procedures leading up to the Election Day balloting. They include the Electoral Commission's (EC) preparatory exercises, such as voter registration and limited voter registration, voter register exhibition, conducting political party primaries, the registration of candidates, and candidate electoral campaigns (ACE, 2016). The EC also engages in civic or voter education and advertises impending elections, among others (CODEO, 2009). The EC is responsible for the registration of voters, and this has recently been one of the sources of electoral violence. CODEO (2009:2) observed that:

> The limited voter registration exercise in Ghana encountered administrative bottlenecks and inadequate voter education that created confusion and uncertainty amongst prospective registrants. In addition to the above, there was a high incidence of irregularities and violence at some registration centres in the Greater Accra and Northern regions.

The Election Management Body (EBA) takes precautions in any election to ensure that voters, candidates, poll workers, observers, and other players involved in the process are

not afraid or harmed and that critical election materials are kept secure (Nnamdi-Okafor, 2015). Depending on the environment, the particular security needs for a given election will vary substantially. In areas where there is an ongoing conflict or a high risk of violence, securing an election will require consideration of several factors, including the deployment of relatively large numbers of security personnel, such as police or military forces, to protect physical locations and individuals. There will be plans in place for the secure transfer and storage of election materials, particularly ballots and ballot boxes, in every election (Nwolise, 2007).

2.9.8 The Judiciary

In recent times most elections in Africa have been fraught with post-election conflicts that have had dire consequences on citizens. Kenya, Ivory Coast, and Zimbabwe are a few of these cases. This makes post-election conflict resolution a very important aspect of the electoral process and deserves enormous attention (Adam & Asante, 2020). A well-functioning judicial system is essential for efficiently combating electoral violence and resolving electoral disputes, which in turn promotes democratization (Gloppen, 2014). The results of opaque or violent elections are frequently tarnished by suspicions of fraud, and the losing parties or the public may consider them as illegitimate. An impartial judge can hear and amicably resolve electoral disputes in such circumstances, ensuring accountability and contributing to the rule of law.

Judicial independence and separation of powers can protect against undue influence from the other branches of the government and lend credibility to its decisions (Tamboly, 2020). The judiciary must also possess the technical competence and the political will to adjudicate such politically charged issues. When the judicial system lacks the clout, capacity, or credibility to effectively intervene, it can lead to further violence, weaken democratic institutions, and create a culture of impunity. The courts have been

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instrumental in consolidating democracy in Ghana, and stakeholders are devotedly operating within the legal framework governing elections, despite logistical, law enforcement, and justice delivery challenges (Adam & Asante, 2020). However, because the legal system is made up of humans, it is vulnerable to corruption. As a result, several institutions and organisations have begun to investigate the judicial systems to uncover such activities. The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), for example, conducts surveys to bridge the gap between perceptions of corruption and reality. According to research by GII (2007), there is corruption among legal practitioners in Ghana.

2.9.9 Civil Society Organisations

Civil society is defined as the realm of organised social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules (Diamond 1999). Since CSOs are made up of citizens who work collectively in the public arena to express their interests, influence policy, and scrutinise and check the exercise of state authority, they are distinct from "society" in general. Given this function, civil society is seen as one of the most important markers of democratic consolidation and is connected to developmental goals given its capacity to pool individual resources to enhance community institutions, infrastructure, and quality of life (Orjuela, 2003).

As shown in Figure 5, CSOs engage in electoral conflict prevention, management, and resolution. They provide early warning signals of impending conflicts and educate society on the need for peaceful coexistence in diversity. The role of civil society in elections often takes the form of support for the institutional processes of democracy. Civil society also has a role to play in reducing election-related conflict dynamics and promoting a peaceful electoral environment. CSOs serve as watchdogs by delivering voter education and ensuring that the rights of citizens are maintained at every level of the electoral

process (Diamond 1999). Initiatives for CSO capacity building on voter education, conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation, as well as election observation, were all part of the second phase.

Figure 5: The Roles of CSOs in Electoral Conflict Transformation
Source: Melander and Pigache (2006).

CSOs play a watchdog role in making sure that the rights of citizens are upheld and honoured at every stage of the electoral process, as well as offering voter education. The importance of stakeholder engagement in the electoral process is key to ensuring that elections are held in a peaceful, free, and fair environment (Gloppen, 2014).

2.10 Appraisal of Reviewed Literature

This chapter outlined gaps in the literature and presented an overview of the terminology of electoral violence. After having discussed the causes and implications of electoral violence, it is fair to conclude that research into the causal factors behind election violence and its implications is of major importance. The factors enabling election violence identified in the literature are multifaceted and vary from country to country. However, from the review, some common factors can be identified, with the key factors being winner-takes-all politics, the use of vigilante groups, and real or perceived manipulation of election results. This has led to several pre-election campaigns, election-time, and post-

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election violence in most African countries, of which Ghana is not an exception. Campaigning for votes in many areas is characterised by insults, political killings, bombings of political offices, and armed clashes between supporters of rival political parties.

Electoral violence occurring in different parts of the world has been motivated by a variety of reasons and factors. Höglund's theory and several pieces of literature on electoral violence reviewed in this study explain that electoral violence can manifest itself in several forms (scuffles, destruction of properties, defamation, kidnapping, brawls, and killing) that are meant to impact the electoral process and ultimately influence the results of the polls. The literature also advises that, throughout the electoral process, the legal framework needs to ensure a level playing field for all competing parties. This suggests that during the conduct of an election, authorities should not impede the electoral process, and political competition should not be obstructed or restricted by anyone. Again, from the literature, a poorly conducted election process does not necessarily lead to a disputed outcome but eventually could lead to an outbreak of violence. However, an effective and credible process can reduce the chances of violence in an election. Knowledge gained from the literature shows that, over the last decade, one potent element that has reduced the occurrence of election violence has been to ensure broad trust and confidence in the fairness, impartiality, and general competence of the election management body, the security forces, and the judiciary. The implications of electoral violence for citizens are unbearable and must be avoided at all costs. To accomplish this, political parties must know that they have a primary role in educating their supporters to promote a culture of peace, dialogue, and consensus. The Electoral Commission, the judiciary, and other state institutions must be strengthened in the accomplishment of their mission. They are to remain neutral in executing their task.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods and techniques that guided the data gathering and analysis. The chapter presents the approach and detailed techniques adopted to address the objectives of the study. It starts with a discussion of the ontological and epistemological foundations of quantitative and qualitative research, as well as the arguments for and against combining the two approaches in a single research project. The strengths and weaknesses of the two opposing approaches are briefly discussed, as is the rationale for combining them in a single study.

The chapter also presents the research design and the methods used in the selection of the research participants and for data collection. The data was analysed and interpreted, and then issues of positionality were discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations.
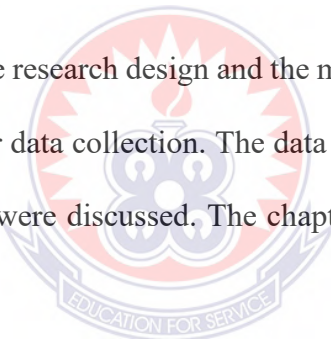
3.1. Research Paradigm

The methodological approach used in carrying out a research project, such as the methods used to collect data and the sources of such data, are all inextricably linked to the ontological and epistemological assumptions we hold about reality (Yin, 2003). Historically, the two dominant ontological perspectives that have inspired social science research have been positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism holds that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it and regards the social world as something revealed to us, not constructed by us (Walliman, 2006). According to positivist ontology, objective knowledge is possible because there is a fixed and unchanging reality that research can accurately access and tap into. As a result,

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positivism advocates the application of natural science methods and practices to the social sciences (Wisker, 2008). The fundamental characteristic of positivism is the contention that the methods, concepts, and procedural rules of the natural sciences can and should be applied to the study of social phenomena (Bryman, 2004). The epistemological assumption derived from positivism is that in a world made known to us through our sense experiences, people simply receive sensory stimuli and recount their responses, contributing very little to knowledge (Walliman, 2006). As a result, in positivist thinking, the confirmation or refutation of theory can only be revealed through data gathered through the way the world is observed and experienced through our senses—in this case, 'objective, official statistics' (Grix, 2004). Data for the positivist model of social research is referred to as 'hard data,' implying that it is free of the interpretative and meaning-endowing processes of the researcher (Creswell, 2014), and such data is numerate, attempting to measure and describe social phenomena through the attribution of numbers (Taherdoost, 2016).
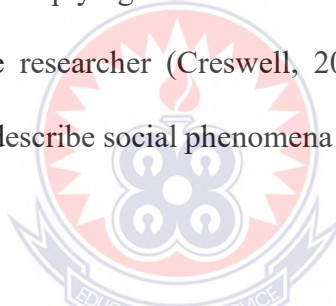
Notable among the techniques for the quantitative approach are questionnaires, social surveys, and experiments, which generate numerical data and ostensibly render social phenomena 'objective,' untouched by people's interpretative and reality-constructing capacities (Ridder, 2017). In contrast to the positivist view of social reality and how it can be known, interpretivism considers reality to be a complex social construction of meanings, values, and lived experience (Grix, 2004). This can be better understood through people's interpretive or meaning-endowing capacities rather than our sensory observation and experience of the world, as positivists believe (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012; Bryman, 2014). Data for interpretivism research is thus derived from people's interpretations of their situations and experiences with reality. Soft data is typically verbal and seeks to reveal and describe social phenomena through the attribution

of words (Grix, 2004). In contrast to positivist or natural science models of investigation, interpretive research employs research methods and data collection techniques that allow research subjects to interpret their own experiences of the world rather than those used in positivist studies. As a result, interpretive data collection techniques include observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials that generate data primarily in the form of words (Creswell, 2014).

This study adopted a pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism is a philosophical approach that advocates the use of multiple methods or techniques to address a research problem. Pragmatism allows for the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods as loosely coupled systems to support mixed-methods research. Pragmatics recognises that there are many ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture, and that there may be multiple realities (Saunders *et al*. 2012). According to pragmatism, positivism and interpretivism are two extreme, mutually exclusive paradigms about the nature and sources of knowledge (Bryman, 2014)). Pragmatics therefore combines both positivist and interpretivist positions within the scope of a single research project, according to the nature of the research questions, and this is what this research adopted.

3.2. Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-method approach. Mixed-methods research combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research to answer research questions. This means a mixed-method approach is characterised by the combination of qualitative and quantitative research components (Creswell, 2014). In social science research, quantitative research is typically based on positivist assumption, and qualitative research is based on interpretivist phenomena (Walliman, 2006).

The quantitative research approach is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data (Grix, 2004). It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalise results to wider populations (Bryman, 2014). When collecting and analysing data, quantitative research deals with numbers and statistics.

Therefore, the starting point of quantitative social research is the statistical and numerical measurement of social phenomena (Walliman, 2006; Bryman, 2014; Grix, 2004). Quantitative researchers, therefore, usually condense what they study into a few key attributes that are commonly referred to as indicators or variables (Miller & Brewer, 2003). Generalisation, which is an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad inferences from observations, is widely acknowledged as a quality standard in quantitative research. The goal of generalisation is thus to demonstrate that some issues are general features of social life (Yin, 2003; Grix, 2004). As Creswell points out, this method is ideal for testing theories, identifying broad patterns, and making predictions. As a result, the quantitative approach is deductive and is associated with positivism and the natural science investigation model (Creswell 2014).

Many experienced researchers are drawn to the quantitative method because of its effectiveness and rapidity. Even with huge sample numbers, data processing technology enables quick data processing and analysis. Instruments used to gather and measure quantitative data include surveys, polls, and statistical analysis programs. Researchers can communicate quantitative results using unbiased statistics. When performed correctly, an analysis allows researchers to make predictions and generalisations about larger, more universal populations outside the test sample. This is particularly useful in social science research. Though quantitative research offers advantages, it also has drawbacks and restrictions of its own. This is because not all study situations lend themselves to the method's applicability and convenience. Therefore, employing a

quantitative research approach in a study where a qualitative research method is called for would not yield the desired results.

To collect information for the research, data must first be collected from respondents using questionnaires. A researcher without a strong background in statistics may find this to be a hindrance. It is extremely time-consuming to analyse the data that has been gathered using a questionnaire. A researcher needs to turn the collected information into numerical data and correlate it with the larger population. Where this is not properly done, it means that the outcome might be false or misleading. Again, the task of sending out questionnaires to respondents and waiting for answers to such questionnaires might be time-consuming, as most respondents will reply late or may not even reply at all.

Qualitative research is the opposite of quantitative research (Yin, 2003). In general, qualitative researchers follow the interpretive philosophical tradition, employing flexible data collection methods that are sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced (Grix, 2004). The method typically entails an in-depth investigation of phenomena through such means as participant observation, interviewing, archival or other documentary analysis, or ethnographic study. According to the interpretivism paradigm, qualitative researchers generally seek to collect data from their studies on an event, institution, or geographical location to discern patterns, trends, and relationships between variables (Bryman, 2001).

The language of qualitative research is based on case studies and social contexts rather than variables and hypotheses, as in quantitative research. According to Creswell (2014:32), "qualitative research involves the interpretation of data whereby the researcher analyses cases in their social and cultural context over a specific period" and may develop theories that emphasise the tracing process and sequence of events in specific settings

(Grix, 2004). Some social science researchers take extreme positions on the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Miller & Brewer, 2003).

One major criticism levelled at qualitative research is that it is typically small-scale and non-representative, yielding results that cannot be generalised beyond the cases studied (Grix, 2004). This 'inability to generalise' from small samples or a few cases is thought to jeopardise the validity of qualitative research results.

Furthermore, critics argue that researchers' immersion in the social context they study leads to a lack of objectivity and a proclivity to use personal opinions rather than evidence to support arguments (Creswell, 2014). Thus, qualitative research is frequently accused of being unscientific, unrepresentative, prone to bias, and even manipulative, whether intentional or unintentional (Bryman, 2004).

Despite its reputation, quantitative research has been criticised on several occasions. According to Yin (2003:43), the quantitative approach can be criticised as reductionist because it relies on preconceived or half-understood concepts and is thus susceptible to bias or manipulation in a different way. Furthermore, overreliance on quantitative methods can fail to consider the social and cultural context in which the variable being measured operates (Grix, 2004).

Critics also argue that contrary to what some of its supporters claim, quantitative research is not value-free because no one can be completely detached from any type of research (Grix, 2004). Furthermore, numerical measurement is said to be difficult in some aspects of human behaviour, such as why people engage in violent conflict (Bryman, 2004; Grix, 2004). The mixed method combines the benefits of the qualitative and quantitative methods. One of the benefits of the mixed-methods approach is generalizability. Qualitative research usually has a smaller sample size and is thus not generalizable. In

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mixed-methods research, this comparative weakness is mitigated by the comparative strength of the large population usually used in quantitative research (Grix, 2004). Again, there is an advantage to contextualization. Mixing methods allow the researcher to put the findings in context and add richer detail to the conclusions. Using qualitative data to illustrate quantitative findings can help "put meat on the bones" of the analysis. Lastly, there is the advantage of credibility. Using different methods to collect data on the same subject can make your results more credible. If the qualitative and quantitative data converge, this strengthens the validity of your conclusions. This process is called triangulation (Bryman, 2015).

These arguments provide a solid foundation for combining quantitative and qualitative methods in social science research. Using mixed methods can also pose some difficulties and drawbacks that a researcher needs to consider before choosing this approach (Denzin, 1989). For instance, the researcher needs to have sufficient skills and resources to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, which can be time-consuming and costly. Despite the criticisms, the mixed-methods strategy of social investigation is quickly becoming popular among researchers (Grix, 2004; Bryman, 2015).

The mixed-method approach was appropriate for answering the research questions in this study and offered one of the best kinds of evidence needed for this research. Mixed methods research is often used in the behavioural, health, and social sciences, especially in multidisciplinary settings and complex situational or societal research (Grix, 2004; Creswell, 2014). A study on electoral violence and human rights falls in this category.

3.3 Research Design

The study design adopted for this research was a multiple-case study. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem (Creswell, 2014). This design uses

investigatory research to collect data about specific demographics. Interviews and research observation are the two standard methods of data collection used when following the case study method (Yin, 2003). It is usually used to narrow down a very far-reaching field of research into one or a few easily researchable cases (Bryman, 2015). For Creswell (2014), the case study research design is also beneficial for testing whether a specific theory applies to phenomena in the real world. It is a useful design when not much is known about an issue or phenomenon.

The case study method is used to gather detailed facts about the social group being studied by researchers. That means there are no interruptions in the process that could limit the validity of the data being collected through this work. With this advantage of making assumptions less necessary when drawing inferences from the data, the study's findings will eventually have more validity (Yin, 2003). Accordingly, the result becomes important to both sides of the argument because it may either support certain hypotheses or disprove a competing hypothesis.

A primary project conducted before a large-scale investigation is an exploratory case study. These case studies, which primarily focus on real-life contexts and situations, are very popular in the social sciences, such as political science (Ridder, 2017). These are typically used to identify research questions and methods for large and complex studies. The primary goal of an exploratory case study is to aid in the identification of situations for further research.

The main benefit of multiple-case research is cross-case analysis. The focus of a multiple-case research design shifts away from understanding a single case and toward the differences and similarities between cases. The multiple case study design was also used to produce detailed descriptions of the effects of electoral violence on human rights, using

concepts to link the data and relate them to earlier literature. Yin (2003) emphasized that multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the patterns, thereby increasing the robustness of the findings.

3.4. Selecting the Study Sites

Using the Conflict Mapping Report of Ghana and in consultation with the EC, Ghana Police, and the National Peace Council, all hotspots, high-security zones, and high-volatility constituencies in Ghana have been duly listed. Hotspot constituencies are those that exhibit high risk and potential vulnerability to violence (Aning & Lartey, 2008).

High-security zone constituencies, according to Aning and Lartey (2008), are those characterised by chieftaincy and ethnic disputes, pervasive poverty, a culture of gun violence, and deprivation. High electoral competitive zones could be described as hot spots if they have previously experienced electoral violence.

From the Ghana police report, this research can be conducted in all 16 regions in Ghana because they all have at least four (4) hot spot constituencies. These constituencies were listed and regions with more than four (4) constituencies with hotspots graded above 25 points by the Ghana Police Survey Report (see Appendix IV) were initially selected for the study. These regions are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Hotspot Constituencies

Region	Hot Spot Constituencies	Region	Hot Spot Constituencies
Upper East	1. Talensi 2. Paga 3. Garu 4. Bongo 5. Navrongo Central 6. Zebilla	**Eastern**	1. Mpraeso 2. Upper/W Akim 3. Asene/Akroso 4. Akim Oda 5. Nsawam
Central	1. Awutu-Senya East 2. Gomoa West 3. Cape Coast South 4. Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira 5. Twifo Ati/Morkwa 6. Mfantsiman 7. Assin South 8. U- Denkyira West 9. Ekumfi	**Oti**	1. Nkwanti North 2. Biakoye 3. Nkwanta South 4. Buem 5. Krachi East
Ashanti	1. Offinso North 2. Asawase 3. Effiduase 4. Bekwai 5. Bantama, 6. Kumawu 7. Old Tafo 8. Manhyia North 9. New Edubiase 10. Nhyiaeso, 11. Offinso South	**Greater Accra**	1. Ablekuma West 2. Amasaman 3. Ayawaso Central 4. Weija-Gbawe 5. Madina, 6. Ningo-Prampram 7. Odododiodio 8. Okaikwei Central 9. Tema East 10. Weija

Source: Adopted from Ghana Police Report (2020)

Out of the six (6) initially chosen regions that had similar characteristics, two (2) were selected for the study through a random sampling method. The results were from the Central Region and the Greater Accra Region. One (1) constituency from each was selected through random sampling from the two regions for the study. The results were Odododiodio Constituency in Greater Accra and Awutu Senya East Constituency in the Central Region. These constituencies were among those that recorded acts of violence during the 2016 and 2020 general elections and a bye-election (CODEO, 2017).

3.4.1 Using constituencies as study sites

A constituency is a group of voters in a specified area who elect a representative to a legislative body (GSS, 2014). People living in a constituency usually share similar interests or political opinions. Therefore, using constituencies was deemed appropriate for this study because it was concerned with elections.

3.4.2 Awutu-Senya East constituency

The Awutu-Senya East Constituency is in the eastern part of the Central Region. It shares common boundaries with Ga South Municipal Assembly (in the Greater Accra Region) to the east, Awutu-Senya District to the north, and Gomoa East District to the west and south, respectively. The municipality, as shown in Figure 6, covers a total land area of about 108.004 sq. km, or about 1.1 per cent of the total land area of the Central Region.

Kasoa, the Municipal and Constituency capital, is in the south-eastern part, about 31 km from Accra, the national capital. The major settlements in the municipality are *Opeikuma,* Adam Nana, *Kpormertey, Ofaakor, Akweley, Walantu,* and Zongo. The constituency has six zonal councils, namely: Zongo, *Ofaakor, Akweley, Opeikuma,* Walnut, and *Kpormetey.* It has fourteen electoral areas and one constituency, known as the Awutu-Senya East Constituency.

The people in the constituency are mainly Guans. There are other settlers' tribes of different ethnic backgrounds. These include the Gas, Akans, Ewes, *Walas/Dagartis, Moshies, Basares,* and numerous other smaller tribes. Due to the cosmopolitan nature of the municipality, the main languages spoken are Akan and English. The main economic activities in the constituency include trading (wholesale and retail), agro-processing, the informal sector, service, and commerce.
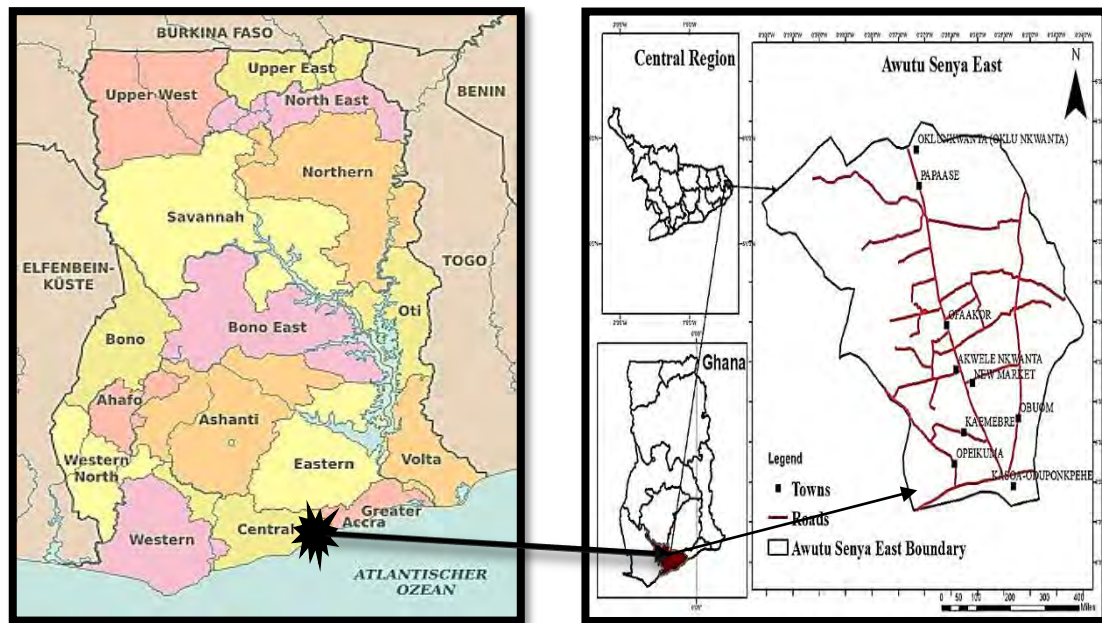
Figure 6: Maps of Awutu-Senya East Constituency
Source: Adopted from GSS (2021)

Trading and its related activities are the leading economic ventures, which, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, employ about 35.7 per cent of the working population in the municipality. Ghanaians, particularly those living abroad, rushed to buy land plots for construction. Houses sprang up by the hundreds in no time. Many landlords and property owners moved into their properties. Those who lived abroad mostly rented their homes to foreigners, including Nigerians, Cameroonians, and others. These foreigners, especially Nigerians and Cameroonians, have made *Kasoa* dangerous and unstable. Incidents like crimes and killings occur almost daily (GSS, 2014).

A former Central Regional Minister, Mr Kwamena Duncan, has labelled the Awutu-Senya East town of *Kasoa* as the new recruitment and training ground for criminals in the region and the capital, Accra. According to him, the populous town is now becoming a recruiting and training ground for criminals, which is very worrying. He said: *My security briefs every day on Kasoa were either snatching vehicles or motorbikes, robbing filling*

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stations, or cyber fraud, particularly among the Nigerians, and this has made Kasoa an everyday crime spot (Ghana News, 2021).

The constituency has been in the news for various negative reasons, and tensions rise especially high whenever elections are approaching. Politically, the constituency used to be a stronghold of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Party. Yet, in the 2012 election, the pattern changed, and, for the first time, the New Patriotic Party managed to win the parliamentary race in the constituency and maintain the seat till the last election in 2020. Figure 7 shows the percentage by which the NPP won the seat from 2012 to 2020. In the 2016 general elections in Ghana, the Awutu-Senya East constituency came under the limelight for being a flash point when six polling stations were suspended following the activities of thugs who snatched the ballot boxes and fomented violence.

Figure 7: Parliamentary Election Results of Awutu-Senya East Constituency -2012-2021
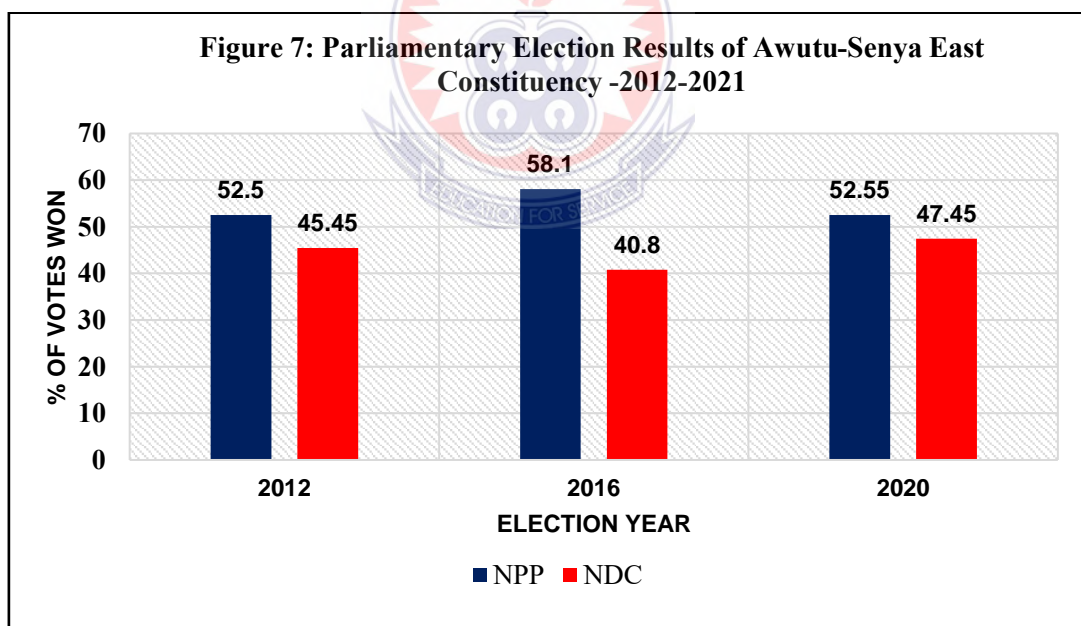
Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana (2020)

3.4.3 The Odododiodio constituency

The *Odododiodio* constituency falls within the *Ashiedu Keteke* sub-metropolitan district and includes seven (7) electoral areas: *Ngleshie, Mudor, Kinka, Nmlitsagonno,*

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Amamomo, Korle Wonkon, and *Korle Dudor.* The *Ashiedu Keteke* sub-metropolitan district covers a total land area of approximately 2.89 km2 (1.12 sq mi). Figure 8 shows that the constituency is bounded to the north by the *Ablekuma* Central sub-metropolitan district, to the west by the *Ablekuma* South sub-metropolitan district, to the east by the Osu *Klottey* sub-metropolitan district, and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. The sub-metropolitan district houses the Central Business District of Accra and, as such, is the hub of major commercial activities within the city of Accra (GSS, 2014).

The 2010 population and housing census estimated the population of the sub-metropolitan district at 117,525 with 13,732 houses and 34,964 households. Using the Greater Accra Growth Rate of 3.1%, it is estimated that the 2018 population stands at 143,768. At the 2010 census, 1,665,086 people were residing in the district. Of the total population, about 47% were migrants (born elsewhere in the Greater Accra Region or other regions in Ghana or outside Ghana), with people born in the Eastern Region but resident in the district constituting 27.8% of the migrant population.
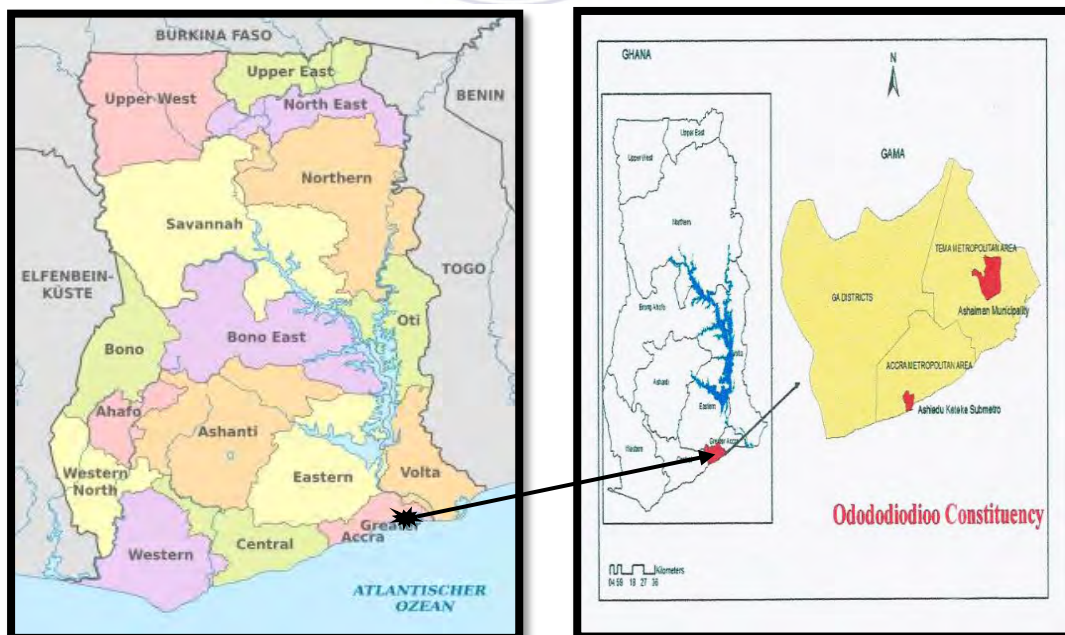
Figure 8: Map of Odododiodio Constituency
Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2021)

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The total number of households in the district stood at 501,903 households, out of which 450,794 households lived in the 149,789 houses within the district. The average household size in the district is 3.7 persons per household, and the population per house is estimated at 11.1, indicating that compound houses are the most common type of dwelling (67.7%) within the district. 38.4% of the population were under the age of 19, 12.4% between 20 and 24, 11.5% between 25 and 29, 21.5% between 30 and 44, 12.2% between 45 and 64, and 4% aged 65 and over. For every 100 females, there were about 93 males (GSS, 2021).

Kantamato, the constituency's most popular used clothing and footwear market, is in the district's heart. Near the *Kantamato* market are the *Agbogloshe* market and a slum site called Sodom and Gomorrah. Trading activity causes congestion and street hawking. The native Ga community of Accra includes the Odododiodio constituency. However, Accra, like Odododiodio, is cosmopolitan. The area is now highly diverse, with non-Ga speakers accounting for roughly a third of the cons. Today, the area is quite diversified, and non-Ga speakers make up about a third of the constituency's population (GSS, 2014).

The constituency has a long history in Ghanaian politics. While imprisoned in the constituency's James Fort in 1951, Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, ran for and won the seat. At the time, the constituency was known as Accra Central. It's worth noting that Nkrumah was a Nzema, not a Ga. He won this election while imprisoned in the James Fort prison, which is in the centre of the constituency. At least once since 1992, the Odododiodio elections in Ghana's fourth republic were notoriously tight, with both the NPP and the NDC winning the seat at least once. The NPP won the 2000 parliamentary seat in the constituency. However, subsequent elections have shown a strong tendency in favour of the NDC, with the NPP candidate losing by a large margin in 2012, with just a third of the vote. The NDC won the seat between 2004 and 2020 as shown in Figure 9.

The name of the constituency was changed from *Ashiedu Keteke* to *Odododiodio,* which is a Ga word that means "come and let us battle." As a result of this, the area has seen several instances of electoral violence, particularly during the biometric registration exercise in 2012, when supporters of the two competing parties clashed violently, injuring numerous individuals (Agyemang, 2013).

Figure 9: Parliamentary Election Results of Odododiodio Constituency

ELECTION YEAR	2012	2016	2020
NPP	36	41.6	41.56
NDC	62.98	57	57.04
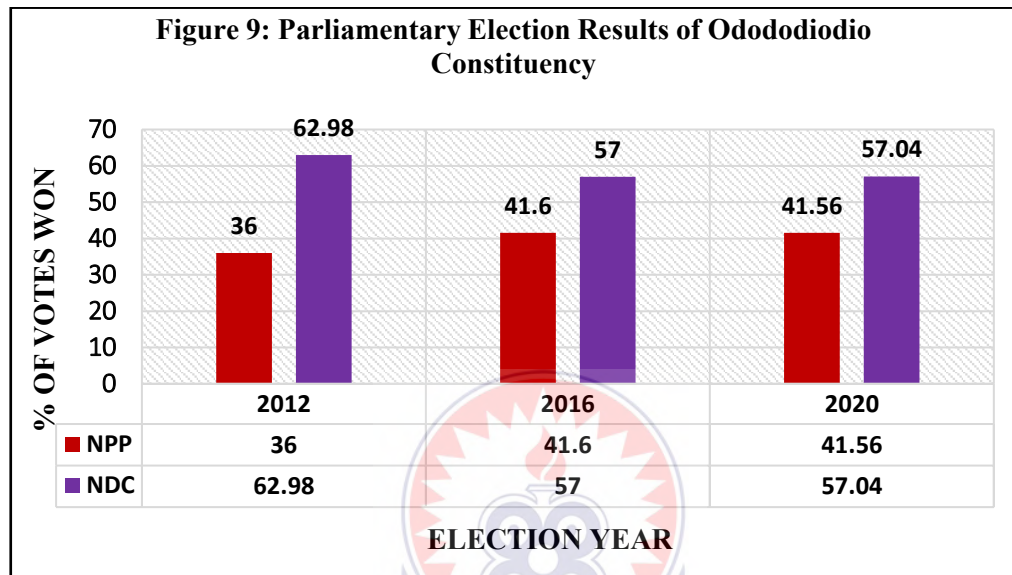
Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana

3.5 Population

The population for this study includes all electorates in the two constituencies (Odododiodio and Awutu-Senya East) selected for the study, workers of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in governance, personnel from the EC, and other governmental stakeholders responsible for peace and security, such as the Ghana Police Service, the National Peace Council, and the National Commission for Civic Education. Others were traditional leaders and religious leaders.

3.5.1 Sample size determination

Sampling is necessary because, when dealing with large numbers of respondents, there is a need to get a fair representation of the people since everybody in the population cannot

be included in the study (Miller & Brewer, 2004). However, the question of the right sample size in quantitative research concerns not only the beginner but also any social investigator. In simple terms, it refers to basic questions such as how large or small the sample must be for it to be representative of the larger population. The key is that most sample size decisions do not focus on estimates for the total population; rather, they concentrate on the minimum sample sizes that can be tolerated for the smallest subgroups of importance (Tuffuor, 1996).

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that there is seldom a definite answer about how large a sample should be for any given study. Therefore, given the limited time and resources available, the researcher would go by the estimation of subgroups to arrive at a sample size of the key informants.

3.5.2 Data sources

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were gathered from political parties, the EC, electorates, the police, traditional authorities, the NPC, and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the chosen constituencies. The NPC and WANEP respondents were chosen from the national offices since they had no office in the constituency under study.

Secondary information was obtained from both published and unpublished materials and activity reports on the work of the police, WANEP, and online news. Newspapers, articles, minutes of meetings, conferences, and working papers of the institutions that were relevant to the topic were also reviewed.

3.5.3 Collecting the data

As noted earlier, the collection of data for this study was done in two phases. The first phase was a pilot study undertaken in *Kasoa* over two weeks in September–October 2020.

This enabled me to familiarise myself with the research environment, identify key stakeholders in the elections, and pre-test the research instruments (questionnaires and interview guides). In this phase of the fieldwork, interviews were held with key staff of the Electoral Commission, electorates, and the Ghana Police Service. Questionnaires were administered to five electorates, two EC staff, and two police. The main fieldwork was carried out in both Odododiodio and Awutu Senya East constituencies at the end of December 2020 and in February 2021.

3.6. Selection of Participants for the Study

After identifying the stakeholder groups among the study populations in the two study areas, the next task was to select those who would participate in the interview discussions and questionnaire survey.

3.6.1 The electorates

The study was to explore how electoral violence has undermined the human rights of inhabitants in the Odododiodio and Awutu-Senya East constituencies. Purposive sampling was therefore used to select the electorates. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which units are chosen because they have characteristics that are required in a sample (Taherdoost, 2016). In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling. In this case, one should be a registered voter in the Odododiodio and Awutu-Senya East constituencies to be part of the sample.

The electorates were the principal respondents; therefore, I intended to gather data from voters who participated in the 2016 and 2020 elections in the two constituencies under study. Ten (10) participants who witnessed or suffered abuses during the 2016 and 2020 general elections were purposefully selected for the interview. In all the identifiable groups invited, I tried to develop rapport and employed much humility to induce the

respondents to grant me interviews and answer the questionnaire. The letter of invitation from the National Peace Council to invite electorates to the workshops in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies was very useful. The letter set some requirements for voters who must attend the workshop, which include being a voter in the constituency in the 2016 and 2020 general elections and having the ability to read and write. A total of 100 electorates were invited to the workshop. The groups invited and their percentage is shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Profession/Association of the Electorates

Electorates	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Artisans	15	15
Teachers	15	15
Civil/Public Servants	15	15
Traders Association	15	15
Local Council of Churches	10	10
Islamic groups	10	10
Drivers	10	10
Students	10	10
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Field data, 2020

3.6.2 Sample size determination

The sample size is a significant feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample (Ryan, 2013). To generalize from a random sample and avoid sampling errors or biases, a random sample needs to be of adequate size (Creswell, 2014). A larger sample size reduces sampling error but at a decreasing rate. Several statistical formulas are available for determining sample size. There are numerous approaches, incorporating several different formulas, for

calculating the sample size for categorical data. This study adopted the Slovin formula. This formula was used to determine the sample size of the electorates.

3.6.3 Slovin's formula

Slovin's formula is used in statistics to calculate the minimum sample size appropriate for a study with an acceptable margin of error. This formula is a general equation used when you can estimate the population but have no idea about how a certain population behaves (Ryan, 2013). The formula is described as:

Sample Size = N / (1 + N*e^2)

- N = population size
- e = margin of error

Calculating the necessary sample size for an electorate population of 100 who attended the workshop in each constituency, allowing for a 5% margin of error means that:

$$N = 100$$
$$e = 0.05$$

- Sample Size = N / (1 + N*e^2)
    - = 100 / (1 + 100 x 0.05^2)
    - = 100 / (1 + 100 x 0.0025)
    - = 100 / (1 + 0.25)
    - = 100 / (1.25)
    - = 80.00

This means that for a population of 100 electorates, 80 or more participants are needed to have a 95% confidence level that the real value is within ±5% of the measured or surveyed value. A sample size of 80 electorates for each constituency was therefore deemed appropriate for the study.

3.6.4 Convenient sampling technique

After purposive sampling was used to select the 100 electorates, a convenient sampling technique was used to select the 80 samples for the study from each constituency. A

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convenience sample is a non-probability sampling method in which the sample is drawn from a group of people who are easy to contact or reach. The first 80 electorates whose names were on the attendance register were used for the study.

3.6.5 Political Party Participants

Ghana possesses two giant political parties and other smaller parties. Twelve political parties made it onto the ballot for the 2020 general election. However, this study considered only political parties that had representation in parliament after the 2016 and 2020 general elections in the constituency under study.

Parliament is a key state institution in a democratic system of governance that plays an important role in promoting democracy and good governance. These were the NPP and the NDC. Each of these two political parties was given two slots; therefore, four political party executives participated in the two (2) constituencies. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the constituency chairman, vice chairman, or general secretary to represent the political parties in this study.

3.6.6 The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) is the official Ghanaian body in charge of all public elections. The independence of the EC is guaranteed by the 1992 Ghana Constitution. A district electoral commission office is in each constituency in Ghana. The District Electoral Office (DEO) oversees the Commission's district office and elections in the constituency. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the district directors of the two (2) *Odododiodio* and *Awutu-Senya* East constituencies that participated in the study.

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3.6.7 Ghana Police Service

The Police Service is a single cohesive unit organised on a national basis with a unified command under the leadership of the Inspector General of Police [IGP], who is responsible for exercising general day-to-day supervision and control over the administration and operation of the Police Service, subject to any direction or directive from the Police Council. The Police Service, which is a very compact but flexible organisation, strives to always achieve its mission. The service's primary functions are as follows: safeguarding of life and property; crime prevention and detection: offenders are apprehended and prosecuted; peace and order must be maintained; and it is directly charged with the enforcement of all laws, acts, decrees, and other regulations. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select one senior police officer from each of the districts to take part in the study.

3.6.8 Traditional authorities

According to Boafo-Arthur (2001), chieftaincy and traditional forms of governance such as those found in Ghana and South Africa are critical for national development and should be recognised as useful institutions in keeping the peace of a country. Chiefs play a key political role as community advocates, articulating local concerns and needs for redress. They serve as custodians of natural resources such as land, advocate for their people's social development, and play a key role in conflict resolution in communities. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select one chief from each of the two (2) constituencies. The chief must be the paramount chief or one appointed by the paramount chief to represent him.

3.6.9 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

CSOs play an important role in promoting peaceful elections by monitoring and reporting on electoral processes, educating voters on their rights and responsibilities,

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and advocating for electoral reforms. By observing polling stations and vote counting, they also help to promote transparency and accountability in the electoral process. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Ghana (WANEP Ghana) is a non-profit, non-governmental peacebuilding organisation founded in 2002 and incorporated under the Societies Acts to prevent, resolve, and transform violent conflict through collaborative and coordinated efforts. A purposive sampling technique was used to select two (2) senior programme managers to participate in the study. One other respondent was selected from the Civil Forum Initiative (CFI), an amalgamation of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana. The chairman of CFI participated in the study.

3.6.10 National Peace Council (NPC)

The National Peace Council will facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peacebuilding in Ghana by promoting cooperative problem-solving in conflicts and institutionalising the processes of response to conflicts to produce outcomes that lead to conflict transformation, social, political, and religious reconciliation, and transformative dialogues. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the executive secretary and the director for conflict resolution of the National Peace Council to participate in the study.

3.6.11 The sample size for the study.

The sample size for the electorates in Awutu-Senya East is 80, and Odododiodio is 80, and 15 other stakeholders concerned with peace during elections were added. Table 4 shows the composition of the sample size used.

Table 4: Composition of Sample Size

Institution	Awutu-Senya East		Odododiodio		Total (%)
	Sample	**%**	**Sample**	**%**	
Electorates	80	45.7	80	45.7	91.5
Political Parties	2	1.14	2	1.14	2.28
Electoral Commission	1	0.57	1	0.57	1.14
Traditional leaders	1	0.57	1	0.57	1.14
Police Service	1	0.57	1	0.57	1.14
General Respondents:					
National Peace Council	2				1.14
CSOs:	3				1.72
Total					**100**

Source: Field Data, 2020

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

After carefully considering the research questions, the nature of the data required for analysis, and the current conditions in the research field, it became clear that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods would be the best way to collect adequate data for the research. This is because some of the data required was qualitative and could best be obtained through interviews, whereas others were quantitative and could thus be elicited through questionnaires. Aspects of the data were also physically observable and could be gathered through direct field inspection or observation. There was also a variety of published information available, such as newspaper articles and other publications, that provided useful data for the study. As a result, I became convinced of the value of combining different methods from both qualitative and quantitative approaches in my attempt to collect the data required for this investigation. To improve the quality or validity of the data, the study used interviews, semi-structured

questionnaires, field observation, and documentary analysis, drawing on the strengths of these various methods.

3.7.1. Interviews

Interviewing is a useful technique for gathering qualitative data because it is 'introspective' and allows respondents to report on themselves, their views, their beliefs, practises, interactions, and concerns (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Furthermore, most people are more willing to talk in an interview than they would be if they were asked to write or fill out a questionnaire (Robson, 1993). The interview technique has several advantages over questionnaires, and these were evident in the interviews I conducted. When interviewees do not understand a question, they can ask for clarification, and the interviewer can ask for elaboration on answers given by interviewees. Furthermore, the interviewee is guaranteed to answer or, at the very least, attempt all questions (provided he/she allows enough time for the interview), ensuring a high response rate. Furthermore, by asking the same question differently and at different stages of the interview, the reliability of a response can be tested (Creswell, 2007). The interview method was used in the study to collect data from participants. Because of the structure of the interview, the researcher did not use a uniform timeframe in interviewing the respondents. For ethical reasons, the researcher decided to change information such as names concerning some of the respondents to ensure the informants' anonymity. The researcher also adopted the face-to-face interview techniques because they were characterised by synchronous communication in time and place.

3.7.1.1 Pseudonyms

The discussion of pseudonyms in the methodological and ethical literature is largely part of a larger debate about anonymity and confidentiality in qualitative social research. This includes not only the naming of participants but also identifying features such as

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geographical locations, occupations, organisations and institutions, and religious background (Creswell, 2007).

Anonymization is a guiding principle in research that refers to removing or obscuring the names of participants or research sites and not including information that could lead participants or research sites to be easily identified (Bryman, 2004). People's names are deeply personal and reflect Ghanaian culture and identity. In this study, participants were identified using pseudonyms to conceal their identities.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the most used data collection instruments in research (Creswell, 2007). The questionnaire for electorates was designed to address one of the study's objectives: to investigate issues concerning the underlying causes of electoral conflicts, the implications of electoral conflicts on human rights, and the role of institutions mandated to promote peaceful elections in Ghana. As a result, the questionnaire was regarded as an appropriate tool for gathering standardised information about the variables of interest from participating households. According to Bryman (2004), most researchers use questionnaires due to their low cost and speed of administration, the absence of the interviewer effect, and their ease of correspondence. Aside from these benefits, the questionnaire allows one to collect standardised information on the same variables for everyone in the sample. As a result, the questionnaire has become an indispensable tool for gathering primary data on people, their behaviour, attitudes, opinions, and awareness of specific issues.

This study made use of a questionnaire as one of the principal tools for the collection of the data. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to gather the data for the study. In the opinion of Osuala (2007), the open-ended questions allow the interviewee the "freedom to decide the aspect, detail, and length of his answer." In other

words, there is room for flexibility, and this enables the interviewees to talk at length about all relevant issues to the research. It is instructive to mention that the open-ended questions are in sharp contrast with the closed-ended questions.

Closed-ended questions keep the questions in a more confined arena and therefore narrow the scope of discussion of the interviewees only to the questions posed to them. Blending the two gave the researcher a lot of information that was relevant to the study. The questionnaire (shown in the appendix) was used to determine the extent of agreement or disagreement on issues related to the problem. Before drafting the questions, a prior survey was conducted in the two constituencies to know the likely options that would merit easy responses from the participants. The numerical ratings used for the three-point Likert scale are Agree (A) (3); Uncertain (U) (2); and Disagree (D) (1).

3.8 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected for this study was analysed using data content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique that examines qualitative data, such as written, vocal, or graphic communications, by identifying and quantifying the presence, meaning, and relationships of certain words, themes, or concepts. (Bryman, 2004).

When utilised to investigate, develop, and advance knowledge in the field of Social Sciences, content analysis can be used to describe and illustrate reality in the field. In doing content analysis, it involves a systematic and analytical approach to working on the information received from the field to be analysed, such as research transcripts, documents, or videos.

Thematic analysis was used in analysing the qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly.

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used to combine the data obtained from the two sources for this study. This is a type of mixed-methods research in which the quantitative phase is prioritised over the qualitative phase. The purpose of the qualitative phase is to explain or expand on the quantitative phase's findings, and sometimes to explain them (Walliman, 2006). The Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method design is a three-phase design. The overall purpose of this design is that qualitative data helps explain or build upon initial quantitative results.

This design begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data and is followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed to follow from (or connect to) the results of the first quantitative phase before interpretation is done, as shown in Figure 10.
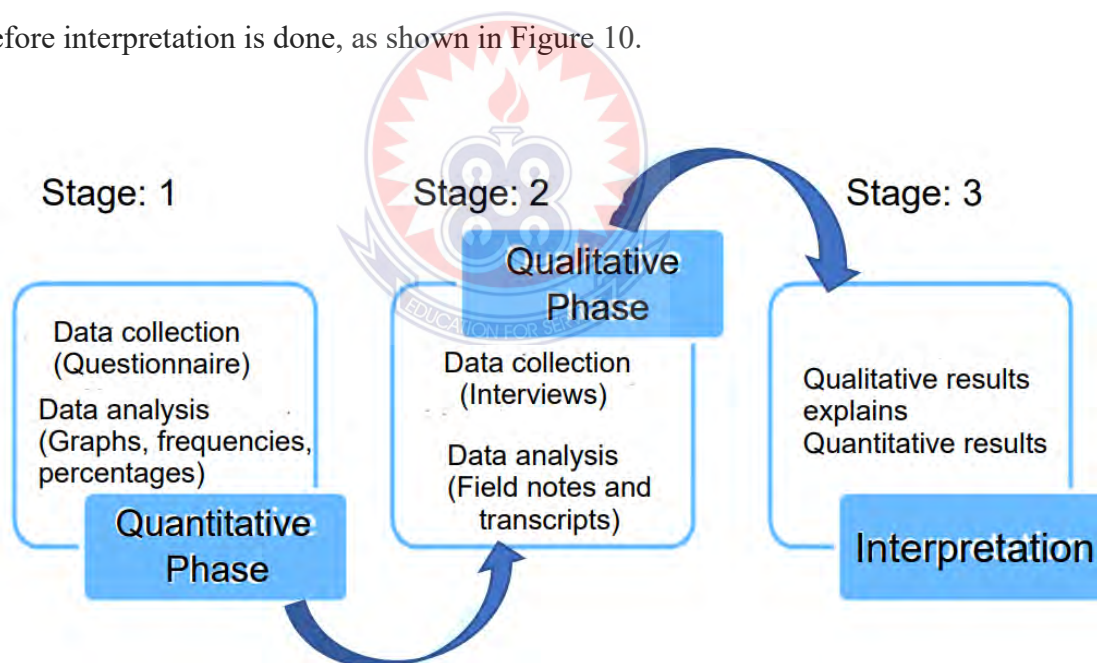
Figure 10: Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method
Source: Adopted from: Walliman (2006)

In the first stage, the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from fieldwork was done to uncover and understand the issue being investigated (the causes and impact of electoral violence). This was done to describe the phenomenon and what it means. Quantitatively, the research summarised the mass of data that has been collected in the

field using the questionnaire and presented the results in a way that communicates the most important findings or features.

According to Krosnick and Presser (2009), the optimal number of rating scale points for the quantitative analysis depends on the researchers' motivation to provide accurate reports. Offering a midpoint on a scale as a basis for analysis makes it simpler and more convenient. A score of 50% or more on an item on the questionnaire was therefore deemed strong for the study. The analysis involved the use of the following:

1. Frequencies and percentages of variables
2. Statistical tests are designed to estimate the significance of the results and the probability that they did not occur by chance.

In the second stage, the qualitative data was analysed to explain the quantitative data. The qualitative data was analysed using the interpretative method based on the themes that emerged during the data collection and Karel Vasak's three generations of Human Rights. Responses from the structured qualitative interview tapes were played several times until the full transcription of each participant was obtained. The results were entered into a computer to be coded, counted, and analysed. For purposes of classification, summarization, and tabulation, content analysis was carried out on verbal or behavioural data.

The final output was presented basically in the form of texts with direct quotes from key informants and stakeholders, as well as local community members. The texts and transcribed messages are buttressed with relevant pictures, tables, and figures.

3.8.1 Document analysis

Document analysis is yet another important source of data for social science research. Documents, as observed by Miller and Brewer (2004), are a good place to look for

answers in research and provide a useful check on primary data gathered through interviews and questionnaires.

Furthermore, when other techniques fail to resolve a question, documentary sources can provide a convincing answer. Aside from that, documentary analysis allows the analyst to become intimately familiar with the materials, which saves time and helps to corroborate and strengthen the evidence gathered using other tools (Robson, 1993).

Documents can provide reliable and quality information because they are usually written about past events and by authors who are well-versed in the subject under discussion. Furthermore, using multiple documentary sources allows you to cross-check the information, which is a type of triangulation.

Part of the information for this study came from both traditional documentary sources such as reports and newspaper articles and electronic media sources such as television and radio programmes. As part of the data collection process, these sources were scrutinised for information on the country's electoral conflicts.

3.8.2 Karel Vasak's generation of human rights

The themes used in the analysis of the data were based on the Karel Vasak categorisation of Human Rights. Karel Vasak, a Czech jurist, proposed the three-generation division of human rights at the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 1979. He first used the phrase in November 1977 (Vasak, 1979).

The three generations are: First-generation human rights, also known as "blue rights," are primarily concerned with liberty and political participation. Second-generation human rights are associated with equality and were first recognised by governments following World War II.

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They have fundamental economic, social, and cultural characteristics. Third-generation human rights are those that extend beyond civil and social rights, as expressed in many progressive pieces of international law, such as the 1972 Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and other pieces of broadly aspirational "soft law."

3.9 Positionality

A positionality statement is an explanation of the researcher's epistemological position, personal characteristics, and identities that may influence the research process. (Walliman, 2006). Academics believe that in qualitative research involving human interaction, such as interviews or observations, the researcher's identity concerning his participants, as well as his background and experience about the research topic, can either enhance or degrade the data gathered and thus the study's results (Bryman, 2015). When study participants perceive the researcher as an insider with whom they share similar experiences, they are less likely to be suspicious of his intentions and the purpose of the study.

This means that a researcher's familiarity with the research setting can benefit the research process. Walliman (2006), on the other hand, believes that familiarity with the context of an investigation can have a negative impact on the research.

Throughout the data collection process, I was aware of the issue of positionality and saw my position about my research subjects as an important factor that could either help or hinder the research process. As an employee of the National Peace Council, researching electoral conflicts made me feel like an insider.

I was also familiar with one of the research areas, but not with my research subjects, none of whom I had met before the pilot fieldwork. My familiarity with the study areas and

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the topic under investigation made me a partial insider, opening opportunities for comprehension, whereas my unknown status to the research subjects could have placed me in the category of an outsider, influencing their reaction to my inquiries. I decided to conduct myself properly as a researcher to gain the confidence and trust of my respondents.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Interview Guide

The interview schedule was carefully crafted to ensure its validity and dependability. First and foremost, the themes on which the interview questions were based were drawn from the study's objectives. Following the creation of the interview guide, it was given to two research students (who had also used interviews in their research) for review and comment. Following that, the interview guide was given to my supervisors, who provided helpful feedback for future improvements.

The research instrument was also tested on key stakeholder groups in Accra in September–October 2006 in a pilot study. This revealed that the questions asked by the researcher in the field were easily understood by the respondents. I also compared the responses to the study objectives, and it became clear that the interview schedule was very reliable because it produced the right type of data.

However, a few flaws in the design were discovered. Some of these included the ordering of themes and questions in some of the schedules, as well as the repetition of issues in a few questions. These were corrected to improve the instrument's quality before it was used in the main fieldwork.

3.10.1 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

It is critical, especially in quantitative studies, to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments to be used in data collection. The extent to which a research

instrument yields similar results when used to elicit data under constant conditions is referred to as reliability, whereas validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument records what it is intended to record is referred to as validity.

The instrument was designed with great care to achieve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, matching the questions with the stated study objectives. After reviewing the initial draught, I showed it (along with the study proposal) to two other research students who were also using questionnaires in their studies. Next, I used the 'expert validation' method (Mensah, 2006) by showing it to my supervisors, who provided helpful feedback on how to improve the instrument's content, wording, and layout.

In a pilot study conducted in *Kasoa* in September 2020, the questionnaire was also tested with 30 electorates. The generated responses were critically examined about the study's objectives and were also compared to each other to ensure a common understanding of questionnaire items. The pilot study results demonstrated that the questionnaire was well-designed and simple to understand, as respondents had no difficulty answering the questions.

3.10.2 Ethical consideration and the protocol for community entry

Apart from dealing with the technical aspects of this study, such as research design, data collection, and analysis, there is another aspect of research to address, namely the moral or ethical factor. Ethical constraints can hinder scientific inquiry just as practical considerations can prohibit researchers from implementing the optimal research design or acquiring as large or diverse a sample as desired.

Researchers may be prohibited from using experimental treatments that could harm research participants, from asking questions that would prove extremely embarrassing or threatening, from making observations that would deceive or place subjects under duress,

and from reporting information that would constitute an invasion of privacy (Singleton, Straits, & Straits, 1993).

Several authors believe that the ethical issue of harm is less of a concern for survey researchers and participants (Wisker, 2008; Sarantakos, 1997; Creswel, 2014). This survey has been structured in such a way that it will not pose any hazards to the respondents and cannot do so.

Informed consent is the second ethical consideration in research. Respondents should not be forced to participate in social research on ethical and legal grounds. Subjects must not only be aware that their involvement is entirely voluntary but they must also be provided with sufficient information about the study to make an informed decision about whether to participate. Simply put, researchers must gain their respondents' explicit or implicit informed consent to participate in a study.

The issue of informed consent was addressed in this study by making sure that the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the research. The electorates were contacted through the National Peace Council (NPC). The researcher first contacted the NPC with an introductory letter from the Department of Social Studies, University of Education, Winneba. With the help of the facilitator at a workshop for electorates before and after the 2020 elections, the researcher took the time to explain the purpose of the study to the participants and other executives of the NPC.

The right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitude, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed. Social research presents many possibilities for invading the privacy of research participants, and researchers must be sensitive to how their actions can violate this basic right.

Regardless of how sensitive the information is, ethical investigators ensure anonymity and confidentiality to defend the right to privacy. Individuals' privacy is protected when information is given anonymously, although this safeguard is frequently feasible in survey research employing a self-administered questionnaire without attachment. This is precisely what this research accomplished. Moreover, unless the respondent was illiterate, he or she was given the option to answer the questionnaire directly under supervision. As a result, the findings report did not include the respondents' names or anything that could lead to their identification.

In this study, questions were carefully constructed to avoid any intrusion on respondents' privacy. The purpose and benefits were also explained to them. Respondents were also informed that there would be no financial benefits for the participants. However, future benefits could be that the findings and recommendations from the study could provide information for improving communities' participation in decision-making in the study area and the country.
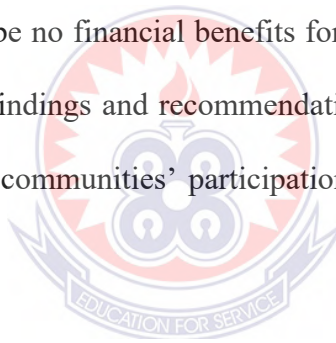
The respondents were also made aware that they were free to choose whether to participate or not. They were informed that the data would be reported in a thesis that would be available in the libraries of the University of Education, Winneba.

3.11 Methodological Limitations

The collection of data for the research was affected by two major adverse factors that limited the quality of the information gathered for this investigation. One such limitation was the limited sample size of 175 participants in the two case-study constituencies. I initially planned to use a much larger sample of about 300 respondents (150 in Odododiodio and 150 in Awutu Senya East). Unfortunately, several factors constrained my intentions and efforts.

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The second important factor that constrained my data collection exercise and, therefore, limited the data I collected was the limited resources with which I conducted the fieldwork. Through the efforts of the National Peace Council, I was lucky to receive an amount of Ghs 5,000 from the United Nations Development Programme for pre- and post-2020 general election workshops, which aided in the administration of the questionnaire.

I therefore had to rely on my limited resources to meet the costs of conducting the interview, printing and photocopying research instruments and other documents, payments at various offices, and remuneration for my field assistants.

3.12 Summary

In this chapter, the various steps that the researcher used to carry out the study are presented. It explained the design and how the regions, constituencies, and respondents were selected for the study. It also described the tools or instruments used to collect the data and how the data was gathered, coded, processed, and analyzed. Ethical consideration was also carried out to ensure the reliability of the data and the integrity of the respondents. The next chapter presents the results that were developed from the field and the discussion of findings derived from the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the review of documents, questionnaires, and interviews conducted to answer the research questions posed in this study. Using documents, interview guides, and questionnaires, data was gathered from security agencies, political party officers, traditional leaders, the electorate, civil society organisations, and the Regional House of Chiefs. The analysis involved the use of data content analysis (within-case analysis) and cross-site analysis. The main aim of this aspect of the analysis was to establish linkages and synergies between and among the two constituencies under study to identify potential areas for intervention.

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which electoral violence has undermined human rights in the *Awutu-Senya* East (ASE) and *Odododiodio* constituencies in Ghana between 2016 and 2020. The research objectives provided the framework for this study. To provide a quick reference, the research objectives inquired specifically about:

1. The underlying causes of electoral violence in the two constituencies

2. Human rights abuses that are involved in electoral violence.

3. The impact of human rights violations that happen during electoral violence.

4. State institutions' responses to ensure peace during elections.

The information gathered from the documents, questionnaires, and interviews is reported and analyzed, and the themes are linked to the study questions. Finally, the chapter provides a detailed description of the themes and concepts that emerged from interviews with stakeholders or duty-bearers who provided information on how the electoral

conflicts arose, as well as other respondents who shared their perspectives on how the conflict impacted their human rights. Several themes and patterns appeared when the enormous data was coded.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

The study gathered some demographic data from the respondents, which included age, gender, and educational background. As shown in Table 5, the data revealed that more males (62.3%) than female respondents (37.7%) participated in the study. The sex representation in this study was unequal, and this suggests that the participants in election issues might be dominated by male inhabitants (Bryman, 2004). Females, on the other hand, were fairly represented and had equal opportunities to have their voices heard.

Table 5: Gender (Sex) of Participants

Gender (Sex)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	109	62.3
Female	66	37.7
Total	**175**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2020

From the data collected, the largest proportion of the respondents were between 18 and 27 years of age (24.6%), and about 31.4 per cent were between the ages of 28 and 37 years. Respondents between the ages of 38 and 47 accounted for 21.7%, those between the ages of 48 and 57 accounted for 17.1%, and those over the age of 58 accounted for 5.1%. The greatest proportion of the respondents are of active age and, thus, would have an interest in participating in electoral activities. This shows that the participants could be relied upon to provide relevant information on electoral violence to conclude. Table 5 shows the age of the participants.

Table 6: Age of Participants

Ages	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
18 - 27	43	24.6
28 - 37	55	31.4
38 - 47	38	21.7
48 – 57	30	17.1
58 and above	9	5.1
Total	**175**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2020)

The largest proportion of the two constituencies who participated in the study had had formal education (58.3%). Other respondents reported they had secondary education (30.3%), those who completed basic education (primary and junior high school) were 6.3%, and 5.1% had not been to school. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Educational Background of Participants

Educational Background	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Tertiary	102	58.3
Secondary	53	30.3
Basic	11	6.3
Not been to school	9	5.1
Total	**175**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2020)

It was also evident that most of the respondents had tertiary education, such as Teacher Training Colleges, Polytechnics, and University degrees. The relatively high literacy level of respondents may affect their ability to provide an accurate report. The data on the educational attainment of most of the respondents gives the impression that the level of literacy of the respondents may have an impact on the participant's ability to understand issues about elections and the violence associated with them. Education affects the way

people think, behave, and solve problems since it broadens one's perspectives on issues and provides a greater opportunity to contribute to community development.

4.2 The Underlying Causes of Electoral Violence

According to the police report, before the 2020 general elections, the *Awutu-Senya* East and *Odododiodio* constituencies were two of the hotspot communities in Ghana. The researcher intended to pose a question to validate such a claim. It was revealed in this study that respondents, through their experiences, acknowledged the fact that electoral violence persists in their respective constituencies. The majority (88.7%) of the respondents from the Awutu-Senya East constituency stated that the 2012–2020 general elections were not violent-free. For them, there were many instances of skirmishes in their electoral areas before, during, and after the 2016 and 2020 elections. Their views are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Violence Recordrd during the 2016 and 2020 Elections

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	55	22	3
Odododiodioo	65	10	5

RESPONSES
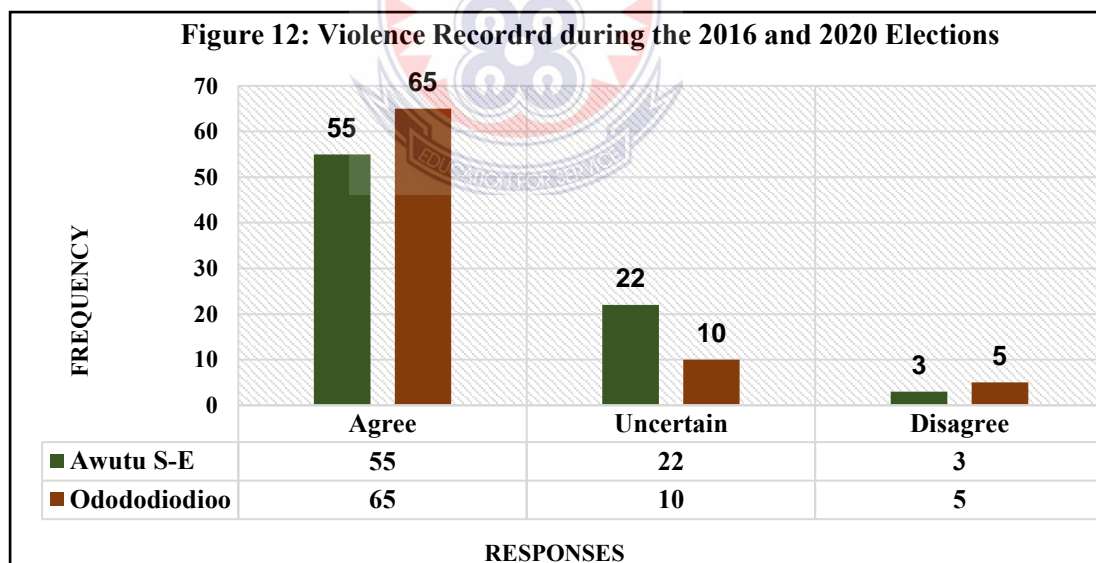
 Source: Fieldwork, 2020

From Figure 12, a substantial number of respondents from the *Odododiodio* constituency, representing 92.5%, acknowledged the eruption of violence during the conduct of the 2016 and 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire and the interview both verified the occurrences of electoral violence in

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these two constituencies. Most of the participants said that the general elections in 2016 and 2020 were accompanied by tension and violence.

According to some interviewees, two political parties (the NDC and the NPP) control Ghana's political landscape. The NDC and NPP are deeply rooted in Nkrumah and the Danquah-Buasia traditions. A respondent said that the political system is based on these two key ideologies.

This, they have argued, supports arguments that the country now practises a de facto two-party system. According to Burchard (2015), countries that practise a two-party system are less likely to experience political violence than countries that practise a multi-party system. This assertion seems not to hold perfectly in this scenario. A respondent from the EC said there has been an alternation of power in the two constituencies since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, but it has only been between the NPP and the NDC.

The first specific objective of the study was to ascertain the underlying reasons behind electoral violence in the *Awutu-Senya* East and *Odododiodio* constituencies. Data from the questionnaire and interviews were analysed. Regarding the numerical ratings from the three-point Likert scale on the questionnaire, which were: Agree (A) (3); Uncertain (U) (2); and Disagree (D) (1), responses from the "agreed" answer on the scale that was above 50% were deemed strong and therefore analysed. According to Krosnick and Presser (2009), the optimal number of rating scale points depends on an individual's motivation to provide accurate reports. Offering a midpoint (50%) on a scale as a basis for analysis makes it simpler and more convenient.

4.2.1 Sensational Media Reporting

The researcher wanted to know whether sensational media reports were the root cause or one of the root causes of electoral violence in the constituencies under review. Out of the

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80 respondents from Awutu-Senya East, 43 (53.8%) agreed, 22 (27.5%) were not certain, and 15 (18.7%) disagreed. About 46.2% of the respondents were uncertain or disagreed with this assertion.

Respondents from the *Odododiodio* constituency produced a similar result. Out of the 80 respondents from this constituency, 41 (51.3%) agreed, 21 (26.3%) were not certain, and 18 (22.5%) disagreed. Most of the respondents in both constituencies agreed that sensational media reporting could lead to electoral violence. About 48.7% of the respondents were uncertain or disagreed with this assertion. This is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Sensational Media Reporting Causes Electoral Violence

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	55	22	3
Odododiodioo	65	10	5
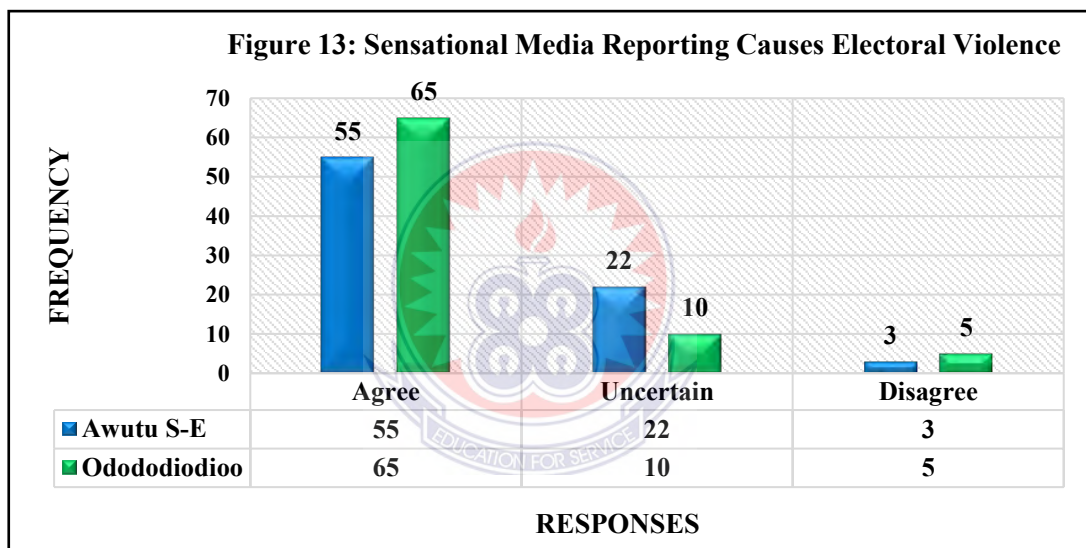
Source: Field Data, 2020

It was revealed in the literature review that sensational media reporting played an important role in triggering the civil war in Rwanda between April 7 and July 15, 1994. During this period, members of the *Tutsi* minority ethnic group, as well as some moderate *Hutu* and *Twa*, were slaughtered by armed militias (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). Uncensored media reports have caused violent conflicts in many parts of the world.

Interviews with respondents confirmed this information in the literature: sensational media reporting could be a cause of electoral violence, especially if the media outlet or platform is very popular and many listeners are uneducated (Osborn, 2008). According

to responses from the interviews conducted, it was revealed that if sensational reporting is carried out in newspapers and TV stations, it is less harmful, confirming the research of Heger (2015). They were of the view that educated people are those who normally read newspapers, and TVs are not easily moveable gadgets, so fewer people in the constituencies may listen to the reportage from such outlets. And it is very unlikely for an educated person to be easily carried out to foment trouble when a piece of false news is broadcast. However, if false information is reported on community radio stations, the effects could be devastating. Respondents said that radios are mobile and less expensive, and almost all cell phones have a radio, which makes sensational reports on them very dangerous. On specific information that could trigger violence, a participant said:

> The media can accentuate or even promote national prejudices or tensions during controversial elections, which is a severe problem in many African nations where election-related violence is on the rise. Information that usually triggers violence usually suggests that one political party is rigging the election or manipulating the electoral results. If the media carries hate speech, it could lead to violence during elections. Hate speech threatens democratic principles, social harmony, and peace. The principle dictates that to prevent electoral conflict, hate speech must be addressed at every opportunity (CS, 2: Filed Data, 2020).

This explains what Osborn (2008) described as the role of the media in electoral violence. According to Osborn, the media has played a dramatically negative role in the electoral process in some countries. Anderson and Lochery (2008) agreed with this fact about the media. According to their research, several electoral observers pointed to the negative role the media played during the 2007 Kenyan general election as one of the principal causes of the outbreak of violence that led to the killing of 1,133 people and the making of more than 600,000 Kenyan refugees. In an interview with a key respondent in Kasoa, she said that:

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> The media has a great role to play in elections because most of the electorate rely on it for the information on which they form their perception. If the media err in their reporting, it is very dangerous because it can cause violence when passions are inflamed by such comments. The most serious report is when the media blends politics and ethnicity, and, in doing so, demeans one ethnic group. This could trigger electoral violence (EA, 4: Field Data, 2020).

A vibrant and free media that permits freedom of expression is considered one of the integral features of a good democracy. However, it must be known that media freedom comes at a cost, as ethical breaches and false and biased reporting can lead to violence and war. Unprofessionalism, biased reportage, and the publication of consummate lies and sensational stories can lead society into deep trouble, especially during elections when tension is high (Africa Watch, 1993).

In an interview with a police officer, he averred that the use of provocative speech and insults in the media, especially during electioneering periods in Ghana, has risen in recent times due to the vast range of communication platforms that have become available and easily accessible to people. The use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to communicate has made the transmission of information very easy. Chambas (2016) warned that the inappropriate use of the media during elections could trigger violence. However, some respondents did not fully agree with the claim that the media could trigger violence during elections in the Awutu-Senya East and the Odododiodio constituencies. Some politicians and even media personnel, in interviews, said that the politics of insults is widespread in Ghana; they condemned it, but they did not believe it was one of the causes of electoral violence in the two constituencies. A participant said:

> Insults are part of politics in Ghana and Africa in general. If you fear being insulted, then don't get into politics. And you know that the best place to release an insult is through the media, especially the radio

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stations. Some of them are mere jokes, and I do not think that because of political insults, electoral violence could occur (PP, 4: Field note, 2020).

4.2.2 Political vigilantism

Respondents were asked whether political vigilante groups (thugs) from political parties could cause electoral violence. Responses from the questionnaire from the Awutu-Senya East Constituency show that 77 (96.3%) agreed, 2 (2.5%) were not certain, and one (1.25%) disagreed. 96.3% of the respondents agreed with the assertion that vigilantism is one of the underlying causes of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East Constituency. Responses from the questionnaire from the Odododiodio constituency also show that 74 (92.5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) were not certain, and the respondents who disagreed were 3.75%. About 92% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, showing that vigilantism is known to be one of the underlying causes of electoral violence in the Odododiodio Constituency. The data from Odododiodio was like the information obtained from the Awutu-Senya East Constituency on this issue. This is shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Political Vigilantism Causes Electoral Violence
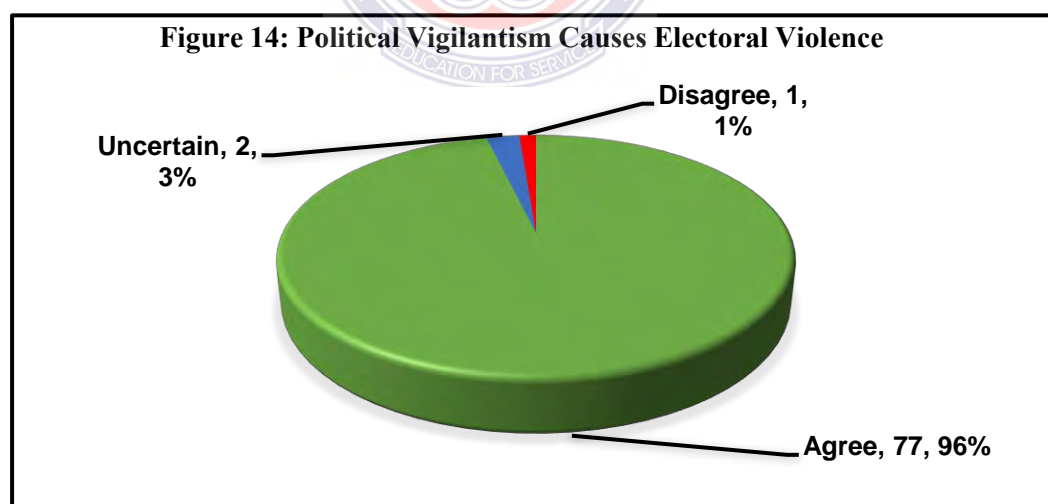
Source: Field Data, 2020

Vigilante groups are strongly built men (Macho-men) used by politicians during elections to perpetuate their diabolical agenda. This is in line with a survey by Bob-Milliar (2014) and Gyampo, Graham, and Bossman (2017), which reported that most Ghanaians think

vigilante groups have the potential to disrupt the country's democratic growth if not controlled. In explaining political vigilantism, a participant said:

> Vigilantism is when a person or a group of people "take the law into their own hands" to protect or advance their interests. In this way, all vigilantism is political because it always involves the use of illegal power against others who are perceived to be a threat to those interests. However, when we speak of "political vigilantism" we mean specifically the use of vigilantes in the name of partisan politics (CS, 2, Field Data, 2020).

In an interview, a participant averred that almost all violence that occurs on Election Day is caused by vigilantes. He recounted the time three South African ex-police officers were arrested for training private security personnel of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) presidential candidate, Nana Akufo Addo, and his running mate, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (Gyampo et al., 2017). According to the respondent, these ex-police officers were illegally training some members of NPP vigilante groups to foment trouble in the 2016 general elections. The NPP admitted importing the three into the country, saying it was important for their flag bearer and running mate to be protected ahead of the 2016 election.

The use of drugs among political vigilantes was raised as a major concern by some respondents in the two constituencies. Respondents mentioned the use of tramadol and other hard drugs to influence their actions. A respondent explained that having consumed these drugs, political vigilantes perpetrate crimes without consideration for their victims. A few respondents were aware of and knew the recently passed Vigilantism and Related Offences Law Act, 2019 (Act 999) to tackle vigilantism and related offences. Moreover, sceptics do not think the Act is necessary and believe more efforts should be channelled toward enforcing existing laws. A participant said that:

> For us to have a peaceful election, we should be able to dissolve these groups (vigilantes or violent groups), but I don't think we can measure up to these groups because they are well-trained and have objectives, including providing security. During election periods, they want to make sure they achieve the objectives they have been trained to accomplish. As a matter of urgency, we need to dissolve or educate these groups so we can have a peaceful election (EO, 3: Field Data, 2020).

Political vigilantism has become an emerging phenomenon in the Ghanaian political and electoral system, and the respondents in the two constituencies believed it was one of the major causes of violence during elections. These responses were similar to the research findings of Gyampo (2012), who found that political vigilantism is a source of electoral violence in Ghana. In an interview, a key respondent in Odododiodio said that he believed vigilante groups could cause electoral violence.

The respondent explained that vigilantes serve as bodyguards for political leaders, and they are mostly uneducated. Serving as bodyguards for politicians may be a good reason for creating such a group, but they are also used by the same politicians to intimidate voters, especially in areas considered to be strongholds of opposing parties. They are mostly used to disrupt the electoral process when the politician they support perceives defeat. Another participant who agreed with the above statement by EO 3 said:

> During the 2016 elections, there were just a few authorised special electoral courts. In actuality, the laws that are intended to punish those who commit crimes relating to elections are applied laxly. Especially regarding the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999), there appears to be a lack of political will to implement the law. According to Section 10 of the Act 999, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General may issue Legislative Instruments (LI) to implement regulations. Even though the Government emphasised the Act on August 23, 2019, the LI was not produced till now (PC, 2; Field Data, 2020).

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These responses from the respondents support the claims made in works by Nnamdi-Okafor (2015) and Gyampo, Graham, and Bossman (2017) that politicians hire vigilante groups to protect their party candidates. However, because some lack adequate training in crowd control, they sometimes make grievous mistakes that lead to political violence.

4.2.2.1 Voter registration disrupted by vigilantes

Voter registration is a technically challenging and frequently delicate process in the election cycle. It was known from the study that vigilantes are employed by political parties to ensure credible voter registration. It was confirmed by respondents from the NPP and NDC that multiple voter registrations, electoral registers containing the names of deceased or non-existent people, registration of minors, incorrectly assigning voters to the proper polling station, and other problems can all influence electoral outcomes. As a result, the quality of voter registration is a major priority for all political players contesting elections.

Election-related violence may be triggered by voter registration manipulation or beliefs that it has occurred.

> The Electoral Commission needs to be more careful about the way it does its work. When they make mistakes in their work, it can easily turn the country into a conflict zone. There are too many irregularities in the voter register that they have exhibited recently. You cannot even understand them. Some names don't match the picture, and some voters cannot find their names in the register. The EC could resolve this problem, but it would create suspicion among the voters. This nearly led to violence in Kasoa (EA, 1: Field Data, 2020).

According to the above respondent, there were severe irregularities in Ghana's 2020 voter registration phase in the Awutu Senya East Constituency that resulted in violence that disrupted the registration. The participant said that the problem had been identified

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and could be resolved by the EC, but the vigilantes would not have the patience for a peaceful resolution. Several voter registration centres in the Awutu-Senya East constituency were destroyed by supporters of the two main political parties, the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Furthermore, when a journalist was reporting on the underage being brought to be registered by politicians to a radio station, the journalist covering the process was assaulted by the vigilantes. Commenting on this, a participant said:

> Most Ghanaians, in general, have no understanding of election regulations, particularly those that govern voter registration and voting. Most violent occurrences involving voting and registration centre on issues of eligibility, particularly those involving the definition of a foreigner and the difficulty in recognising minors (PO, 1; Field Data, 2020).

Finding the primary motivations for joining vigilantism organisations, respondents cited employment, rewards for services, acceptance within organisations, retaliation, protection, and protection from the authorities. A small percentage of respondents are aware of and knowledgeable about the recently passed Vigilantism and Related Offences Law Act, 2019 (Act 999), which addresses vigilantism and related offences. Additionally, many argue that the Act is not essential and that greater efforts should be focused on enforcing already-existing laws. A participant averred:

> Vigilante organisations' activities increasingly overlap with post-election, transitional, and governing periods and go beyond elections. This indicates that vigilantism is progressively taking root in Ghana, and Ghanaians are concerned about the blight of their apparent contempt for the law and propensity for impunity (PC, 1: Field Data, 2020).

The frequent confiscations of state property, assaults on state institutions, public servants, and residents, as well as the mayhem these actions generate during elections, particularly during by-elections, have drawn a great deal of public criticism and condemnation. Following the most recent vigilante incident at the *Ayawaso* West Wuogon by-election on January 31, 2019, the president acted quickly in response to widespread public outrage and calls for action to end Ghana's vigilantism (CODEO, 2020).

4.2.3 Unemployment among young people

Respondents were asked whether youth unemployment could be an underlying cause of electoral violence. Responses from the Awutu-Senya East show that out of the 80 respondents, 78 (97.5%) agreed, 2 (2.5%) were not certain, and none of the respondents disagreed. Responses from the Odododiodio constituency show that out of the 80 respondents, 71 (88.7%) agreed, 7 (8.7%) were not certain, and 2 (2.5%) disagreed. The 97.5% of Awutu-Senya East and 88.7% from the Odododiodio constituencies indicate that a greater percentage of the respondents agree that youth unemployment is an underlying cause of electoral violence during elections. This is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Youth Unemployment is an Underlying cause of Electoral Violence

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awuru S-E	78	2	0
Odododiodioo	71	7	2
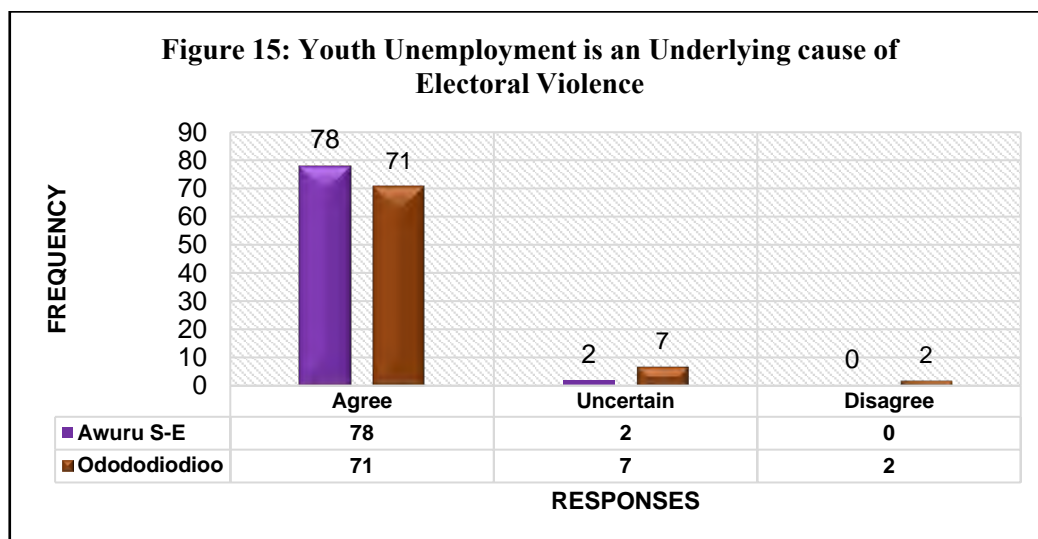
Source: Field Data, 2020

Despite young people's ability to effect positive change in democratic processes, they can also be involved in election-related violence. It was revealed from the interviews that,

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although most young people are neither violent nor interested in violence, political leaders sometimes successfully manipulate and mobilise them to initiate or escalate violent actions to support their political objectives. The research by Abbink and Gerti supports this view from the respondents. According to Abbink and Gerti (1999), in countries with histories of electoral violence, there is evidence that some youth groups have developed strong ties with political parties or armed opposition groups, while in others, it is the youth wings of political parties that have been directly involved in violent activities.

In an interview with a key respondent on this subject, he explained that advanced countries usually do not experience electoral violence because most of the youth who engage in violent acts are gainfully employed. To him, one key reason why youth engage in violence is that they are idle. This is in line with the findings of Collier and Hoeffler (2004). They were of the view that a high rate of unemployment could trigger violence.

In international development, the idea that unemployment is a strong probable cause or driving factor behind electoral violence and violent conflict is very common. It is thought that unemployment fuels extremism, recruits people into violent gangs, and sparks participation in insurgencies (Fischer, 2012). The review of the literature examines the evidence for a causal relationship between youthful unemployment and violence in developing nations, with a particular emphasis on criminality, gang violence, and domestic violence (Collier & Hoeffel, 2000b). Although a strong correlation between teenage unemployment and violence is popularly believed, there is little hard data to support this claim. The problem is not that the data refutes a connection; rather, there are not enough of them to do so.

Another participant interviewed almost shared the same view as Collier and Hoeffler (2004) on youth unemployment and its effect on elections. She said most young men who

are working will not have time to engage in electoral violence. Those who engage in violence during elections are mostly unemployed youth. Most of them do that to obtain material benefits or political appointments when their leader wins the election. She concluded by saying harsh economic conditions in the country are a contributing factor to the perennial electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East constituency.

Respondents' opinions that youth unemployment and economic hardship can lead to electoral violence are also supported by the findings of Cramer (2010) and Urdal (2004). These two researchers suggested that youth unemployment is linked to electoral violence and is among the main causes of insurgencies or civil wars in the world. In an interview with a key respondent, she opined that:

> It is critical to pay attention to these unemployed young people. Unemployment affects a large section of our population under the age of thirty (30), accounting for around 51% of the population. They are young, strong, and energetic, with little or no education and no money – they are poor. They engage in acts of violence without thinking. There will always be a supply of young, adventurous people willing to commit any act of violence at the behest of anyone who has the money to feed them if many of them have very little education, no job, and no money. And it's a ticking time bomb for Ghana (CS 3: Field Data, 2020).

A traditional leader in the Awutu-Senya East Constituency was also of the view that it is the youth who usually engage in electoral violence. He said that the majority of the actors in electoral violence are young people. Older men and women will hardly do that, even though they know some unscrupulous adult citizens may engage in these acts of violence, but they are few. This age group cited by the respondent confirms the research of Agyemang (2013) who provided evidence. A participant said:

> Unemployment among young people who feel neglected in society is susceptible to recruitment into a group with the intent of fomenting

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> violence or threatening opponents during elections. These unscrupulous acts are mostly done by the youth; those between 18 and 40 years of age are those who usually engage in electoral violence (TR 2: Field Data, 2020).

In the 2016 elections, the police arrested 12 people who engaged in violence at two polling stations. All of them were under 40 years old (Commonwealth Report, 2016). In an interview with an opinion leader, it came to light that the youth foment trouble during elections because they have no work to do. Therefore, a little motivation from the ones who will benefit from the violence will push them to foment trouble. He said, "I do not think a productive young person will engage in electoral violence". Most of the youth who engage in electoral violence are uneducated too, usually school dropouts. Almost all the respondents interviewed agreed that youth unemployment is an underlying cause of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East and the Odododiodio constituencies. Interestingly, all the respondents interviewed in both constituencies consensually agreed that if most of the youth in Ghana are gainfully employed, the police will have little work to do during election periods.

4.2.4 Winner-takes-all politics

The researcher wanted to find out if winner-takes-all politics could be an underlying cause of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East and the Odododiodio constituencies. Out of the 80 respondents from Awutu-Senya East, 78 (97.4%) agreed, one (1.3%) was not certain, and another (1.3%) disagreed. Surprisingly, only one respondent disagreed with this assertion from Awutu-Senya East.

This means that most of the respondents were of the view that the "winner-takes-all" style of politics can lead to electoral violence. In the Odododiodio constituency, out of the 80 respondents, 69 (86.3%) agreed that winner-take-all politics could be an underlying cause

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of electoral violence. About 7.5% were uncertain, and 6.25% did not agree. This is presented in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Winner-Takes-All Politics is an underlying cause of Electoral Violence

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
■ Awutu S-E	78	1	1
■ Odododiodioo	68	6	6

RESPONSES
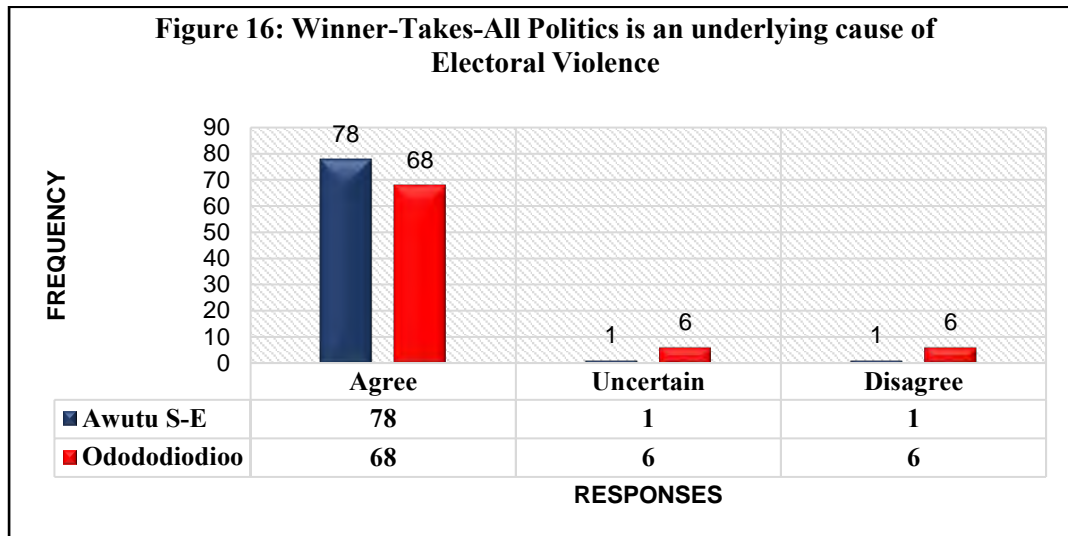
Source: Field Data, 2020

Considering the manifestos of all the political parties in the 2020 election in Ghana, it was evident that all promised to improve the lives of Ghanaians when voted into power. None of the political parties claimed to seek power to advance the living conditions of their members alone. Each political party may have at least one unique agenda for the country that other parties may not have. However, when they win power, a different attitude is exhibited. Gyimah-Boadi (1997) asserted that when a political party wins power and all appointments go to its members alone, the next election could experience more violence.

In an interview, a respondent said that one would expect that after elections, all national resources, including human beings, would be harnessed to achieve a national goal, but the opposite is what has been experienced in Ghana over the years. This confirms the research of Dennis (2007). To him, positions in government are not given on merit but by political party identity cards. A respondent said:

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> It is only the political opposition party that complains about the winner-takes-all mantra. However, if they win the election, instead of abandoning the mantra and running an all-inclusive government, they will continue with it (TR, 2: Field Data, 2020).

An interviewee also explained that he would not vote in any elections for his political party again if they allowed members of opposition parties to take part in government affairs and hold positions. He explained that when they were using their money and strength to go around campaigning for votes and people were beating and insulting them, they were not contributing. Another respondent agreed that the winner-takes-all style must continue. He said if you allow people from the opposition into the government, you must start writing your handover notes. They will sabotage any effort the government makes to fulfil campaign promises to the electorate so that his party will have the opportunity to come to power in the next election.

A key respondent explained that it has been the practise that, once a political party assumes the reins of governance after a general election, political appointments become exclusive to its members only. In the practise of "winner-takes-all, members of the opposition parties have no right to have any official appointed to most state-owned institutions, regardless of their qualifications and expertise. Public facilities like toll booths and public places of convenience are forcibly closed by members and party functionaries of the political parties that won power. Other respondents agreed that in a winner-takes-all system, party loyalists become contractors overnight and begin to win and execute government projects regardless of their qualifications. Another voter respondent said:

> We do not give food meant for children to dogs. This is what the Bible says. To give work or a contract to someone from the opposition party— God forbid. Someone who could even kill you during campaign time

does not deserve to be in your government. Any position in the government will have a party faithful to it. They are our rivals, and we will treat them as such. When they come to power, I know they will not give me any appointments in their government (PP 1: Field Data, 2020).

Every political party fears the prospect of being in opposition because being out of office opens the door to accountability, which could have disastrous implications. Again, if you lose an election, you may be out of work until your party regains control in succeeding elections. Even while elections yield victors and losers, this leads to violence because no one wants to lose.

In an interview with a key respondent on this topic, he explained that because of winner-takes-all politics, some state institutions engage in selective applications for vacant positions, giving preference to those who are affiliated with the political party in power. The problem associated with this made Cretz (2015) tell countries that practise "winner-takes-all" to reconsider the system, which, to him, has marred the democratic credentials of most African countries. Winner-takes-all leads to violence as no one wants to lose, even though elections produce winners and losers. In an interview with a key respondent on this topic, he said:

Ghana's political structure does not provide for "power sharing" procedures. What options are available if a political party loses a parliamentary seat in an election? Is it possible to get a lower-level appointment with a winner-takes-all mentality? Politics in Ghana is the key driver of violence. We lack power-sharing arrangements in our system. In the first post, somebody beat you by a margin of one vote and won an election. This gives him or her complete control. The presidential system, which consists of two terms of office, is majoritarian (50 per cent plus one) in which the winner picks thousands of officers, all of whom are appointed by his political party. So, if you mobilise resources as a losing party to even contest, you do not get

anything at the end of the day. These kinds of practises put pressure on others to be violent (PP 1: Field Data, 2020).

Due to Winner-takes-all politics, elections, which are supposed to be a contest of ideas, have become contests for national resources, leading to violence, are employed to win political power, irrespective of the consequences, confirming the research of Dennis (2007) and Nwolise (2007), who found in their research that winner-takes-all politics is a cause of much electoral violence.

4.2.5 Culture of Impunity

Most of the respondents were of the view that if a culture of impunity is tolerated in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies, it could motivate the youth to foment trouble during elections. Responses received from the Awutu-Senya Constituency show that out of the 80 respondents, 55 (68.7%) agreed, 22 (27.5%) were not certain, whilst the respondents who disagreed were 3 (3.6%). Responses received from the Odododiodio Constituency show that 65 (81.3%) agreed that a culture of impunity and corruption can lead to electoral violence, 10 (12.5%) were uncertain, and 5 (6.3%) disagreed with the assertion. These assertions are shown in Figure 17.

Figure: 17: Culture of Impunity Leads to Electoral Violence
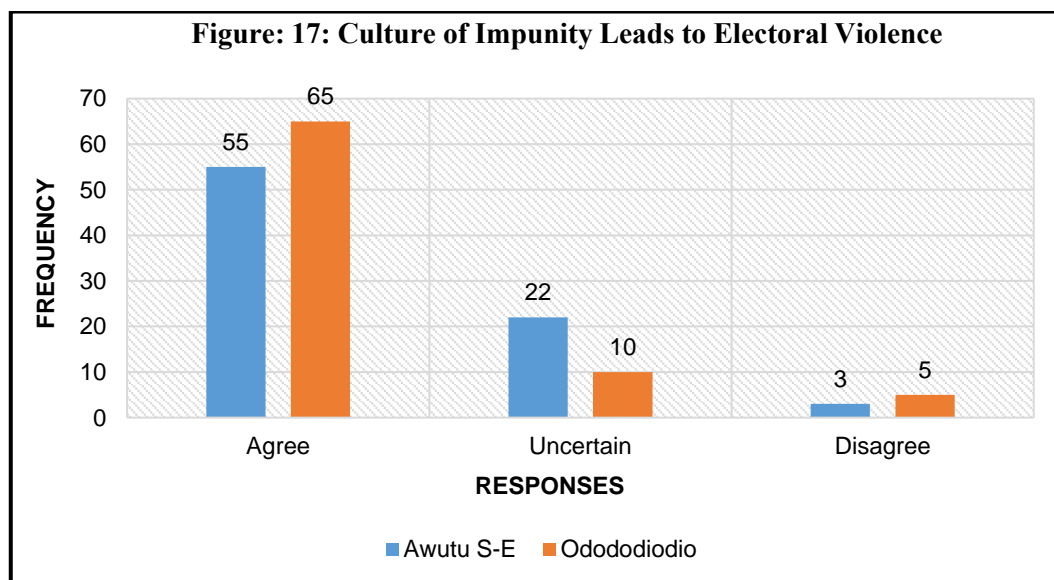
Source: Field Data, 2020

A "culture of impunity" is a term used to describe the situation in which a social group or an individual has the mentality that they can do whatever they want and still be exempt from punishment (Solita, 2012).

In an interview with a key respondent, he explained that the high levels of impunity in the body politic of young democracies such as Ghana were because some of those institutions that had been tasked with making sure citizens obeyed rules and regulations were weak and ineffective. He said Ghana could only succeed if it built a critical mass of citizens who could reason beyond partisanship and attempt to strengthen its institutions. He further explained that punishment must be predictable; that is, one must be able to foretell what is likely to happen when he or she flouts the rules. It is when the rules are well known, enforced, and internalised that we can say there are strong institutions in Ghana.

A respondent in an interview said that the culture of impunity occurring in the state has many people in authority behind it. He explained that sometimes there is a government official who has promised the actors of violence and crimes that they will not be punished for doing the wrong. Therefore, people misbehave and think they will not be held accountable for their misdeeds or actions. A participant explained that:

> The NDC and NPP supporters are to blame for all the violence that takes place during elections. For instance, the NDC supporters in the Volta region and other parts of the country who burned down government vehicles in 2012 to protest the president's nominees for DCE positions were not dealt with according to the laws of this country. This has encouraged others to do the same after the 2016 elections. If it continues like this, people will disturb the electoral process one day, which will lead to war (CS, 3: Field Data, 2020).

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The view of the participants that a culture of impunity could lead to electoral conflict was supported by Boafo-Arthur (2008). Boafo-Arthur (2008) cited the culture of impunity as a cause of electoral violence in most developing countries. According to him, most countries that experienced electoral violence had not handled previous acts of violence very well, which therefore motivated others to do the same in the future.

The two dominant political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP, introduced a culture of impunity, according to another respondent. He said, "Ghanaians must tell NDC and NPP leaders that Ghana does not belong to them alone." In another interview, the respondent was of the view that the essence of choosing leaders to manage the state is to ensure that individuals' lives and properties are protected. To him, the issue of impunity has entered the fabric of the country to the extent that any group of individuals, in the name of political activism, can burn down government and individual properties and go unpunished. Such individuals do not just go unpunished; they also go around bragging and proclaiming their might in public.

Another key participant explained that impunity benefits political leaders, and it will be very difficult for them to stop it. He said that if the youth burn down the state and individuals' properties, they will go free in the name of political activism. According to Nnamdi-Okafor (2015), if perpetrators of electoral violence are sure they will go unpunished, they are likely to repeat the act or intensify it, and others who were previously afraid to commit such acts will join too.

For Aning and Lartey (2009), the ineffectiveness of state institutions, especially the judiciary and police service, in punishing offenders of the law is a key factor that encourages electoral violence in a country. Rauchfuss and Schmolze (2007) added that the ability of those who engage in electoral violence to protect themselves from

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prosecution and punishment produces not only an incessant loss of trust in the justice system for survivors but a continuing psychological threat to future elections.

A respondent explained that during the 2016 election in the Odododiodio constituency, the state apparatus sat unconcerned and looked on as some unidentified young men perpetrated violence at a polling station and went unpunished. According to this respondent, the police have "teeth, but they cannot bite". This is because they are controlled by the central government, the incumbent government, and other unseen forces. The Ghana police service could easily prevent electoral violence if they wanted to, but they are afraid to be professional because they want to protect their jobs, and this prevents them from being effective. A respondent averred:

> The police are not independent at all; this is very sad. They look on as people perpetrate violence. They will only arrest you if they see that you are an ordinary citizen with no support from the big man (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

According to Aning (2001), even though most democratic countries in Africa have some strong punishments for those who engage in electoral violence, often those who fall victim to these rules are not punished according to the law. Those who are punished are the less privileged ones. Citizens know that the police and other state institutions have the responsibility of ensuring violent, free elections, but they are not effective due to corruption. This is in line with the research of Rose-Ackerman (2001), who said that if most of the people in a country perceive corruption in public institutions, it diminishes the trust they have in them and increases resentment and impunity.

The study has revealed that the supporters of the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress are identified as the main causes of electoral tension and violence in the two constituencies. This is not surprising since the competition for power is

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between these two front parties. Competitive elections are, by their very nature, conflicting processes aimed at mobilising divergent interests in society and stimulating political competition between political actors and groups (Bob-Milliar, 2014).

4.2.6 Arms proliferation

A question was posed to ascertain if the proliferation of arms in the country an underlying cause of electoral violence could be. Responses received from respondents in the Awutu-Senya East Constituency show that 41 (51.3%) agreed, 33 (41.25%) were not certain, whilst 6 (7.5%) disagreed.

Responses received from respondents in the Odododiodio Constituency also show that 50 (62.5%) agreed, 29 (36.3%) were not certain, whilst one (1.3%) disagreed. This is shown in Figure 18. Most of the respondents (above 50%) in both constituencies agree that the proliferation of arms can cause electoral violence, which is an indication that it could be one of the triggers of violence during elections.

Figure 18: Arms Proliferation leads to Electoral Violence

RESPONSES	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	41	33	6
Odododiodioo	50	29	1
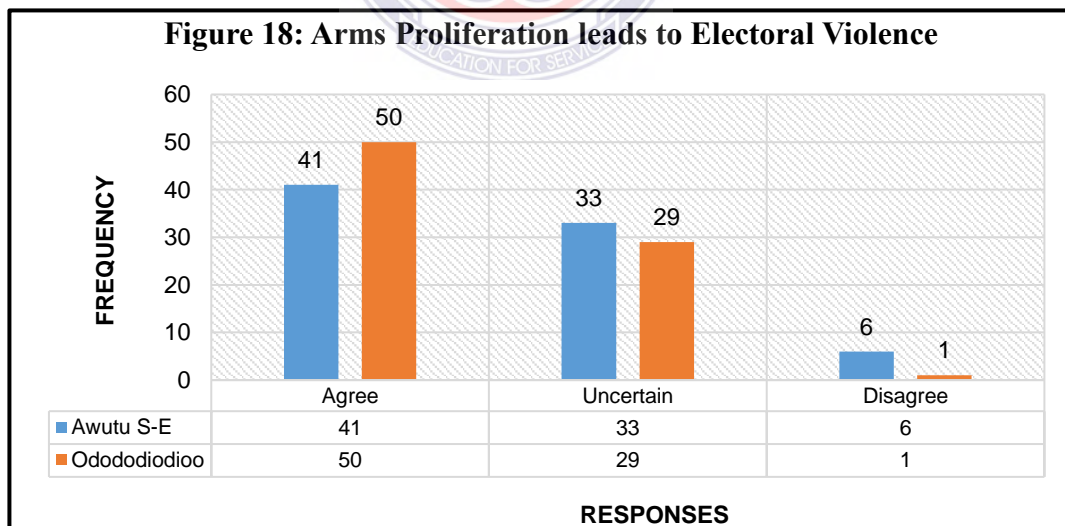
Source: Field Data, 2020

One key indicator of the capacity of political actors to commit violence during elections is the availability and accessibility of arms and ammunition. A survey conducted by the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and the Kofi Annan International

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Peacekeeping Training Centre in 2015 confirmed this fact. In their survey, they found that more than 2.3 million arms are in circulation in Ghana, but only about 40% of those weapons are registered with mandated authorities. The 1.3 million illegal arms in circulation in Ghana signify a terrifying capacity and a ticking time bomb for mass violence in the country, or at least political provocation during elections.

A respondent explained that in almost every country, the existence of small and light weapons is very important. She clarified that these weapons help to maintain both national and continental peace and security. However, when it falls into the wrong hands, it can be very dangerous. It motivates people to engage in violence at the least provocation, especially during elections.

According to Hoetu and Applerh (2012), there were seven gun-related incidents during the 2016 biometric voter registration process in the Awutu Senya East Constituency, some of which briefly disrupted the registration process. One of these communities was the Awutu-Senya East Constituency.

In an interview, a respondent who is a policeman explained that the proliferation of arms and ammunition makes electoral violence easy. The proliferation worsens during electioneering periods as more arms are imported or smuggled into the country to engage in war in case the election turns violent. He further explained that after the run-off election in 2008, there were reports of a crowd armed with small arms, machetes, and other implements who marched to the premises of the Electoral Commission to protest suspicions of vote rigging. This could have started a violent conflict in Ghana.

The study by Hickman (2011) lends credence to the participant's claim that the spread of small guns in a nation may result in election violence. Hickman noted that the anxiety induced by the possibility of violence from small arms possessed by vigilante

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organisations of some political parties could dissuade people from casting their ballots on Election Day.

A respondent said that, before the 2016 elections, there were reports about armed men moving from one polling station to another in the Odododiodio constituency to hijack ballot boxes to rig elections. This could cause electoral violence if the opposing groups fought back.

Another respondent said that the 2020 biometric voter registration also saw about seven gun-related incidents at polling stations. Some temporarily disrupted the registration exercise. These are indications that people may choose to express their frustration, suspicion, and dissatisfaction with the outcome of the elections by resorting to the use of arms if they are available, as happened in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010.

According to Aning (2001), the sub-region has seen protracted armed conflict over the last two decades. Small arms circulate within West Africa through leaky international borders and are used to facilitate illegal or criminal acts, including electoral violence and armed robbery. In a country like Ghana, the production of arms also takes place at the local or domestic level, which makes access to them very easy (Elischer, 2013).

A respondent from the National Peace Council explained that, in July 2016, the police in the Upper East region impounded a vehicle that was carrying AK-47 rifles and ammunition. In August 2016, too, the Accra Police impounded 800 rounds of ammunition that were being transported to Techiman in the Bono East Region. That same month, another interception of 21 boxes of "Red Star" ammunition cartridges in the *Bimbilla* North District in the Northern Region took place. All of these happened in the year 2016, less than six months before the general elections on December 7. This respondent thought that these weapons were meant to destabilise the 2016 elections.

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In an interview, a religious leader explained that it was the collective responsibility of state institutions, civil society organisations, and citizens to ensure peaceful and armed violence-free elections. While the security agencies and the National Commission on Small Arms work to control the illicit proliferation of small arms and their effect on elections and to sensitise the public to the dangers involved, all stakeholders must execute their duties diligently. The use of small arms in elections has far-reaching implications for the country. The proliferation of small arms has the potential to undermine the credibility of elections and weaken efforts aimed at consolidating democracy. Arguably, the election violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1993 laid the foundation for the civil war in 1997. The proliferation of small arms in a country makes recourse to electoral violence more likely and more destructive (Aning, 2001).
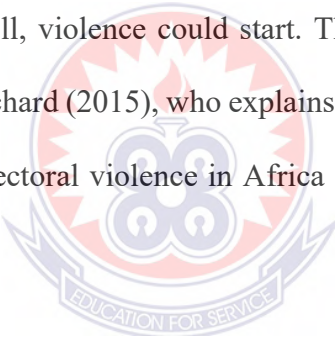
Small arms could be used to cause violence throughout the election process: before, during, and after the election. Before elections, activities such as the compilation of the voter's register are affected by the abuse of small arms, which increases the susceptibility to violence. Corrupt people use small arms to intimidate prospective voters during voter registration, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to cast their vote.

4.2.7 Mutual mistrust in systems and institutions

According to some participants, a lack of mutual trust among stakeholders has also contributed to electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East constituency. A National Peace Council official stated that mutual mistrust is one of the causes of electoral violence in Ghana as a whole. Politicians do not trust each other. And this mistrust is somehow extended to the Electoral Commission (EC). This is because the opposition political parties do not trust the party in power, which is perceived to be controlling the EC.

A respondent gave an example: There was a perception that the Israeli firm Superlock Technology Limited (STL), which was contracted to transmit the 2016 electoral results from coalition centres to the EC strong room, was lured to manipulate votes and transmit electoral results in favour of the NDC.

Perceived suspicion also extends to regions and constituencies, especially in the strongholds of the two major political parties. An official from the EC further opined that there is a lack of understanding among the leadership of political parties and other stakeholders in the electoral process in Ghana and this breeds mistrust. Hence, people perceive electoral manipulations, even among EC officials, which may not be true. This leads to party agents questioning every process undertaken by the officials. If the explanation does not go well, violence could start. The views held by the respondents above are supported by Burchard (2015), who explains that mutual mistrust plays a major role in the occurrence of electoral violence in Africa and newly democratised states. A participant averred:

> There is a lack of information on the status of cases of electoral violence reported to the Police and the Court. This increases public anxiety and mistrust of the Police and Judicial Services. I think they must act on such cases with speed and publish the results to serve as a deterrent to others (CS3, Field Data, 2020).

A participant who shared his thoughts with the researcher said excessive partisanship, particularly shielding party faithful who go against the law from punishment, has been the major cause of lawlessness in the country, especially during elections. He explained that in a situation where everybody knows an influential politician who can give an order from above to undermine an attempt to enforce laws, impunity becomes the order of the day. Impunity supported by excessive partisanship, especially where political elites find

it difficult to deal with their own, means one can practically get away with murder. According to another respondent, until political leaders become bold enough to deal with their own when they go contrary to the law, the nation will continue to witness indiscipline among the citizenry during election periods. A participant averred that when it comes to elections, the police are very important, and the position of the IGP should not be politically appointed. He said:

> The police are sometimes afraid to do the right thing during elections out of fear of losing their job or being transferred to a remote place as punishment. I think that to solve this problem, the position of IGP should not be appointed by the ruling government. The IGP should be given the status of a superior court judge, whose removal from office cannot be based on the whims and caprices of the appointing authority. He said such constitutional arrangements should also ensure that the Minister of Interior could only give directives to the IGP in writing on matters of policy, not as to how the IGP should do his or her work. Such arrangements would embolden the IGP and the Police service to take decisive action against politically motivated infractions without fear of being removed or punished by the President (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

4.2.8 Urbanization and Demographic Structures

In-depth interviews with key informants in the Awutu-Senya East constituency showed that most of them blamed urbanisation and the demographic structures of the constituency as one of the underlying causes of electoral violence. In the follow-up question: *to you, what do you consider to be the reason why there is electoral violence in this constituency almost every time there is an election?* The key explanations received ascribe the higher rates of electoral violence to these three factors: (1) the degree of urbanisation and population density of the constituency; (2) the greater rates of migration and population growth in the constituency, where many foreigners live; and (3) the differences in

demographic structures between the constituency and other constituencies. The Commander of the Central-North Regional Police said:

> *Kasoa* has gained notoriety because of these Nigerians. We must keep surveillance on them and their activities so that if there is anything suspicious in their movement or work, we can inform the security agencies, especially the police (GP, 1: Field Data, 2020).

The police advised landlords to scrutinise foreign tenants accurately and register them with the Ghana Immigration Service to ensure they have the right resident permits to be in the country. A participant also averred:

> Recently, 70 out of the 340 persons arrested in a swoop at *Kasoa* and its environs in the Awutu Senya Municipality of the Central Region were foreigners and all the 340 are youth. They have been remanded by the *Ofaakor* Circuit Court. These foreigners, who were arrested by the police during an operation to clamp down on criminal activities in the municipality, were charged with engaging in electronic cyber fraud and entering Ghana without a permit. Officials from the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) allegedly extort monies from these Nigerians who usually stay illegally in the country and foment troubles during elections (EA 5, Field Data, 2020).

According to Participant E5, the Awutu Senya East constituency has a greater proportion of young people because it is a commercial town. Another popular answer to the question was that the rate of electoral violence and crimes is higher in the constituency due to the higher rate of inequalities among individuals, groups, and communities in terms of livelihood opportunities, access to resources, and self-identity. Therefore, the poor and unemployed in society are easily convinced to foment trouble with the least amount of motivation.

4.3 Human Rights Abuses Involved in Electoral Conflict

The second research question of this study examined the human rights issues inherent in electoral conflicts. In answering this question, the third research question, which is about the human rights implications of electoral violence, was also answered. The data was collected from leaders of political parties, grassroots party actors, traditional leaders, and victims of electoral violence, as well as verified media reports on electoral violence in the Odododiodio and Awutu-Senya East constituencies. The discussion has been done under the three-generation split of human rights proposed by Karel Vasak (1979). These three groups are:

1. First-generation (Civic and Political Rights),
2. Second generation (Social, Cultural, and Economic) and
3. Third generation (Solidarity Human Rights).

4.3.1 Abuse of civic and political rights

Electoral violence has a negative impact on the first generation of human rights. These are the civic and political rights of an individual. There are two subcategories of first-generation rights. The first subcategory focuses on physical and civil security standards.

This involves abstaining from torture, slavery, and other brutal practices. Norms of civil and political liberties or empowerment fall under the second sub-category. This includes liberties like the ability to practise one's religion freely and the right to vote. From the study, these rights were abused in the constituencies under study during the 2016 and 2020 general elections in Ghana in the following ways:

(a) *Physical assault and arbitrary arrests*

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced or witnessed physical assault, gunshots, killing, injuries, and arbitral arrest of individuals and groups before, during, and after the 2016 and 2020 elections. From the questionnaire, out of the 80 respondents from

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the Awutu-Senya East constituency, 70 (87.5%) agreed, 8 (10%) were uncertain, and 2 (2.5%) disagreed. In the Odododiodio constituency, out of the 80 respondents, 73 (91.3%) agreed, 5 (6.3%) were uncertain and 2 (2.5%) disagreed. This is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Physical Assault and Arbitrary Arrests

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	70	8	2
Odododiodioo	73	5	2
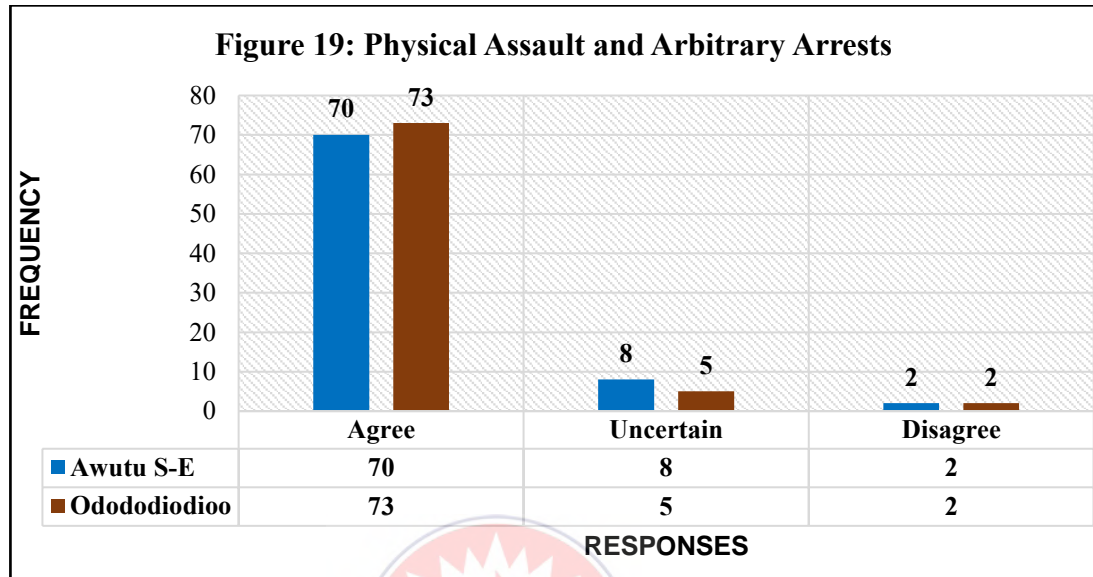
Source: Field Data, 2020

Electoral conflicts often have extensive negative effects on the economic, political, and social development of any country that experiences them. This is especially true in developing countries and countries in transition, where state institutions are weak, opportunities for economic gain through illegal acts are widespread, and people commit crimes with impunity (Alemika, 2011). Electoral conflicts can have disastrous effects on individuals as well as groups and even entire nations. Physical assault and arbitrary arrests are examples of abuses that are meted out to victims during elections. A victim of such human rights abuse had this to say:

> I cannot recall the exact date, but in December 2016, I and six others from the Awutu-Senya East constituency were arrested in "Rambo style" at a drinking spot and taken to the *Kasoa* police station. We were beaten before being arrested. We were told the arrest was at the request of the MCE of the area. For more than 3 hours, no reason was given for our arrest. When

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> we insisted on knowing the reason for the arrest, we were told we were planning to obstruct the NDC from organising their rally in the constituency. This was not true; however, we were detained for two days. But for the intervention of some chiefs and their elders, we might have remained in the cell for a longer period (EA, 1: Field Data, 2019).

A victim who also suffered arbitral arrest during electioneering activity from the Odododiodio constituency had this to say:

> On August 11, 2016, I and eight others were arrested and taken to the James Town police station. We were told the arrest was at the request of the leader of the ruling party (NDC). We did not know what we had done to be arrested. We were just campaigning for our political party, which was not against the law. Even though we were not charged formally with any crime, I and the other eight were detained for about 10 hours. I overheard one policeman saying to another, "Let's teach them a little lesson." How can this happen in a democratic country like Ghana? (EA, 2: Field Data, 2019).

Another victim from the Awutu-Senya East constituency who claimed that his rights were abused during the 2020 election reported that:

> I was arrested and detained in the *Kasoa* police cell for no reason. I was speaking my mind on an issue bothering me and my family, and two policemen came to arrest me and told me that I was needed at the police station. Because of my activism in the constituency, the incumbent MP saw me as a threat to his second bid and he was therefore monitoring me day and night. His men tried to bribe me to stop campaigning against her, but I was not corrupt, so I continued, and this led to my arrest (EA, 3: Field Data, 2020).

(b) *Arbitral arrested in Jamestown in 2020*

In an in-depth interview with a member of the NDC, he explained that two people were arrested following a violent incident at Jamestown in the Odododiodio constituency on Sunday, October 25, 2020. He said all those arrested were supporters of the National

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Democratic Congress (NDC). Meanwhile, it was the NPP and NDC that engaged in the electoral conflict. He quizzed: Why was it that only members of my party were arrested while the incident occurred between supporters of both the opposition NDC and the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP)?

According to this respondent, it was members of the NPP that instigated the violence; hence, arresting only supporters of the NDC as perpetrators of the act was unfair. To him, those who started the violence were walking free, and two of their (NDC) boys were arrested and kept in police cells for many hours. The respondent said that the Ghana Police Service revealed that the two people arrested in connection with the violence were those who initiated the disturbance. However, the two were innocent. Unlawful detention, or unlawful imprisonment, occurs when a person intentionally restricts another person's movement within any area without legal authority, justification, or the restrained person's permission. According to Africa Watch (1993), unlawful detention is a breach of human rights. According to Abdul-Gafaru and Crawford (2010), an unlawful detention is one attributable to the state when it has acted without valid legal authority. This generally gives rise to a civil claim for damages.

A participant alleged that the NDC members who were arrested by the police during the violence between them and the NPP on December 7, 2020, were all innocent. He recounted:

> On the day of the election, about 52 of our supporters who had come to the party's collation centre to submit their pink sheets, and, of course, others who were there to observe the process, were arrested by the police because of the unfortunate shooting by known hoodlums of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). But unfortunately, it was our people that got arrested. We managed to obtain bail for 48 of them, and later, 28 of them appeared before the court, where, luckily, they were all granted bail and

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were told to re-appear on February 3. The police should have arrested NPP supporters too, but because they are in power, they were not touched (EO, 1: Field Data, 2020).

One of the oldest human rights that every human must enjoy is personal liberty. It is found in the British Magna Carta of 1215 and the constitution of Ghana. Personal liberty is the freedom to behave as one pleases, limited by the laws and codes of conduct of the society in which one lives. An arrest without following proper procedure violates the rights of the victim. Larson (2017) agrees that certain acts, whether conducted by civilians or security agents, are and will always remain forbidden in all places. Violations against people's lives, health, or physical or mental well-being, including murder, torture (physical or mental), corporal punishment, and mutilation; infringements on personal dignity, such as humiliating and degrading treatment, and any other type of assault, cannot be acceptable during elections.

(c) *Injuries and pain*

On October 26, 2020, Graphic Online reported that peace walks by supporters of the NPP and NDC turned violent in Jamestown in the Odododiodio constituency on Sunday morning, October 25, 2020. It was reported that supporters of the two leading parties were hurling bottles and stones at each other amidst the firing of gunshots. Myjoyonline.com on October 26, 2020, also captioned this incident as Odododiodio clash. In the newspaper report, Nii Lante Vanderpuye confirms that the two arrested by the police for fomenting trouble were from the NDC and claims that the police were being selective.

The news had it that Mr Vanderpuye, the NDC Parliamentary candidate for the Odododiodio constituency, complained about the severity of injuries that members of his party sustained for merely embarking on a peaceful walk. He rejected all accusations of complicity in the Sunday morning violence levelled against him by his political opponent

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in the constituency, the NPP's Nii Lante Bannerman. You have organised your walk for Saturday. We allowed you, and we did not interrupt. We allowed you to do everything you wanted to do. But when we went to do ours on Sunday, suddenly, you organised thugs to pelt my people with bottles and stones, and even one of your boys came out with a gun and shot into the crowd, "he stated (October 26, 2020, Graphic Online).In the above statement, the NDC Parliamentary candidate for the Odododiodio constituency accused the NPP of assaulting his party members when they embarked on a peaceful health walk. In Figure 16 below, an NDC party member was at a hospital receiving medical care due to injuries sustained during a clash with the NPP on October 26, 2020. A respondent who witnessed this violence explained that:

> The walk began at the Opera Square in Accra and was routed through Rawlings Park, UTC, Arena, and James Town, and was designed to end at the starting point at the Opera Square. However, when the group got to the NPP's Odododiodio Constituency Office area, known as the "Blue Gate" around the High Street, a misunderstanding ensued between a group of young men who were in the "Blue Gate" area and some supporters of the NDC participating in the health walk. This led to severe violence (EO, 2: Field Data, 2020).

Aning and Danso (2012), Gyampo (2012), Bob-Milliar (2014), and Kendie and Osei-Kufour (2016) agreed with this finding. To them, electoral violence can lead to severe injuries to victims. Such injuries could render the victim disabled for his or her entire life. A participant said:

> Injuries inflicted on people during election violence affect their productivity. Injuries have a substantial influence on Ghanaians' well-being by leading many to early death, in addition to their immediate health repercussions. Productivity years are being squandered. Life years are lost due to disability and disability-adjusted life from electoral violence (EA 5, field data, 2020).

As a cruel violation of the right to bodily and mental integrity, torture strikes at the very foundation of the human personality. Therefore, it was eliminated from criminal proceedings during the Age of Enlightenment and is now outlawed by current international law, both treaty-based and customary, without exception, even in emergencies. Article 1 of the 1984 United Nations Convention against Torture defines torture as cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment. This is prohibited by Articles 7 and 10 of the ICCPR, of which Ghana has ratified (Alemika, 2011).

(d) Violence at Bukom Square in 2016

Several respondents commented on the recurrent electoral violence that takes place at Bukom Square in the Odododiodio constituency. Two serious incidents of electoral violence occurred at Bukom Square in 2016, according to the respondent, a senior police officer, on September 9 and November 8. The supporters of the NPP and NDC disagreed on an issue and started hurling stones, broken bottles, and sticks at each other, and while the police tried to intervene to ensure order, they clashed. According to him, where they got the stones, bottles, and sticks from was very strange because the venue for the debate was without stones, bottles, and sticks. As a result, the supporters of the two political parties planned and came prepared to attach themselves.

The police pushed back the crowd far from the podium, cordoned off the area, and whisked the two aspiring parliamentary candidates away into their vehicles to secure their safety. Then the police called for reinforcements because the level of violence was too much for the few police officers there to handle. Although the police were armed, they did not fire warning shots or tear gas to disperse the crowd, as that could have resulted in a bloody situation. Leaders in the predominant Ga community quickly intervened. The whole floor of the assembly had blood stains. Confirming this, a respondent said that:

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The supporters of the NPP and NDC had gathered at Bukom Square to cheer on their respective candidates, who were taking part in a parliamentary debate on the Accra-based radio station, 3FM 92.7 when tempers flared. The candidates for the NDC, incumbent Nii Lante Vanderpuije and the NPP's Nii Lante Bannerman, were ushered to the event grounds by hundreds of party faithful who chanted songs. The event kicked off peacefully with the five aspirants contesting the elections in the constituency discussing the relevant issues on their agenda and that of their party to justify why each is the best choice to represent the constituency in parliament. They jabbed each other and accused the incumbent MP of being responsible for the wrongs that were happening in the constituency. Supporters of the NPP's Bannerman arrived at the grounds with placards bearing inscriptions that attacked the NDC's Vanderpuije, something that incensed the supporters of the NDC (OD 3: Field Data, 2020).

Some of the placards, which were raised high, read: "MP Liar" and "MP Rapist." At the height of the debate, an NDC supporter moved out of the charged crowd to drop one GHC1 note on Mr. Vanderpuije. The NPP responded similarly with a Ghȼ10 note. The situation heightened the long-standing tension between the supporters of the two rival parties, causing each side to cast aspersions and insults on the other while the debate progressed. Anytime NDC's Vanderjuije takes the microphone to speak, the NPP supporters will raise their voices amidst the shouts of "away, away, and away." This, along with the inscriptions on the placards, angered Mr. Vanderpuije, who could not control his temper. But just about six minutes before the end of the debate, which was broadcast live on 3FM, an angry NDC supporter moved out of the crowd to the dais and punched one of the representatives of Mr Bannerman's. Then the situation degenerated into violence; many people were injured that day (source: TV3 news 2020).

In another development before the 2016 elections, Nii Lartey wrote for Citi FM Online on Tuesday, November 8, 2016, that NPP and NDC supporters clashed in the Odododiodio constituency after having a separate political rally. He stated in his writing that:

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Three New Patriotic Party (NPP) members were arrested over clashes between the governing National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Odododiodio constituency on November 8th, 2016. There were violent clashes between supporters of the incumbent Member of Parliament for the constituency and the NPP's parliamentary candidate, Nii Lante Bannerman. Many people were injured, and the NPP members who were arrested for starting the violence were detained in police custody.

The incumbent Member of Parliament, Nii Lante Vanderpuye, alleged that the NPP's Nii Lante Bannerman masterminded the attacks on his supporters when his team had ended a rally at Jamestown in the constituency. According to him, Mr Bannerman had organised some young men to attack his team members with stones, bottles, guns, machetes, and other weapons. The clashes reportedly occurred after separate campaign rallies held by the two aspiring MPs ended. Some supporters of the NPP earlier besieged the Jamestown Police Station, demanding the release of some of the men who were arrested after clashes (OD 2: Field Data, 2020).

(e) Shooting at Awutu-Senya East constituency in 2020

In an interview with a religious leader affiliated with the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), he observed with great concern the shooting incident that occurred at a registration centre during the voter registration exercise at the Awutu-Senya East Constituency on Monday, July 20, 2020. The leader said that even though no one was killed by the gunshot, death could have happened. He said the people living in the vicinity where the gun was fired were just lucky that the bullet did not kill anyone. He averred that what is more worrying is the involvement of the Member of Parliament for the area and Minister of Special Development Initiatives, Hon. Mavis Hawa Koomson. In a television interview, the minister publicly admitted her direct involvement in the shooting incident.

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According to the pastor, such acts, if allowed to continue, will result in the deaths of innocent souls, as has occurred in the Techiman South and Odododiodio constituencies. He therefore unreservedly condemned the unwarranted actions of the Minister in the strongest terms and called on the Ghana Police Service not to relent in their efforts to bring all perpetrators of the shooting incident to book by ensuring that justice and fair play are manifestly seen to be done in this matter. He averred that:

> Such high-profile incidents should not be countenanced by our state security. Acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect the electoral process, all in the context of electoral competition, should have no place in these worrying times with COVID-19 hanging over us. Violence by powerful incumbents like the minister should be condemned by all well-meaning Ghanaians (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

(f) Gunshot wounds and other injuries in ASE

A respondent recounted how two people sustained gunshot wounds near the Steps to Christ polling station in *Kasoa* in the Awutu-Senya East (ASE) constituency after some men in a black SUV car fired at them. A visit to the Ghana Police Service office at *Kasoa* confirmed this report. They said:

> They are on a chase for the occupants of the black 4×4 SUV car with registration Number GW 2375-20, from which the occupants shot into the crowd of voters at the Steps to Christ polling station (GP 1: Field Data, 2020).

Figure 16 shows the NDC secretary of the ASE constituency injured in electoral violence during the 2020 general elections in *Kasoa.*

(g) *Violation of the right to life*

The findings of this study show that lives were lost in the Odododiodio constituency through electoral violence in the 2020 elections. This undermines an individual's right to

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life. The circumstances under which lives were lost during the election were arbitrary and bizarre.

To confirm this, respondents were asked whether shootings and killings had ever taken place because of election violence in their constituencies in 2016 and 2020. From the questionnaire, out of the 80 respondents from the Awutu-Senya East constituency, 60 (75%) agreed, 19 (23.8%) were not certain, and one (1.3%) disagreed. Out of the 80 respondents in the Odododiodio constituency, 79 (98.7%) agreed, one (1.3%) disagreed, and none disagreed. Almost all respondents in the Odododiodio constituency believed that electoral violence could result in killings or murders. This is shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Loss of life through Murder

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	60	19	1
Odododiodioo	79	1	0

RESPONSES
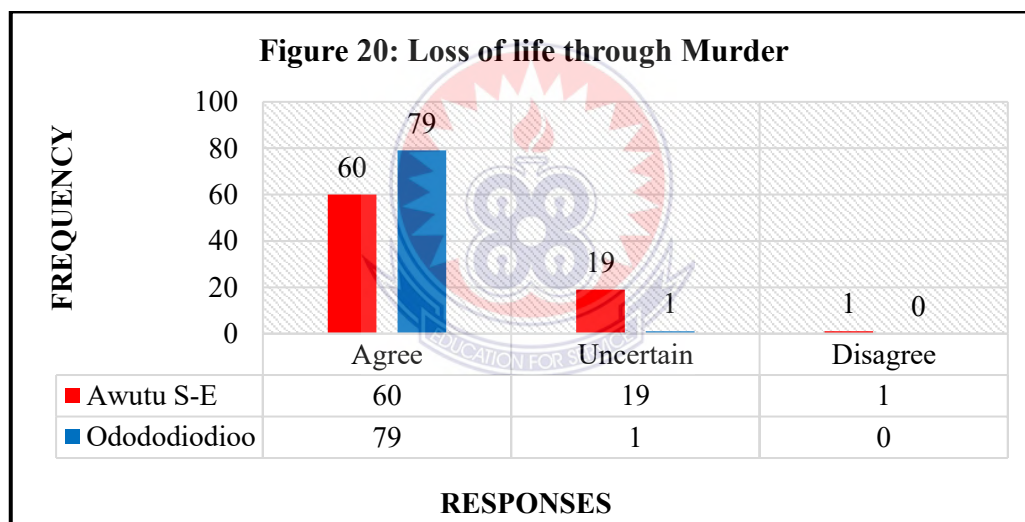
Source: Field Data, 2020

A respondent from the Awutu-Senya East said that:

> I usually hear of fighting and destruction of properties during elections, but I have never heard of any gunshots, killings, or kidnappings during elections in this constituency. I am not saying it can't happen, but it's unlikely. I sometimes hear about them reported on TV and radio, but I have not personally witnessed one in this constituency (EA, 4: Field Data, 2020).

A research participant from the Awutu-Senya East said that:

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> There were gunshots just behind my house, but no one was killed. I was told the perpetrator of the violence shot upwards into the sky as a form of warning shot to drive away prospective voters. Many people got scared when they heard the gun noise, and I think it might have put fear in people's hearts and stopped them from going out to vote. For killing, I have never heard of or seen one in this constituency (EA 5: Field Data, 2020).

(h)   *Killing at Odododiodio constituency in 2016*

All respondents were of the view that one of the election flashpoints in the Greater Accra Region is the Odododiodio Constituency, as confirmed in the police report (Appendix iv). According to them, every election held in the constituency since 2008 has recorded serious electoral violence in which many were injured, and some were murdered.

Another respondent averred that, before the 2016 elections, violence erupted on Friday evening, September 9th, 2016, when supporters of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) clashed. During the violence, an NDC supporter, a young lady, was stabbed and died at the hospital, and several others from both parties were injured to varying degrees. A visit to the family house of the victim mentioned earlier confirmed this to the researcher.

(i) *Two (2) Shot dead at Odododiodio constituency in 2020*

The clashes between political party supporters could lead to deaths, injuries, and the destruction of valuable items (WHO, 2008). This was confirmed in this study, as most of the respondents in the Odododiodio constituency said that electoral violence had led to the deaths of some individuals in the constituency. The respondents explained that vigilantes inflict pain, even on innocent individuals, which led to the deaths of two in the constituency. Sam Dowuona wrote for the Ghana News Agency online on Tuesday, December 8, 2020: Five NDC supporters were charged with murder after election violence in the Odododiodio Constituency. The Odododiodio constituency was one of the

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few that was hit by violence before, during, and after the 2020 presidential and parliamentary polls. A participant commenting on this said:

> The situation led to the deaths of two people. The MP for the constituency, Nii Lante Vanderpuye, was arrested to assist the police in investigating the violence but was later released. Over 50 supporters of the NDC were also picked up by the police over the incident. Some were arraigned before the court. According to the police, five of the supporters of the NDC were charged with conspiracy to commit murder (EO 5: Field Data, 2020).

On December 8, 2020, the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) announced that five people suspected to be connected to the disturbances that erupted in the Odododiodio constituency in the Greater Accra Region between supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) were arrested. According to him, a young girl and another man were confirmed dead after the shooting incident on the 2020 election day.

In an interview, a police officer at Odododiodio confirmed the shooting incident with more details. He said that the 2020 elections witnessed isolated violent cases in some polling stations in Accra. For example, there were gunshots at the Modark Hotel and the Constituency Collation Centre, both in the Odododiodio Constituency in the Greater Accra region. The shooting incidents left two people dead, and Mr. Edwin Nii Lante Vanderpuye, the incumbent MP, was arrested together with some of his supporters. Emmanuel Dompre, 36, and Rita Otoo, 15, died from the acts of these uniformed officers during the 2020 elections. Killings are one of the effects of electoral violence The right to life is the belief that a human being has the right to live and should not be killed by another entity (Ajulo, 1993). This right was infringed upon in the Odododiodio constituency during the 2020 elections.

This human right means that nobody, including the government, can end the life of a person through any means, including electoral violence (Alston, 2005). It also means the government should take appropriate measures to safeguard life by making laws to protect its citizens and, in some circumstances, by taking steps to protect individuals whose lives may be at risk. Article 13 (1) of the 1992 Constitution says that "no person shall be deprived of his life intentionally except in the exercise of the execution of a sentence by a court in respect of a criminal offence under the laws of Ghana of which he has been convicted."

The right to life is the most important human right, from which there can be no exceptions, not even during times of war or national emergency, according to the literature analysed for this study (Schwartz, 2009). Article 69(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 4(1) of the American Convention on Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights all forbid the willful taking of life.
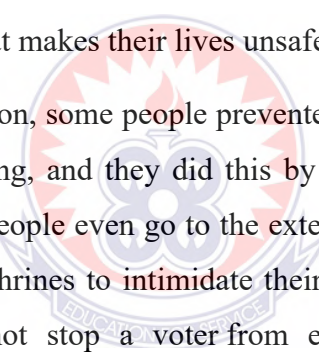
The electoral conflict in the two constituencies under study is abusing the rights of ordinary residents through torture and denying them the right to life. Article 13(1) of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana, states that no person shall be deprived of his life intentionally except in the exercise of the execution of a sentence by a court in respect of a criminal offence under the laws of Ghana of which he has been convicted. There can be no justification for the loss of life witnessed in the conflict. It has no legal basis and is arbitrary.

(j) *Fear and panic*

It was revealed in the study that another implication of electoral violence is the fear it puts on voters, which drives them away from exercising their franchise. According to

Dennis (2007), voter intimidation puts undue pressure on a voter or group of voters so that they will not register to vote, vote a particular way, or stop a voter from voting.

Intimidation can take a range of forms, including verbal, physical, or coercive. Voter intimidation violates the political rights of victims and affects the legitimacy of the entire election. From the questionnaire, all the respondents from the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies agreed that electoral violence can affect voter turnout. All the respondents from the two (2) constituencies revealed that low voter turnout was another effect of the electoral violence. A respondent explained that in the wake of heightened violence, the electorate, for fear of their lives, does not take any risk in voting. The frequent outbreaks of violence, according to some respondents, create a tense and intimidating atmosphere that makes their lives unsafe. A participant said:

> During the last election, some people prevented real or perceived political opponents from voting, and they did this by using threats and violence. Such unscrupulous people even go to the extent of invoking the names of deities, spirits, and shrines to intimidate their opponents, if they see that violence alone cannot stop a voter from exercising his franchise. A politician I saw hired a thug to use force or intimidation to prevent an eligible voter from exercising his franchise during the elections. Undue influence used by thugs to get their way includes threats to inflict physical or spiritual injury on a person if the latter refuses to do as ordered (EO 3: Field Data, 2020).

There is a general belief that if a person is cast under this sort of real or perceived spell of charm or spiritual force, he or she could be traumatised and emotionally disturbed in one way or another. According to the electoral laws of Ghana (2008), any physical attempt to stop an eligible person from voting is an electoral offence. However, the spiritual influence is hard to ascertain. Electoral violence does not only affect voter turnout; it also puts the credibility and legitimacy of electoral outcomes into disrepute.

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This, to them, does not ensure free and fair elections. Electoral violence because of the clashes between political parties and their supporters creates an intimidating and tense atmosphere, which influences people's choices of voting for fear of their lives. According to some participants, the theft of ballot boxes makes it difficult for supporters of losing candidates or parties to accept the outcome, which leads to a relapse of violence. Parliamentary candidates who win under conditions of violence, according to some respondents, are not legitimate in their eyes, hence they do not give them the support they need.

(k) *Abuse of human dignity through abusive language*

At its most basic, the concept of human dignity is the belief that all people hold a special value that is tied solely to their humanity. It has nothing to do with their class, race, gender, religion, ability, or any other factor other than their being humans (Butler, 2012). Participants in interviews indicated that the use of abusive songs and language has become a common phenomenon in Ghana's politics. It has come to light that verbal abuse on TV, radio, and the campaign platforms of political parties abuses the dignity of individuals and is one of the triggers of election violence in the Odododiodio constituency. A participant held that:

> When politicians come to the platform to campaign, instead of telling the people what they will do when they are voted into power, they would rather insult or attack their opponent, which leads to violence. They call their opponents derogatory names, which is very offensive. Sometimes the words used against opponents are such that they provoke anger and cause violence. (EO, 4: Field Data, 2020).

This was also mentioned in a report by the Commonwealth Observer Group that was in Ghana to observe the 2016 general elections. In its statement after the 2016 general elections, the observer group raised concerns about the use of inflammatory language,

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particularly on radio, as a leading cause of election conflict (The Commonwealth, 2016). When people are divided and given a value based on characteristics like class, gender, religion, and so on, it creates unequal societies where discrimination runs rampant. People assigned a higher value get preferential treatment. Anyone who does not fit into the privileged category is abandoned or oppressed.

4.3.2 Abuse of socio-economic rights

To Karel Vasak, socio-economic rights are the second generation of human rights. This generation of human rights can be further broken down into two subgroups: The first subcategory focuses on standards for meeting fundamental requirements like education, nutrition, and healthcare. The standards for meeting "economic needs" are covered under the second subcategory (Vasky, 1979). Fair pay and adequate living standards are part of these rights. Second-generation rights are based on establishing equal conditions. They were often resisted by Western nations during the Cold War, as they were perceived as "socialist notions." The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Articles 22 through 27 of the UDHR focus on these rights. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, first- and second-generation rights were divided by the responsibility they placed on governments (Butler, 2012).

First-generation human rights were seen as a "negative obligation," which meant that it was up to the government to make sure that those rights were not being restricted. Second-generation human rights were seen as a "positive obligation," which required governments to take proactive measures to see that those rights were realised. Governments are now seen as having a duty to "respect, protect, promote, and fulfil" these rights. However, respondents reported that these rights were abused during the 2016 and 2020 elections in the two constituencies.

(a) Destruction of properties

Participants were asked whether personal properties and state-owned assets could be destroyed during election violence. From the questionnaire, out of the 80 respondents from the Awutu-Senya East constituency, 60 (75.0%) agreed, 20 (25.0%) were not certain, whilst none disagreed. From the data obtained from the Odododiodio constituency, 63 (78.8%) agreed, 16 (20.0%) were not certain, whilst 1 (1.2%) disagreed. More than 50% of the respondents in the two constituencies agreed with the assertion that personal properties and state-owned assets could be destroyed during election violence. This is shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Destruction of Properties

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	60	20	0
Odododiodioo	63	16	1
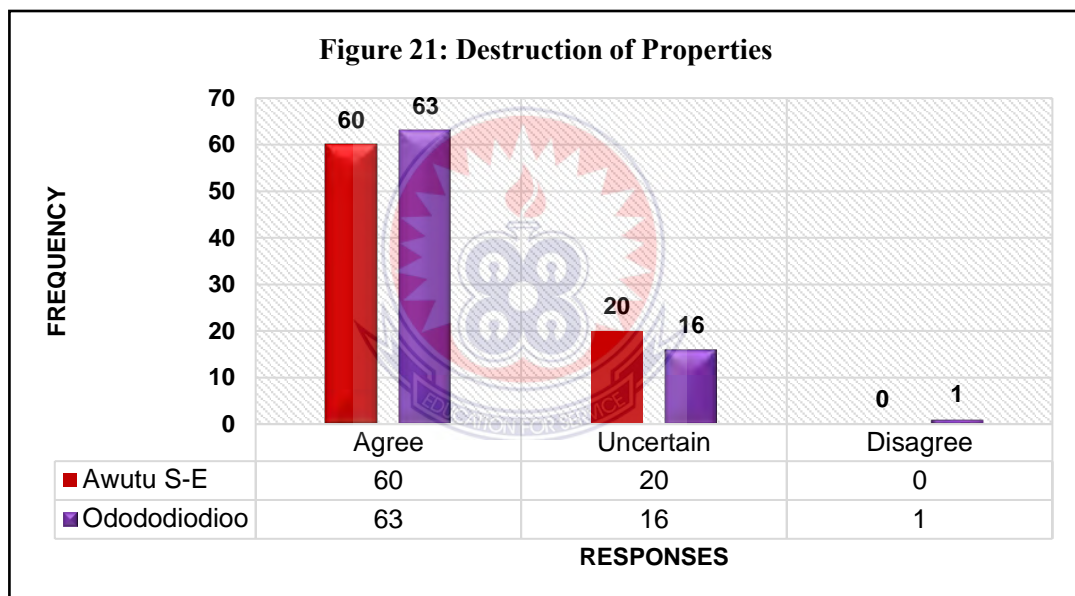
Source: Field Data, 2021

Participants were of the view that, whenever there is an electoral conflict, someone could suffer economic consequences. Sisk (2012) agreed with this statement; he said that in extreme but not rare situations, people find themselves homeless after electoral conflict. In the case of a farmer, this often includes the loss of his or her production base.

The right to property, or the right to own property, is classified as a human right. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) enshrines the right to property as follows: (1) Everyone has the right to own property, both alone and in partnership with

others. (2) No one's property shall be taken from him or her arbitrarily. The object of the property right, as it is usually understood nowadays, consists of property already owned or possessed or of property acquired or to be acquired by a person through lawful means.

(b) *Destruction of posters and vandalism of properties*

Political parties are usually faced with the problem of poster obliteration during elections. In an interview, a political party executive lamented that his party spent a great amount of money printing posters. However, they were destroyed by their opponents shortly after fixing them. According to Fischer (2002), electoral violence includes the destruction of property, which includes posters. He defined the concept as:

> As any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced protection, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination (Fischer 2002).

Jeff-Fischer's definition is very important because it recognises certain random violent acts, such as vandalising posters, as part of electoral violence. Because electoral violence is about power, its definition must include the threat of violence, not just actual acts of violence.

According to Strassel (2016), even though political parties have the right to advertise their activities and candidates, those involved in deploying party posters often tend to ignore the requirement or even the courtesy of seeking prior authorization from the private property occupants or owners of the surfaces on which they advertise.

According to a respondent, a political scientist, the use of private sites without permission may be considered an "invasion" of an individual's right to privacy. Such intrusive tendencies may prompt violent attacks on posters by private property owners as they seek

to protect their premises from further intrusion. This agrees with Ansah (2016), who suggested that political parties may not be directly involved in poster attacks. Rather, their disregard for proper authorization often induces attacks on their posters by occupants of private properties.

Although most private premises do not have the "Post No Bill" warning, placing political posters on them is deemed an attack on private property. When private property or structures are disfigured, the private individual is responsible for painting or repairing the defaced item or structure. A participant said that:

> I would never destroy an NDC signpost just because I have a different opinion. It's their right to have their signpost, it's their freedom of speech, but they too can't destroy my property because they have a difference of opinion (PP, 2: Field Data, 2020).

It was revealed from the study that the guidelines of when and where election posters may be erected touch on questions of civic participation and freedom of expression. Several statutory provisions seek to balance the nuisance posters may cause with their democratic purpose of informing the electorate. The restrictions apply to posters placed in publicly visible places, including trees, gates, poles, and posts.

(c) Destruction of the properties of individual and political parties

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) protects the property right most explicitly in Article 14, stating that "the property right shall be guaranteed." It may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or the general interest of the community and by the provisions of appropriate laws. Article 17 of the UDHR says "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others". If electoral violence leads to property loss, then Article 17 of the UDHR has been infringed

upon. The destruction of properties during electoral conflicts is not in the general interest of the constituency. In another interview with a participant, he said:

> The windscreen of my uncle's car was destroyed because he had the NDC symbol on the car. The NPP were out trotting, and when they saw any car bearing the NDC emblem, they hooted at you and, in some cases, attacked you. This is uncivilised and unacceptable in a country like Ghana (PP, 3: Field Data, 2020).

This agrees with the assertion by Collier and Vicente (2012) and Chambas (2016) that violent conflicts bring untold miseries as well as economic and political instability. People's lives and properties come under threat, and human rights violations soar during violent conflict. People living in affected areas could be displaced and must constantly move about for security reasons. Some victims of the conflict become scared, and some are emotionally and physically traumatised for life. A participant said that:

> Electoral laws are not enforced here. When your party is not in power, nothing works for you, and when you oppose them, they beat you up and wound you with a machete. They can even attack your home and destroy your property. The police and EC do not ensure that the challenge form works (TR, 1: Field Data, 2020).

Gyampo, Graham, and Bossman (2017) agreed with the finding that political violence can lead to the destruction of properties of political parties; properties of individuals, political parties, and the state were destroyed during the 2020 general elections.

Electoral violence can lead to the destruction of individuals' properties. The literature reviewed for this study confirms that human rights violations in Chechnya during the political conflict resulted in large-scale property destruction (Onwe et al., 2015). A report on Chechen asylum seekers in the UK gives evidence of the human rights abuses and related destruction of assets that occurred in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2003). This shows that a substantial number of the respondents might not have witnessed or

experienced the destruction of personal property during electoral violence. This was confirmed in the interview when a respondent explained that Ghana could not experience large-scale violence like it happens in some countries in Africa. The participant said:

> You know, Ghanaians fear blood, so in times like this, we fight, but not to the extent of burning other people's houses or cars and killing them. I don't think it can happen in our country (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

However, the researcher referred to the literature on the chieftaincy conflict between two feuding factions at the *Gbewaa* Palace in *Dagbon* from March 25 to 27, 2002, which resulted in the burning down of the palace. This conflict led to the killing of Yaa Naa Yakubu II and 40 of his elders (Boadu-Ayeboafoh, 2006). If this happened in Ghana, then it could happen again, or a worse one could occur in Ghana through electoral conflict. In another interview, the participant disagreed with the assertion that large-scale electoral conflict could occur in Ghana. According to him, acts that take place during electoral violence in Ghana could get out of hand one day if they are not checked. The participant in the interview said that his uncle's vehicle was destroyed by protesters during a clash between the NPP and the NDC in the Awutu-Senya East constituency. The stone hit the windscreen of the car parked under a shed. The windscreen was destroyed, and he had to replace it. He initially reported the case to the police, but they could not arrest anyone since the culprit could not be identified and the victim was not the target. It was revealed in this study that a lot of the personal properties of individuals in the ASE constituencies were destroyed in electoral conflicts. A participant explained that during the 2020 voter registration exercise, Hon. Hawa Koomson fired gunshots at the Step to Christ registration centre at the CP electoral area in the ASE constituency. He said there was confusion at the registration centre amidst beatings by at least 15 hoodlums, allegedly from the MPs' camp, who set ablaze three motorbikes and dismantled the mobile phones

of some electorates. He explained further that the 2020 Parliamentary Candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Awutu-Senya East Constituency, Phyllis Naa Koryoo Okunor, upon hearing that those whose motorcycles were burned were members of her political party, presented three motorcycles to the victims to replace what was burned. He said that the resources used to replace these motorcycles could have been used to do other important things. The destruction of civilian homes and properties in electoral conflict areas has devastating long-term consequences far beyond the end of the violence itself and often impacts the already vulnerable the most. This confirms the studies by Ametewee (2007) and Asamoa (1990). They asserted that houses were destroyed during the conflicts in northern Ghana.

(d) Electoral violence Interrupts Educational activities

It was revealed from the study that electoral violence disrupted the academic work of schools in the constituencies under study. Election-related violence can have a negative impact on the educational environment, notably on teachers' morale and productivity. The right to education is additionally protected in Ghana under the Children's Act of 1998 (Act 560) and the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778). Act 560 unifies the legislation about children by defining child rights, maintaining, and adopting children, and regulating child labour, apprenticeship, and other relevant issues. Political unrest and electoral violence hinder the opening of schools in election hotspots and raise absenteeism rates for both teachers and students. Children's security while travelling to and from school is at risk due to electoral violence. Parents who are worried about violence against female students may prevent their daughters from attending school. A teacher participant had this to say:

> The 2020 general election took place on Monday, December 7. It was a working day, so I prepared to go to school and teach. On my way, I saw some of my students walking around. They were not prepared for school.

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So, I asked them why they were not in their school uniform and why they were not prepared for school.

I received almost the same answer from about five students I questioned. They answered that their parents say they should not go because there is the likelihood of the election turning into violence. I went to school and, to my surprise, about 60% of the students were absent. The fact is, psychologically, residents in Odododiodio are often found in a state of fear and panic during the election period, especially on voting day (EO, 3: Field Data, 2020).

Another respondent who thinks that his children were denied access to school in the Awutu Senya East constituency during the 2020 general election said:

The headteacher at the school my children attend closed the school at around 10:00 a.m. on Monday, December 7, 2020, due to the electoral conflict that occurred near the school. He also told them not to come to school the next day if the violence continued.

The attack and subsequent threats on people, including students and pupils living at Kasoa, indirectly affect the academic work of our children; some even fail to attend classes due to the conflict (EO, 1: Field Data, 2020).

Children suffer denial or deprivation of education as they are prevented from attending classes by their parents out of fear of attacks, threats on teachers, and destruction of school facilities during electoral conflict situations.

(a)   *Abuse of right to health*

The Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols state that medical personnel, facilities, and transport, as well as the injured and ill, may not be attacked or harmed and that the delivery of health care may not be unnecessarily interfered with in armed conflicts, whether they are international or not (Footer & Rubenstein, 2013). Medical personnel pursuing their exclusively professional tasks must be respected and protected from attack

and harm unless they commit, outside of their work, acts harmful to the enemy, but this is not the case in the Odododiodio constituency during electoral violence.

Both armed non-state actors and state actors have shown a lack of respect for health care through attacks and meddling, whether during election violence or other periods of violence. It was revealed in the study that at times during electoral conflict or political unrest, vigilantes' attacks and interference with medical staff, facilities, and patients were common. Roads are sometimes blocked to prevent vehicular movement.

A participant recounted that an ambulance carrying a sick person was forced to slow down its speed in 2016 when violence broke out between the NDC and NPP in the Awutu Senya East constituency. This constitutes an abuse of the right to medical care delivery at a time when it is most required. Another participant in the Odododiodio constituency said:

> I don't often think of electoral conflict as a major public health hazard in Ghana. Our health centre was not attacked during the violence before the election. However, people are sometimes injured whenever electoral violence occurs.

> Children are injured as a direct result of fighting among political parties. During the 2020 election, about 20 people were rushed to the facility with different degrees of injuries due to the violence between the NDC and NPP (EO, 2; Field Data, 2020).

Another participant said:

> The police, to curb the conflict, sometimes fired teargas into the crowd, and this worsened the situation. We don't have enough beds in this health centre, so when an incident like this occurs, it puts what we have under pressure and the staff must overwork to save lives. In addition to this, sometimes it becomes very risky to walk to work during the electoral conflict, like what happened in this constituency in 2020.

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> One of our staff was hit by a stray stone when returning from work. We must seek the assistance of the police to accompany staff who work late at night and those who take over from them. This leads to delays in changeover, which affects health delivery (EO, 4: Field Data, 2020).

The debate over whether human rights law applies in instances of violent conflict is now over, and it is widely accepted that human rights law should be applied alongside international humanitarian law (Footer & Rubenstein, 2013).

This makes attention to human rights law more important. The right to health, like all human rights, imposes three layers of obligations on states: the responsibility to respect—to refrain from directly interfering with a right; to protect—to prevent third-party interference with the enjoyment of a right; and to fulfil—to take steps to ensure the fullest possible realisation of a right.

(b)   *Abuse of economic rights*

Ensuring the human rights of individuals to shelter, food, and basic economic stability, foundational to the realisation of their human dignity, is well within those constitutional bounds. From the data, a participant interviewed has this to say:

> In 2016, during the confrontation between the NDC and the NPP in this constituency, my home was under attack; one of the windows of my building was reduced into rambles; other personal belongings running into thousands of Ghanaian Cedis were destroyed. My wife's hairdressing salon, which served as her major source of livelihood, was not spared at all, as it was also hit by a stone, which created a big hole in the roof, and we had to spend money to repair it. In fact, during the violence, many people were kept indoors. People who trade in the evening cannot go out (EA, 4: Field Data, 2020).

Another participant, who was also an eyewitness to the electoral conflict in the Odododiodio constituency and was a victim of abuse, had this to say:

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> One morning before the 2020 general election, I was told by a colleague that my beer bar was under attack. When I reached the site, I saw an open fight between supporters of NDC and NPP near my drinking bar. They destroyed the door of the bar, and I had to shut the business down for over a week. The destruction cost me hundreds of Ghana Cedis (EO, 2: Field Data, 2020).

Another participant agreed that the conflict had devastating effects on the economic development of the ASE municipality. He asserted that.

> The economic environment changes during the election period, especially on the day of the election. The unemployed youth waste their time fighting and destroying properties during electoral conflicts. Many stores are closed, and many prefer to stay indoors on voting days. They fear conflict may erupt. When the election dispute went to court for determination, people were relieved a bit until the day the verdict was to be given. Most market women and traders stay indoors, and many people do not open their stores to sell (EA,1: Field Data, 2020).

The obligations imposed on a state to fulfil economic rights must be handled in the same manner as those imposed by civil and political rights. These include granting liberties, placing restrictions on the state's conduct towards outsiders, and requiring the state to act or accomplish a specific goal (Crawford, 2010). The enhancement of the prevalent and harmful economic crises inflicted on people due to electoral conflict depends on the implementation of economic rights policies.

4.4.3 Infringements on Solidarity Rights

Solidarity human rights, or third-generation rights, are rights that try to go beyond the framework of individual rights to focus on collective concepts, such as community or people. Third-generation rights encompass a broad class of rights. Third-generation rights can be divided into sub-categories as well. The first sub-category relates to "the self-determination of peoples" and includes different aspects of community development and

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political status. The second sub-category is related to the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (Lauren, 2011). Third-generation rights are frequently seen in contracts that fall under the category of "soft law," which means they are not enforceable by law.

The UDHR and the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development are two examples of such agreements. Although this generation of rights is more frequently contested than the first and second, it is getting more and more worldwide recognition. Due to "increasing globalisation and a heightened awareness of overlapping global challenges," such as extreme poverty, these rights have begun to receive more attention. The specific rights that are most included within the category of third-generation rights are the development rights, to peace, to a healthy environment, to share in the exploitation of the common heritage of mankind, to communication, and to humanitarian assistance.

(a) *Violence affects the credibility of elections*

It is a violation of human rights when an adult member of a nation who is qualified to vote is not included on the voter register or when he is intimidated and prevented from voting. The costs that accompany electoral violence are usually high. Even in situations where injury or death is not recorded, election violence may have a serious impact on the electoral process, the outcome of the elections, and their perceived legitimacy, denying people their political rights (Staniland, 2014).

Most of the respondents from the Awutu-Senya East constituency, 97.5% (n =78), agreed that electoral violence can affect the legitimacy of an electoral outcome by denying the masses their political rights. 2.5% (n = 2) were unsure, while none disagreed. In the Odododiodio constituency, most of the respondents, 92.5% (n = 74), agreed that electoral violence can affect the legitimacy of an electoral outcome. 2.5% (n = 2) were unsure, while 3.75% (n = 3) disagreed.

More than 90% of each of the constituencies agreed with the statement indicating that electoral violence can undermine the political rights of people and affect the legitimacy of the election. Within the electoral process, these rights are guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution and cannot be denied to any potentially qualified citizen. This is shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22:Violence affects Legitimacy of the Election

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	78	2	0
Odododiodioo	74	3	3
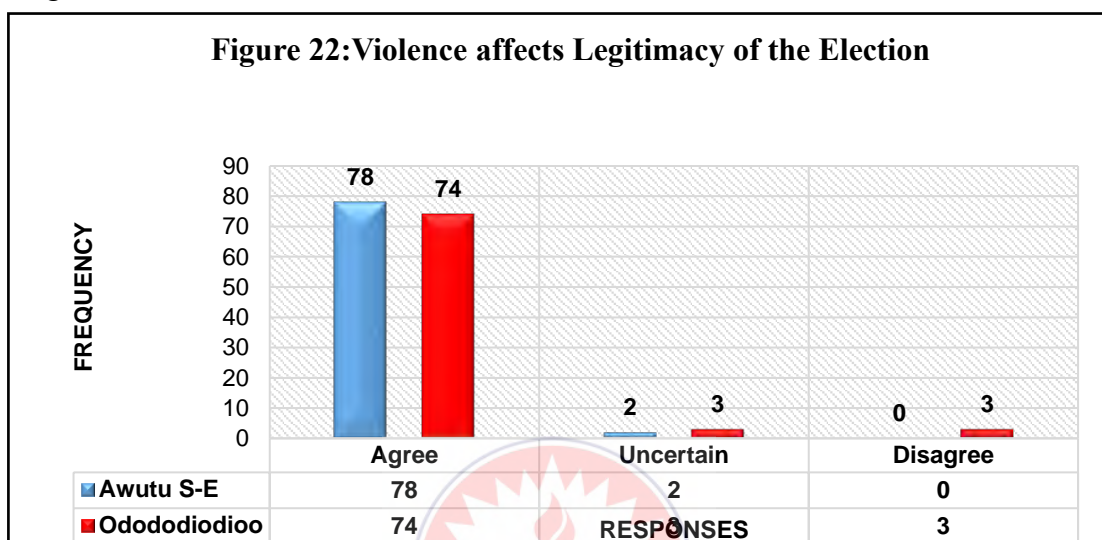
Source: Field Data, 2020

(b) *Attack by vigilantes violates the right to peace*

A participant recounted that they were registering for the voter ID card on July 20, 2020, when suddenly a car with vigilantes inside arrived. When they got down, one said in a loud voice that anyone not part of the registration exercise should move away. There was a royal bike parked there, and they decided to take it out of the way, but the owner said they should leave it for him to take it out personally. They just started hitting all the motorcycles around us. They also set them on fire and started beating the owners of the bikes.

The participant was of the view that the development discouraged eligible voters from participating in the voter registration exercise. He explained that, because of what happened, everyone left the queue, and the EC staff also packed their equipment and left the registration centre. The MP for this constituency, who was standing there, started

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pleading with the people not to run away, saying that nothing bad was going to happen while her people were holding guns and just shooting.

According to the electoral laws of Ghana (2008), every person who has satisfied the requirements laid down by the law is eligible to register and vote in a peaceful environment. The fear and acrimony that characterise voter registration and the entire 2020 election period in the Awutu-Senya East constituency create indecision, which fuels the outbreak of electoral conflict if precautionary management measures are not put in place.

Participants were of the view that they are always put under fear and anxiety during elections due to the frequent clashes between supporters of the two major political parties, the NPP and the NDC. DeGraft-Aidoo (2015) is of the view that some registration centres witness acts of hooliganism and riots simply because some people decide to make it impossible for others to get registered and be voters. This is an abuse of the political rights of the people. A participant said:

> How can election results be accepted when they are full of violence? Anytime there is a general election, we lose our peace. This should not happen in a democratic country. Even international communities will not accept the result as credible. If people are intimidated, they will not come out to vote. This will affect the integrity of the results (CS, 3: Field Data, 2020).

(c) *Exploitation of the right to democracy and development*

Participants in the two constituencies under study have the inalienable right to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development, which paves the way for the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Beitz, 2009). Their human right to development implies the full realization of the right of people to self-determination and the continuous development of their communities.

A respondent in an interview said that electoral violence retards the development of any constituency that experiences it. He explained that properties destroyed during the violence had to be replaced with resources that could have been used to advance the growth of the community if the properties were not destroyed. A participant recounted how the electoral violence in the Odododiodio constituency led to the disconnection of the water supply to her house.

> For three days, we did not have access to water in our homes. We had to walk to another community before getting water. We reported the issue to the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) to resolve the problem because it was having a disturbing impact on us. It was there that we got to know that the pipeline linking our community was broken during the rampage between NDC and NPP. For a week we did not have water, and you can imagine the problem, especially regarding sanitation (EO, 5: Field Data, 2020).

In the institutional setting, electoral violence reproduces oppressive and anti-democratic power relations, especially authoritarian repression. Not only does it reduce public confidence in democratic processes, but it also impairs democracy's quality directly (by torturing or killing voters, candidates, etc.), indirectly (by limiting inclusive participation), as well as through views of legitimacy among the public. Elections in these constituencies have already begun to be associated with controversy and violence in some situations. Trust in democratic institutions and procedures is severely damaged by such linkages. Article 21 (1) of the UDHR states that "Everyone has the right to participate in the government of his nation, personally or through freely chosen representatives." This is violated by what is happening in these constituencies.

It is impossible to preserve healthy livelihoods and human dignity without access to water. For the eradication of poverty, the creation of peaceful and successful societies,

and the guarantee that "no one is left behind" on the path to sustainable development, human rights to water and sanitation are crucial.

(e) *The human freedom index*

The Human Freedom Index presents the state of human freedom in the world on a broad measure that encompasses personal, civil, and economic freedom. It is presented on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represents more freedom. All the respondents in the two constituencies under study (160, representing 100 per cent), were of the view that electoral violence can affect the human rights standing of a country. This is shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Violence affects the Human Rights Index

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Awutu S-E	80	0	0
Odododiodioo	80	0	0
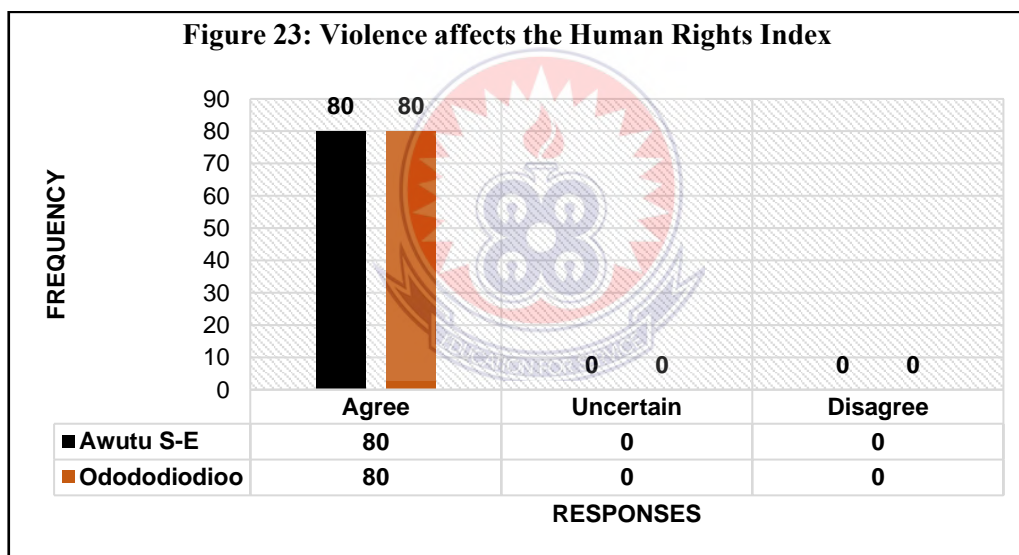
Source: Field Data, 2020

The Universal Human Freedom Index provides easy access to country-specific human rights information emanating from international human rights mechanisms in the United Nations system: the Treaty Bodies, the Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review. The Universal Human Freedom Index (UHFI) is intended to facilitate access to human rights recommendations allotted by three key pillars of the United Nations human rights protection system: the treaty bodies established under international human rights treaties, the special procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human

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Rights Council. The government of Ghana periodically submits itself to the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review for peer review of Ghana's human rights records.

The purpose of the peer review was to track progress on Ghana's human rights obligations and commitments. The documents on which the reviews were based include: (1) national reports—information provided by the state under review; (2) information contained in the reports of independent human rights experts and groups, known as the Special Procedures, human rights treaty bodies, and other UN entities; and (3) information provided by other stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, regional organisations, and civil society groups (Mihailo & Gamser, 2018).

In an interview with a political scientist working with NPC, he said:

> Election violence greatly affects the peace of the country. Anytime it happens, it affects the country's score on the World Peace Index. This is very important to investors and tourists. Such people look at the index before they invest or visit any country. A country with a poor score will not be attractive to investors because they will see the country as an unsafe place to invest their capital (NPC, 1: Field Data, 2020).

Human rights cannot be adequately protected in countries where there is no adequate judiciary protection. Therefore, variables such as the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law should closely resemble the situation with human rights protection. Electoral violence and how it is managed can greatly affect the human rights perception of a country. In modern societies, the rule of law is not only about the judiciary; a competent state administration enforcing enacted legislation, as well as a human rights-based approach to governance and safeguarding the rule of law, are also very important. If government administration is ineffectual or corrupt, this means that human rights protection is hard to establish or preserve.

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4.4 Responses of Institutions with the Tasks to Ensure Peaceful Elections

The last research question was to find out the role of state institutions and law enforcement agencies in the management and resolution of electoral conflicts as well as the protection of the rights of voters in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies. Every member of society has the right to protection. The government has a responsibility to protect all members of the state. The 1992 Ghanaian Constitution states that all people have the right to be protected in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property.

4.4.1 The role of security agencies

The role of security agencies during elections cannot be overemphasised. The security agencies in Ghana play a very significant role in ensuring the non-violent and successful running of elections. According to a respondent who is a policeman, before the electioneering period commences, the security agencies, especially the police, are given training and assigned to polling stations to maintain law and order.

They are to ensure that the electoral process is peaceful, free, and fair. In the political campaign era, they granted permission for political rallies and maintained order at the events. On the day of the election, they create an environment for electoral officials to discharge their duties without interference. They further ensure that the electorate votes peacefully. The respondent explained that they do not tolerate people who would like to disrupt the orderly conduct of elections.

Respondents were asked to rate the performance of the security agencies and their roles before, during, and after the recent general elections in 2016 and 2020. From the responses of the 80 respondents who answered the questionnaire in the Awutu-Senya East constituency, 30 (37.5%) said that the security before, during, and after the general elections was adequate. Another 40 respondents (50%) described the performance of the

security as adequate; 8 (10%) said the security was adequate; and 2 (2.5%) could not rate the security provided during the past elections.

From the responses of the 80 respondents who answered the questionnaire in the Odododiodio constituency, 24 (30.0%) said that the work of the security agencies before, during, and after the general elections was adequate. Another 43 (53.8%) respondents described security as adequate; 10 (12.5%) said security was adequate; and 3 (3.7%) could not rate the security provided during the past elections. The respondents gave the highest rating for the adequate response, and this can be seen in Figure 24.

Figure 24: The Performance of the Security Agencies in the 2016 and 2020 Elections

	Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Inadequate	Not aware
Awutu S-E	30	40	8	2
Odododiodio	24	43	10	3
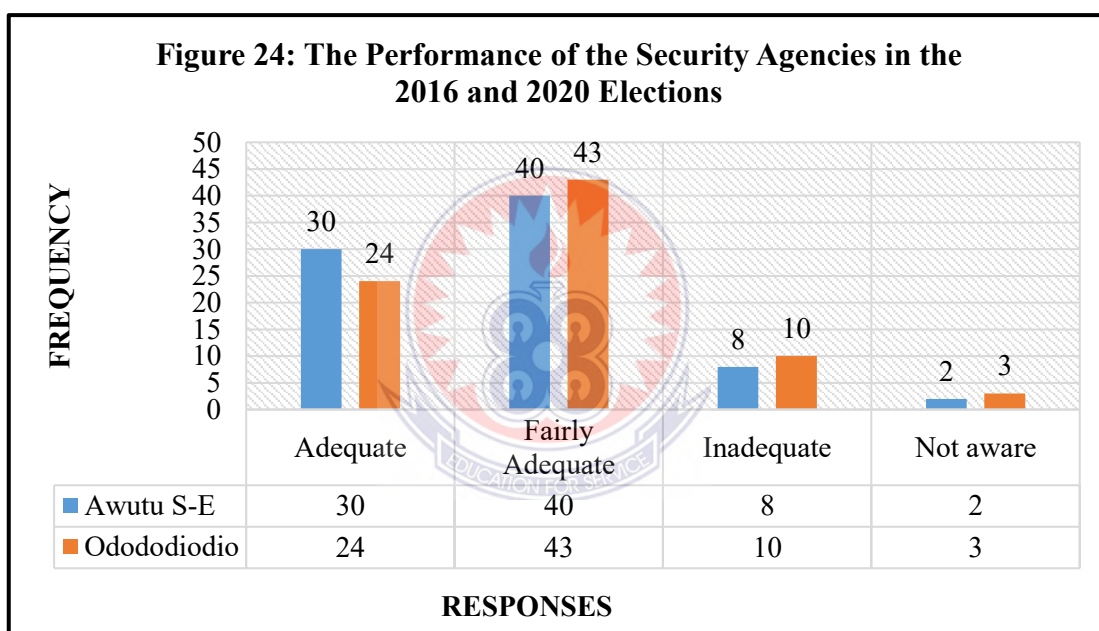
Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The findings from the study suggest that the security agencies performed their duties well during the electioneering period. In general, about 65% of the respondents agreed that the work executed by the security agencies was adequate. However, the other 35% felt their performance was inadequate.

A participant in an interview said that more effort must be made to train security personnel effectively to broaden their knowledge of the electoral laws. They should also be provided with the necessary protective gear to help them effectively manage situations when

conflicts arise during the electoral process. The number of security personnel provided at the polling stations should be adequate. They should not be limited, or they could be overpowered by rioters, or too many could also intimidate the voters.

A police participant was of the view that they are given a lot of training in election management before general elections. The practitioner noted that the training provides a solid framework for approaching election security planning. A good practice is to examine electoral security in the context of the electoral cycle and work closely with the election management body (EMB) to assess which steps may require direct or indirect policing. Processes must be adapted to the circumstances and needs of each constituency and election to take both predictable and unpredictable security threats into account. This is in line with the writings of Abbink and Gerti (1999), who wrote that the police must be trained in election management and crowd control to effectively prevent electoral violence. The researcher sought to know how the security agencies work to protect before, during, and after elections. A participant explained that the state must always protect all members. For instance, the police arrested the MP for Awutu-Senya East when she fired a gun at a voter registration centre. The gun used for the act was also confiscated by the police.

> The Ghana Police Service is always prepared to ensure that the country is
> peaceful. They are very professional in their work. The Ghana Police Service
> is on top of issues during elections. They arrest anyone who violates the law,
> and I think they are doing their best (CS, 2; Field Data, 2020).

It was also reported that the security agencies protect electoral materials and electorates during and after elections. A respondent was of the view that but for the intervention of the security agencies, the EC head office would have been attacked by the NDC when they lost the 2020 election and their flag bearer failed to concede defeat. Figure 25 shows the military protecting the EC office from attack.

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(a)　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**(b)**

Figure 25: Security Agents (a) Guarding Electoral Commission Office
(b) Protecting Campaigners in Accra
Source: Ghanaweb.com

A participant who is a policeman explained that:

> The police are under the Ministry of the Interior and oversee preserving
> law and order, but the military has continued to assist in law enforcement
> efforts, such as defending important infrastructure. The National
> Investigation (NIB) is a separate entity that handles cases deemed critical
> to state security and reports directly to the Ministry of National Security.
> The police maintained specialised units in Accra for homicide, forensics,
> domestic violence, economic crimes, visa fraud, narcotics, and cybercrimes
> (PO, 1: Field Data, 2020).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana states in an unequivocal term that all have a right to be

protected in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property. This is a fundamental human

right that every citizen must enjoy. The security agencies must ensure that this right is

enforced. A participant during an interview also commended the security agencies. She

said:

> Security agencies do their best during elections to ensure peace prevails
> by maintaining high levels of professionalism throughout the various
> phases of the electoral process. They ensure that there is no impartiality
> in the conduct of the security services' official duties (PP, 2: Field Data,
> 2020).

This is not surprising since the maintenance of law and order and peace is already a core function of most security agencies, such as the police, military, and prisons. Orji (2013) said that when individuals are recruited into the police, army, and others, they are trained professionally to maintain law and order. They are equipped to handle conflicts, violence, and riots. It is, therefore, expected that the security agencies should be able to maintain peace effectively during by-elections. However, some of the respondents were of the view that the work of the police was not adequate. A respondent who was interviewed said:

> The security institutions are not doing their work well. They take bribes and look on while crime is committed during the electoral process. They are weak. I don't trust them, especially the police. They always want to favour the ruling government (CS, 3: Field Data, 2020).

Another participant said:

> The Ghana Police are not doing their work well. If they do their work well, the soldiers will not be needed during the election. The police take bribes and look on while crimes are committed during the electoral process. So, soldiers are always brought in during elections. Soldiers are not trained in crowd control, so they manhandle innocent citizens, which leads to severe abuses (EO, 3: Field Data, 2020).

According to Chambas (2016), a weak or inadequate state structure may be reflected in a variety of ways, such as a poorly developed political party system, weak democratic institutions, including electoral laws that are not well defined or lack consensus, a dysfunctional judicial system, an unprofessional security sector, and high levels of systemic corruption. In some cases, the security forces may be overly politicized, ethnically biased, or simply unprofessional. In a weak state, poor structures may enhance insecurity, compromise law and order, and encourage the proliferation of small arms and the hiring of militias by political actors, raising the potential for violence.

4.4.2 National Peace Council (NPC)

The NPC was identified as one of the mechanisms to address electoral violence in Ghana. In this regard, a respondent from the CDD pointed out that one of the mechanisms for addressing election-related violence is the institution of the National Peace Council (CDD, 2017). As part of the operational plan of the NPC, the agency is enjoined by its strategic plan to ensure that electoral conflicts are prevented and conduct a post-election assessment with the view to informing future areas of intervention relating to electoral violence and other violent conflicts. The Director for Conflict Resolution of the National Peace Council said in an interview that staff of the NPC throughout the country were trained in mediation strategies to prepare them effectively to manage electoral disputes. They organised several dialogue and conflict prevention workshops for the youth, traditional and religious leaders, as well as the press, conducted effective peace education on radio stations, established a NEEWARG or REEWARG, and resolved electoral disputes.

It came to light from the study that all the NPC staff in the country had training on mediation strategies to deal with electoral disputes. They were therefore equipped to understand what electoral conflicts are, what can trigger election-related violence, and how to manage such conflicts so that they do not escalate into war. A respondent from the NPC said that the training given to them was timely and helped them approach electoral disputes with tact and dispatch. One NPC staff member in the Central Region (NPC 2) said:

> In the Central Region, the NPC successfully mediated the dispute between
> the NPP and the NDC in Ekumfi and Kasoa. Similar successful mediation
> exercises between factions of the Zongo community in Mankessim
> between the NPP and the NDC were also managed well. We also organised

a series of peace seminars for all hotspot constituencies in the region (PC, 2: Field Data, 2020).

A key informant remarked:

> My brother, all these workshops and meetings by the NPC are formalities. All we were told at their meeting was peace, peace, peace. Nothing else. They do not deliberate on the issues we expect them to talk about, which will address how to curb electoral violence. When you raise such issues on such grounds, they see you not as a peace lover. Meanwhile, the problems have not been addressed (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

This suggests that the work of the NPC to promote peace during elections might not be achieving its aim. According to the respondent, their meeting with them failed to address the core issues of elections, such as dealing with the immediate causes or triggers and how to curb them.

The National Peace Council organised a ceremony to get the key presidential candidate in the 2016 and 2020 general elections to sign a peace agreement before the election. The objective of the ceremony was to get a firm commitment from the candidates to work for a peaceful and open electoral process. In 2016, the ceremony was held on December 1, and in 2020, it was held on December 4. This event contributed to the peace Ghana had in these elections. Figure 26 shows this event before the 2020 general elections:

Figure 26: Presidential Candidates Signing the Peace Pact before the 2020 Elections.
Source: National Peace Council File (2020)

4.4.2.3 Passing of the Vigilantism Act (Act, 999)

Through the efforts of the NPC, a law has been passed with the object of disbanding political party vigilante groups and prohibiting acts of vigilantism in the country. The NPC led the two leading political parties in Ghana (NDC and NPP) to sign a communique to disband vigilante groups associated with them (see Appendix VI).

The NPC further went throughout the whole country to educate Ghanaians about the law. Before the 2020 general elections, the National Peace Council (NPC) called on political parties, civil society organisations, and the media in the Awutu-Senya East constituency to sensitise the public on the roadmap to eradicating political vigilantism and sanctions against vigilantism acts. Vigilantism is an act or threat of violence or intimidation undertaken by a person to further the interests of himself, herself, or another (Gyampo, Graham, & Bossman, 2017).

The NPC, who made the call at a campaign programme on the eradication of vigilantism and related offences in Kasoa, said the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act 2019 (Act 999) was going to 'bite' anyone or group found culpable. The Act passed in 2019, states that a person shall not directly or indirectly form, organise, operate, or promote the formation or operations of a vigilante group. A respondent who works with the NPC explained:

> Any person who contravenes the provisions in Act 999, including taking part in the activities of vigilante groups during elections, commits an offence and would be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than 15 years. The NPC is monitoring to ensure that all political parties and stakeholders comply with the roadmap developed by the Council and stakeholders to promote peace and security before, during, and after the general election (PC, 2; Field Data, 2020).

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4.4.3 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

CSOs play a critical role in preventing the escalation of electoral violence into war (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The CDD, for example, has established a Political Environment Notify programme in which monthly statements are released to alert security services and the EC to areas of potential conflict. An official from the IDEG backed this up, saying that CSOs play an important role in reducing election violence. He mentioned, for example, that IDEG had implemented "Peace and Anti-Violence Actions." As a result, every election year, IDEG works with the national election task force to avert violence by warning them of potential hotspots. IDEG also informs voters on the potential effects of electoral violence as well as the numerous hotspots where violence is likely to emerge. A key informant remarked:

> The role of civil society in reducing election-related conflict dynamics and promoting a peaceful electoral environment is critical. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play an important role in improving the overall quality of democracy (CS, 2. Field Data, 2020).

All of this is being done to avoid a possible outbreak of violence and escalation. In Figure 27, a group of CSOs are seen campaigning against electoral violence.

(a)   (b)

Figure 27: CSOs Campaigning against Electoral Violence (a) Catholic Church
(b) Women Situation Room
Source: Central Regional Peace Council File

A participant commenting on the role of CSOs in peaceful elections said:

> The CSOs are involved in capacity-building initiatives on conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation, voter education, and election observation. They are also involved in the dissemination of information on elections through various media platforms and monitoring other stakeholders' execution of their roles in the electoral process, such as the EC, media, political parties, CSOs, and the security sector. These activities are very beneficial in averting election conflicts (CS, 1. Field Data, 2020).

Finally, a participant claimed that CSOs are critical to reducing tensions and encouraging groups to smoke peace pipes. He emphasised that while some of these institutions' actions are not always visible to the public, they play an important role in maintaining our peace. As a result, they can act behind the scenes to calm a situation that could have easily devolved into violence. The opinions of the respondents are backed up by Alexander, Inglehart, and Weltzel (2012), who claim that, in addition to the media's role and contribution, the remarkable improvement in the political space for speech and representation has benefited Ghana's democratic consolidation process to a large extent. As previously said, the growing relevance of civil society in peace-building and international politics cannot be overstated, and it has been extensively recognised by international organisations such as the United Nations.

4.4.4 Traditional and religious leaders

A respondent asserted that intervening bodies like traditional and religious leaders play an influential role in moderating the behaviour of political leaders. Religious leaders can help by encouraging their followers to be law-abiding and tolerant during elections. Traditional leaders in Ghana have also played and continue to play significant roles in community development and local governance. People in Ghana (both urban and rural) still respect their chiefs and queen mothers and, in many areas, will revert to them in

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matters of dispute resolution. Similarly, religious leaders are revered for the comfort they bring to their followers, although unsavoury stories about the relationships between pastors and their followers abound.

An interview with the political party worker also affirmed this assertion. An informant acknowledged the capacity-building programmes organised by the council for political parties from time to time, which aim to manage intra and inter-party conflicting issues.

> I remember that, before the 2016 elections, the NPC, together with IDEG, for the first time, brought together all our presidential candidates to sign a peace pact that would pledge their commitment to peace and violent free elections. Yes, the programme was organised in collaboration with IDEG and the Asantehene's Manhyia Palace in Kumasi to raise awareness about the importance of inter-party dialogue in dealing with certain issues (PP, 2: Field Data, 2020).

Ga Mashie has been a known hotspot and was particularly so in 2016. That peace prevailed in the election cycle of 2016 was partly due to the pro-activeness of the chiefs. According to one respondent:

> The paramount chief in this area demanded that the sub-chiefs call and advise the people before and during the elections. The sub-chiefs did that. They were told not to allow opponents to hoot at opponents in their campaigns. The police were also deployed to those places to curb that situation (EA, 2: Field Data, 2020).

4.4.5 The Inter-Party Dialogue Committee (IPDC)

The inter-party dialogue has been an EC initiative mostly at the national level. Representatives of political parties meet to discuss issues relating to elections. It appears that this dialogue was also used to resolve disputes. One respondent in Kasoa stressed the important work of the NPC and the inter-party dialogue as follows:

> The inter-party dialogue was the brainchild of the NCCE, and we worked in partnership with the NPC. The NPC organised three workshops in the municipality: at *Saboba, Bimbila,* and *Zabzugu.* They also brought the youth of political parties together to sign an agreement not to engage in violent behaviour and to restrain their supporters from engaging in acts of violence. They also agreed to commit themselves to ensuring peace and to reporting any threat to peace to the authorities (PP, 4: Field Data, 2020).

Activities like peace walks, games, and songs are promoted by the NPC to enhance individual and group behaviour and relations. The execution of these preventive programmes builds confidence and trust among the citizens. Reflections from informants suggest that the NPC has well-established conflict prevention mechanisms.

> The NPC has a conflict map, so we look at the map, we know the hot spot, and we try to normally put in strategies to offset any likelihood of a violent conflict. So, we are aware of the conflict hotspot, and we put in the checks for people to stand by to report any issues that border peace (PO 1: Field Data, 2020).
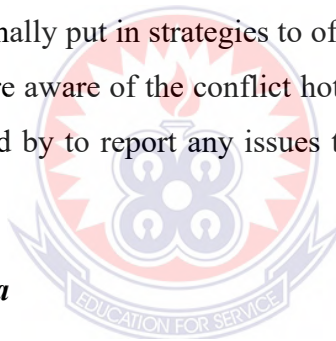
4.4.6 The role of the media
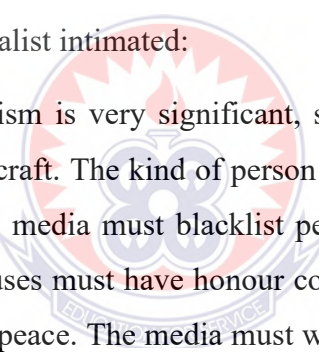
In response to a question about how the media has aided in the prevention of violence devolving into armed conflict, a respondent stated that the media plays a key role in ensuring that violence in Ghana does not devolve into serious war. One respondent was of the view that one indispensable role of the media is the coverage of elections. This role, according to the respondents, is a powerful tool to curb electoral fraud.

He intimated that media coverage plays an intervening role as media personnel can impose their influence on political leaders. Thus, the media plays an auxiliary role by acting in ways that moderate the behaviour of political leaders. To bolster this claim, an EC official stated that the media gives people a platform to express their opinions. This provides some joy to people whose opinions are broadcast on the radio and thus acts as a

form of therapy to keep vengeance at bay. Furthermore, a CDD official believes that the media has aided in the moderation of political violence in Ghana.

The significant contribution of radio conversations, particularly those relating to EC operational problems, has helped to prevent violence and soften potentially violent electoral processes. Despite this, there are a few media houses, such as Net 2, which belongs to an NPP member of parliament, and Radio Gold, which belongs to an NDC sympathiser, that are politically aligned and that throw out insults against their opponents and incite their audience. The unprofessional conduct of media personalities, such as the use of inflammatory language, misrepresentation of facts, and concocting non-existing stories, serves as the breeding ground for tension and confusion before and after elections. Commenting on this, a journalist intimated:

> I think professionalism is very significant, so the journalists themselves must improve their craft. The kind of person the media gives airtime to is very important. The media must blacklist people who advocate electoral violence. Media houses must have honour codes for reporting in a certain way that will foster peace. The media must work with civil society groups like Star Ghana, CDD, and IEA to bring resources together and focus on issue-based elections. Election coverage should include more than just numbers and voter turnout; it should also include development tracking. When we do all these things, the media will reduce the tension in the country (PC, 1: Field Data, 2020).

Finally, a representative from the KAIPTC stated that the media plays an important role in reducing election violence in Ghana. Many news outlets report on acts of violence in the hopes of prompting security services to intervene and prevent the spread of violence. Their participation in the announcement of election results increases transparency and lessens conflict in the country.

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Arthur (2010), agrees with these respondents, stating that the media, as the fourth estate of the realm, has played an important role in maintaining the country's democratic values by acting as a watchdog and monitoring organization. It has done so by revealing various groups' attempts to buy votes and influence the electorate not only in the run-up to elections but also during them. It has worked as a check on the government and others in positions of public trust by raising problems of transparency and accountability.

4.4.7 Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

CHRAJ combines the work of the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Ombudsman, and the Human Rights Commission under one umbrella (CHRAJ, 2019). It is mandated to investigate abuse of power and "all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public funds by officials" [Article 218(e)]. One of the core functions of CHRAJ is to investigate complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power, and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of his official duties (CHRAJ, 2019). Under this, two legislators, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, a North Tongu MP, and Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah of *Ellembelle*, petitioned the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), asking that it investigate the deaths that occurred during the 2020 polls. The petition focuses mainly on events that happened in the Techiman South, Odododiodio, *Ablekuma* Central, and *Savelugu* constituencies. The petition alleges that uniformed officers used unreasonable and unjustifiable force in the Odododiodio Constituency by discharging tear gas and apprehending people who were residents of a hotel and were not charged with any crime. These acts are said to have resulted in two deaths. The acts of these uniformed officers resulted in the deaths of two people, namely:

1. 36-year-old Emmanuel Dompre and

2. 15-year-old Rita Otoo

According to a respondent who confirmed this, the armed officers executed these acts in clear breach of the statutory procedure for arrests and needlessly visited upon unarmed and peaceful civilians acts of brutality resulting in death and injuries to others. During the visit by the researchers to the CHRAJ office to ascertain this, it was, however, revealed that they are still in the process of investigating the incident.

4.4.8 International and Domestic Electoral Monitoring

In an interview with a participant, he explained that one essential mechanism that advances the confidence of the public in elections and that can therefore help to prevent electoral violence is the monitoring and observation of elections. To her, election observers provide an effective mechanism to guard against manipulation because they serve as a warning to all stakeholders that the international community is watching the electoral process. This statement is alluded to by UNDP (2011), which says the objectives and importance of observers and monitors in elections must not be understated.

International election observation is very significant to all stakeholders in elections because it is done for the benefit of the people of the country holding the polls and for the entire international community. A participant who was part of the 2020 election observation team said:

> There were different observer groups in the country to observe the elections. Some were from the commonwealth, European Union (EU) African Union (AU), and National Democratic Institute (NDI) to observe the elections. There were other domestic observer groups like the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) who also observed the elections. NDI for instance, partnered with the CODEO who employed a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) to independently verify the accuracy of the presidential election results as declared by the Electoral Commission (EC).

> CODEO deployed about 8,000 Ghanaians as trained, accredited, non-partisan observers, of which 1,500 were dedicated PVT rapid response observers. Their PVT results closely matched the EC results. All eyes were in Ghana in the 2020 elections because was the final African country to hold national elections in 2020. Election observation helped a lot in ensuring peaceful elections (CS, 2: Field Data, 2020).

A participant was of the view that the presence of international election observation missions is not always good. They always want to portray Africans as dirty. Some of the observers may decrease the likelihood of pre-election violence. Their presence alone alerts politicians that an independent body is watching their actions, and, therefore, they become careful. But they may increase the likelihood of post-election violence if they expose attempted election rigging, which could be false. He said:

> Election observation is a useful method for enhancing election quality. Observers contribute to public trust in the integrity of electoral processes. Observation can aid in the promotion and protection of election participants' civil and political rights.
>
> Even while an election is in progress, it can lead to the correction of flaws or poor practices. It has the potential to deter manipulation and fraud, as well as disclose such issues if they arise. When observers can offer positive assessments, it increases trust in the democratic process and strengthens the legitimacy of governments formed because of elections (CS, 3: Field Data, 2020).

4. 5 Chapter Summary

The outcomes of the demographic data are as follows: One hundred and seventy-five respondents from two constituencies were used for the study. Some of the respondents were electors, experts in peace, security, and human rights, as well as opinion leaders, traditional leaders, and the media. The following are some of the outcomes derived from the discussion of the various sources of data based on the research questions used in the

study: Research question one: The three major causes of electoral violence are the stakes involved in losing the election; disregard for rules and regulations by party actors; and sensational media reporting. The findings of the research identified unemployment, vigilantism, politicization of electoral crimes, high migration of foreigners into the Awutu-Senya East constituency, and lack of trust in state institutions as some of the major drivers of these acts of electoral violence.

Responses to research question three show that the human rights implications of electoral violence are that it affects the legitimacy of elections' outcomes and causes low voter turnout (political rights). It also leads to abuse of the right to education by disrupting school activities. It also leads to the loss of lives, physical injuries, and the destruction of properties. Lastly, the answers to research question four show that security agencies, the National Peace Council, and election observers are the three key institutions or groups that are concerned with ensuring peace during elections.
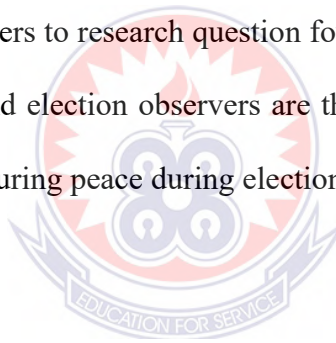
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises and presents the conclusions based on the empirical analysis of the four objectives. Based on the main findings, the chapter delineates some recommendations meant to guide policy design towards averting or minimising the human rights abuses experienced during elections by citizens of Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies, and in Ghana as a whole. The rest of the chapter is structured as follows: The first sub-section presents the summary. This is followed by the conclusion, recommendation, limitations, and directions for future research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate the underlying causes of electoral violence in the electoral processes of two hotspots in Ghana: The Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies, after more than two decades of practising electoral democracy. There were two main categories of respondents, namely: 160 electorate respondents and 15 informants whose work affected the conduct of peaceful elections in Ghana. A total of 175 respondents, therefore, formed the sample for the study. The study was also to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the underlying causes of electoral violence in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

2. What type of human rights violations were involved in electoral violence in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies from 2016 to 2020?

3. How does electoral violence impact the human rights of inhabitants in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

4. What are the responses of institutions charged with the responsibility of ensuring peace during elections in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies?

The pragmatism paradigm underpinned this study. The study adopted a mixed-method approach to data collection in which both quantitative and qualitative data analysis were required. A content analysis research tool was used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts in the quantitative or qualitative data. The data was organised into various themes and categories (four sections based on the research questions and the purpose of the study) such that each section provides answers to each of the research questions. Structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents.

Descriptive analysis, also known as descriptive analytics or descriptive statistics, was adopted for this study. This is the process of using statistical techniques to describe or summarise a set of data. As one of the major types of data analysis, descriptive analysis was used due to its ability to generate accessible insights from otherwise uninterpreted data.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings of the study. It has been arranged according to the research objectives and questions.

(a) *Findings based on the first research question are as follows:*

Across the two hotspots, Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies, the types of human rights violations experienced during electoral conflicts include:

1. The findings of the research identified unemployment, impunity, vigilantism, the politicisation of electoral crimes, high migration of foreigners into the Awutu-

Senya East constituency, and a lack of trust in state institutions as some of the major drivers of these acts of electoral violence.

2. In terms of the motivations for forming vigilante groups, respondents generally identified mistrust of state institutions (EC and police), the need for internal party security, the desire to win political power, and the conception of vigilantism as a business model as the underlying motives.

3. In exploring why people join vigilantism groups, respondents identified unemployment, rewards for services, recognition within political parties, revenge, and impunity as the main reasons.

4. Respondents also identified structural causes of electoral violence, such as winner-takes-all politics, unemployment, poverty, and the migration of foreigners, as potential sources of electoral violence.

(b) *Findings based on the second research question are as follows:*

1. Arbitrary arrests, imprisonment without trial, and physical assaults are key abuses citizens of Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies suffer during electoral violence.

2. Verbal abuse, threats, and Intimidation of political opponents and voters by vigilantes were identified in the two constituencies as one of the key actions through which electoral violence is expressed in the study areas.

3. The right to life was infringed upon during electoral violence in the study areas. For instance, in the Odododiodio constituency, two people lost their lives through electoral violence during the 2020 elections.

4. The last category of human rights abused during electoral violence in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies was the destruction of individuals'

properties. People's houses, cars, and other belongings were destroyed during electoral violence.

(c) *Findings based on the third research question are as follows:*

1. Violations during electoral violence negatively affect the Human Rights situation in Ghana. It tarnishes the image of the country and drives away investors. A state in which human rights are violated by failing to take steps to promote and advance them loses international investment.

2. Injuries inflicted on people during election violence affect the productivity of those who sustain them. Injuries have a substantial influence on a person's well-being by leading many to early death, in addition to their immediate health repercussions. Productivity years are squandered. Life years are lost due to disability and disability-adjusted life from electoral violence.

3. Violence during elections affects the credibility of elections in Ghana; it makes individuals and groups doubt the acceptability and competence of the elected ones. This casts doubt on the authority of the political party or the person who emerged as the winner during the elections.

4. In the period under study, Ghana has not experienced heavy electoral violence, which has forced people to leave the country to settle in other countries. Normally, when electoral violence starts, the security agencies intervene at a cost to the state, so it does not escalate into war as it happens in other countries.

(d) *Findings based on the last research question are as follows:*

1. Election observers may help reduce the likelihood of election violence. The presence of international election observation missions has had mixed effects on electoral violence. Observers may decrease the likelihood of election violence,

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but they may increase the likelihood of post-election violence if they expose election rigging.

2. The role of the media was identified as a critical factor that has helped prevent electoral violence in Ghana. It was revealed that the media plays a critical role in ensuring that violence in Ghana does not degenerate into serious conflict. Media coverage plays an intervening role as media personnel can impose their influence on political leaders.

3. It is also striking to note that the role of the chiefs, CSOs, and religious leaders has also helped prevent electoral violence from degenerating into armed conflict. They moderate the behaviour of political leaders. It was revealed that traditional and religious leaders work together to ensure that tensions among political parties do not escalate into armed conflict.

4. The National Peace Council and NCCE were identified as critical institutions that would help forestall a recurrence of violence in Ghana's future elections. The study revealed that the NPC was one of the mechanisms used to address electoral violence in Ghana. The study found that the NPC mediates between and among political parties and candidates when any misunderstanding arises before, during, and after elections.

5. Respondents think the police are not being professional in their work, which has contributed to several electoral violence incidents in Ghana. They criticised the use of soldiers in election security. According to respondents, if the police were to work effectively, the services of the military would not be needed during the election.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, five broad conclusions were drawn. In Africa, conducting multi-party elections is most often marred by violence. Politics has become increasingly competitive because of the high stakes involved in gaining state control. Following Ghanaians' adoption of democracy, eight general elections have been held, all of which have been deemed successful, free, and fair.

However, recent elections in the Odododiodio and Awutu Senya East constituencies have been marred by violence and tension. Fears of elections devolving into violence have prompted civil society organisations to devise methods to reduce violence and promote peace. These violent disputes have been fuelled by political parties and their candidates. The democratic principles of tolerance for differing points of view and equal rights have not been realised.

The two dominant political parties have resorted to force, coupled with intimidation and violence, to achieve the desirable goal of winning political power at all costs. The politicisation of ethnicity by political parties is the root cause of the tension and devastating violence.

The threat of this violence degenerating into armed conflicts has led CSOs to design strategies to forestall these skirmishes. The study indicated that there are multiple sources of violence, ranging from mutual mistrust to high levels of unemployment and income inequalities. The study also indicated that certain institutions, such as the Security Task Force and the National Peace Council, and the chiefs and religious leaders, when taken care of, will be able to perform some intervening roles to moderate the behaviour of the political class. Low levels of education have not helped in the promotion of democracy

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in Ghana. There is, therefore, a need to promote education as a means of sensitising citizens to the need for democratic development.

The right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to vote and to stand for election, is at the core of democratic governments based on the will of the people. Genuine elections are a necessary and fundamental component of an environment that protects and promotes human rights.

The right to vote and be elected in genuine, periodic elections is intrinsically linked to several other human rights, the enjoyment of which is crucial to a meaningful electoral process. These prerequisite rights include:

- the right to freedom from discrimination.
- the right to freedom of movement
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and
- the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.
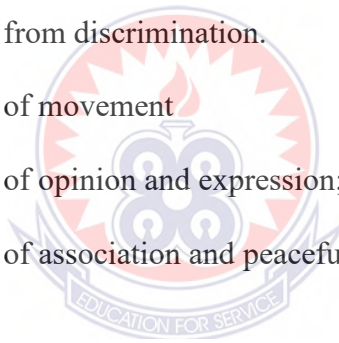
The widespread violations of rights by government forces and vigilante groups during elections could undermine the credibility of Ghana's democratic credentials.

The authorities that are mandated to take steps to ensure that there is peace during elections and hold those involved in abuses to account sometimes fail in their duties. This allows political actors to commit violence. Stable democracies are built on strong institutions. Through the correct separation of powers, a democracy with strong institutions would be able to provide the necessary components of a fully democratic government, enabling a system that allows for free and fair elections.

Finally, both short-term and long-term initiatives are needed to avoid and mitigate electoral violence. Additionally, a focus that goes beyond election-level considerations

and considers more general social, economic, and political challenges is also necessary. Targeted electoral violence prevention measures can help prevent the worst forms of violence, but eliminating violence from the range of strategies considered by electoral actors requires deeper changes in the socio-political structures of the country. Ghana could lose its position as the most peaceful country in West Africa in the subsequent Global Peace Index if measures are not put in place to curb violence in elections.

Democracy and human rights cannot survive in Ghana without free and fair elections. To aid in the prevention of electoral violence at various stages of the electoral cycle, the EC, other stakeholders, civil society, and the international community must strengthen Ghana's electoral commission's competence to oversee all stages of the electoral process. This includes a conflict early warning system, devising strategies, improving the legal environment, and developing binding codes of conduct for political parties.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made to ensure a more effective control of electoral violence and the protection of human rights during elections:

A. Government and its agencies

i. A human rights-based approach to elections, which is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into electoral policy as well as the running of all general elections, must be implemented by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). This must shift the focus to empowering electorates to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling these rights.

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ii.   A comprehensive approach to supporting the victims of electoral violence is important so that those affected can cope with the consequences of the violence. Strategies directed toward the victims of electoral violence can also prevent violence from negatively affecting attitudes toward democratic politics, a necessary condition for sustainable peace. The government must allocate adequate resources in the budget for the election to develop a policy and strategies to address the consequences of electoral violence and to implement and evaluate such a policy. The EC and the Ministry of Health can jointly carry out this duty.

iii. In addition, CHRAJ should systematically investigate each reported human rights abuse case. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice should systematically follow up on cases of violations after each election to ensure successful prosecution and enforcement of criminal or disciplinary sanctions to effectively combat impunity.

iv.   Monitoring and education regarding elections should be continuous activities in Ghana. Violence during elections needs to be continually addressed. Activities for citizens and political parties to have peaceful elections and monitor electoral violence are usually prioritised in the time leading up to an election.

      Violence can occur during general elections as well as during by-elections. By-elections could occur unexpectedly and can sometimes be much riskier than general elections. Therefore, an electoral violence management policy, including monitoring and voter-centred education, must be carried out on a long-term basis and continue between general elections to prevent and manage the causes and consequences of election violence. The EC, NCCE, and NPC must be charged to collectively carry out this duty. The government must therefore allocate adequate

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resources for peace education and maintaining monitoring capacity in between elections.

v. The government must include conflict-mitigating measures in the design of the electoral process. There should be laid down regulations on how electoral conflicts will be addressed when they occur. A peace pledge, which brings together political parties, religious leaders, and leaders of civil society to publicly declare a commitment to a code of conduct, is one such instrument that must be included in the electoral process. The openness and publicity of peace pledges aim to uphold the standards of free and fair elections.

vi. Section 42 of PNDC Law 284 must be repealed by parliament. The Police are restricted by Section 42 of the Representation of the People Law, 1992 (PNDCL 284), which is problematic. To prosecute electoral offences, the clause demands that the police obtain written permission from the Attorney General. Police officers frequently choose the simpler path by accusing individuals of crimes from the criminal code, which frequently tend to be misdemeanour offences.

vii. It is necessary to amend Article 202(1) of the 1992 Constitution, which specifies that the President, in consultation with the Council of State, shall choose the Inspector-General of Police. There should rather be a framework that, among other things, calls for advertising the IGP position, shortlisting qualified candidates, conducting interviews, and choosing the best candidate for parliamentary review and approval before the president's appointment. This will make the police more independent, so they can execute their mandate during elections without fear.

viii.   The National Media Commission (NMC) and other media organisations must update their codes of conduct and discipline any of their members who use politics and sensational reporting to further unwarranted tension in the nation before, during, and after elections. The NMC should combat and impose sanctions for incitement to hatred and violence in the media, which undermines, among other things, the country's social cohesion.

ix.   The Electoral Commission of Ghana should promote inter-party dialogues in all constituencies. This will help mitigate risks and threats to peaceful elections. Most often, misinformation leading to suspicion creates anxiety between opposing political parties. This dialogue will offer the opportunity for all issues to be fact-checked and rumours to be dispelled.

x.   The Electoral Commission should also educate polling agents from political parties about electoral laws and procedures. Most of these agents are ignorant of the laws, and this defines their violent actions at the polling stations.

xi.   The creation of permanent employment for the youth would go a long way toward preventing them from indulging in political violence. Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies should adopt Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives to empower youngsters in their communities.

B.   *Landlords*

Landlords and hotel operators, especially in Awutu-Senya East, must properly investigate foreign tenants and report those with suspicious characters to the Ghana Immigration Service to ensure they have the right resident permits to be in the country.

C.   *Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)*

i.   Civil Society organisations (CSOs) could contribute to peaceful elections by building the capacity of the youth to serve as peace ambassadors in hotspot communities. This will create a generation that is more concerned with the peaceful outcomes of elections in their communities than being used as tools to perpetuate violence.

ii.   Mass public sensitization on the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) is required from the Media, Civil Society, Political Parties, the NPC, and the NCCE to boost awareness about the Act. Religious leaders should continue to preach peace at social events and in churches and mosques.

D.   *Leadership of Political Parties*

i.   Political parties, whether in power or opposition, should not organise or deploy vigilante groups as part of their activities. These vigilante organisations are frequently violent, confiscate property or assets, and target opposition groups and public figures. Party leadership must be willing to punish members who violate the code of conduct of political parties in Ghana.

ii.   Political party leaders must take an active part in IPDC meetings. Meetings of this type provide the parties with the opportunity to make comments, suggestions, and complaints and make their concerns known. This forum can help aggrieved members resolve grievances before they become major issues, as well as develop mutual sensitivity and understanding between parties and electoral officials.

iii.   The political parties should cultivate a culture of tolerance in their supporters, provide electoral education to their supporters, and recruit well-educated members as their polling agents during elections.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The justification for every academic study lies in its ability to fill some identified gaps. This study filled several identified niches, thereby contributing to knowledge. First, studies on electoral violence have narrowly focused on conflict actors, their effects on livelihoods, and solutions to mitigate conflicts in the area. This study, however, holistically diagnosed the human rights issues involved in electoral violence in two hotspot constituencies, taking into consideration the role of institutions in preventing and managing such conflicts.

This study found that a high degree of urbanisation and a greater rate of migration of foreigners into a constituency in a poor region could provide fertile ground for electoral violence. It explains that international observers at elections may increase the likelihood of post-election violence if they expose attempted election rigging in their report. Less importance is given to the use of a human rights approach to addressing electoral challenges in Ghana leading to severe infringement on human rights Finally, this study has added to the empirical literature on the extent to which electoral violence can undermine human rights.

5.6 Contribution to Social Studies

The Social Studies programme was designed to equip students with relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to solve societal problems. The programme was developed to enlighten and engage democratic citizens in a culturally diverse society and to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good (UEW-Online, 2020). This study on electoral violence explains the attitude of people during elections and how violence during elections is a societal problem. The study has provided solutions to minimise this problem in society for the public good.

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5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

The present study covered only two constituencies in Ghana. A replication of the study in other constituencies, especially in the Ashanti and Volta Regions, which are the strongholds of the NPP and the NDC, respectively, is suggested to ascertain the impact of ethnic politics in Ghana. It is also suggested that research on the actors of electoral violence as an area of study would be very significant.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

This study seeks to examine the extent to which Electoral violence has undermined human rights in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies from 2016 to 2020 in Ghana as part of a PhD programme at the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba. You are invited to take part in the study by responding to the questionnaire or interview schedule. Please be informed that any information you give will be strictly for research purposes only and will be handled confidentially and professionally.

Please Select your Constituencies

Constituency	Please Tick (√)
Awutu-Senya East	
Odododiodio	

Part 1: Socio-Demographic Data. **Please Tick (√)**
1: Type of Respondent:

a.	Electorate	[]
b.	Civil Society Organisation Officer/ Academia	[]
c.	Security Officer	[]
d.	Election Official	[]
e.	Opinion Leader	[]
f.	Party Functionary	[]

1. Sex: Male   []
               Female   []

2. Ages:
               18- 27   []
               28- 37   []
               38- 47   []
               48 –57   []
               58 and above   []

4: Educational Background (Highest Attainment):
a) No Formal Education   []

b) Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS, etc)   []

c) Secondary (SHS, Tech/Voc., etc.)   []

d) Tertiary Institution (Poly, Univ., etc.)   []

e) Any other (please specify) …...…………………………........…..........

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Part 2: Please Tick (√)

1. In your view do you think from 2012 and 2016 elections organized in Ghana were violence-free?   a. Yes [] b. No [] c. I don't know []

2. If yes, what are some of the activities or actions that took place before, during, and after the election that, in your view, might have contributed to the violence?

Before the election
i………………………………………………………………………....
ii………………………………………………………………………

During the election
i……………………………………………………………………….
ii……………………………………………………………………….

After the election
i……………………………………………………………………….
ii………………………………………………………………………

Part 4. Please Tick (√)

Below is a list of statements about Electoral Violence. Read carefully and select which statement best describes your understanding of Electoral Violence. Please tick (√) in the appropriate column. Note that the ratings are as follows:

Agree (A) - 3   Uncertain (U) - 2   Disagree (D) -1

3A:	What Are the Causes of Electoral Violence	A	U	D
1.	Sensational media reporting			
2.	Vigilante groups of political parties			
3.	The type of elections			
4.	Youth Unemployment and Economic hardship			
5.	Weak State Institutions- Such as Police, Court, etc			
6.	The Stakes Involved in Losing or Winning Elections			
7.	Culture of impunity			
8.	Winner Takes All Politics			
9.	Proliferation of Arms			
10.	Ethnocentrism and ethnic marginalization			
11.	Popular ignorance (Where the voters are not well-informed)			
13.	Using incumbency factor to gain undue advantage			
14.	Others			

4. Describe the kind of violence that occurred before, during, and after the general election. *Before the election*

i…………………………………………………………………………….…………

ii……………………………………………………………..………………

iii…………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………….………….........

During the election

i……………………………………………………………………….…………

ii……………………………………………………………………….…………

After the election

i………………………………………………………………………………….

ii…………………………………………………………………………………

5: Human Rights Violations Involved in Electoral Violence		A	U	D
1	Threats, physical assault, and arbitral arrest			
2	Destruction of personal properties of political opponents for political reasons			
3	Disruption of school activities			
4	Shooting, killing, and kidnapping			
5	Hunger, famine, and diseases,			
6	Displacement of people and the refugee problem			
7	Putting fear and panic in voters			
8	Using abusive language, offensive or intimidating			
9	Others			
10	Others			

Key: A. - *Agree,* **U. -** *Uncertain,* **D. –** *Disagree*

Part 5. Please Tick (√)

6. Does electoral violence have a negative effect on the society?

Yes [] No [] Not aware []

7. Human rights implications of electoral violence		A	U	D
1	Affect legitimacy of electoral outcome (political rights)			
2	Loss of lives, physical injuries, and destruction of Properties			
3	Abuse of Right to Education; disruption of school activities			
4	Putting fear and panic in voters leads to Low voter turnout			
5	Displacement of people and the refugee problem			
6	Negative Human rights index			

Part 6. Please Tick (√)

Responses of Institutions to Prevent or Minimized Electoral Violence

8. Do you think the security provided before, during, and after the general elections was adequate?

   i. Adequate [] ii. fairly Adequate [] iii. Inadequate []

Did the Personnel Discharge their Duties Effectively?

   i. Yes [] ii. No []

9. Give two reasons for your answer in Q.9

i.……………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………....…

ii.………………………………………………………………...………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

11. Which three (3) most important institutions/bodies have the responsibility of maintaining peace during elections? 1 to 3; **Please Tick (√)**

i. Political Parties………   ii. Electoral Commission………………

iii. NCCE……………….   iv. Election Observers………………...

v. Media……….…….…   vi. Security Agencies………………...

vii. Religious Groups….   viii. National Peace Council

Civil Society Organization   Any Other …………………………….

Key: A. - *Agree,* U. - Uncertain, D. - *Disagree*

12. Responses of Institutions to Prevent or Electoral Violence	**A**	**U**	**D**
1	Protected lives and voting materials.			
2	Effective international and domestic electoral monitoring			
3	Effective electoral educational programs			
4	Conduct good groundwork for averting violence.			
5	Assist political parties in improving their activities,			
6	Constantly monitoring volatile and areas considered as hotspots.			
7	Responded promptly to emergencies			
8	Support citizen education and media training			
9	Resolve electoral disputes before they escalate			

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS IN THE CONSTITUENCIES

This study seeks to examine the extent to which electoral violence has undermined human rights in the Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies from 2016 to 2020 in Ghana as part of a PhD programme at the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba. You are invited to take part in the study by responding to the questionnaire or interview schedule. Please be informed that any information you give will be strictly for research purposes only and will be handled confidentially and professionally.

1.   How would you describe the conduct of elections in Ghana?

2.   Did you witness any forms of violence in the 2016 and 2020 elections?

3.   What factors could you say are responsible for this violence?

4.   What human rights violations are involved in electoral conflicts?

5.   Were you, or do you know anyone who was abused during the 2016 and 2020 elections?

6.   How are the human rights violations and abuses associated with electoral conflict carried out?

7.   What are the human rights implications of electoral violence?

8.   Were the perpetrators of any of this violence punished? If so, in what ways?

9.   What have been the responses of the institutions with the responsibility of ensuring peace during elections in Ghana? Follow-up questions.

10. What suggestions can you offer to prevent or reduce the occurrence of electoral violence?

11. Could you direct me to anyone who was abused during the 2016 and 2020 elections?

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APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DUTY-BEARERS OF THE STUDY AREA

This study seeks to examine the extent to which Electoral violence has undermined human rights in Awutu-Senya East and Odododiodio constituencies from 2016 to 2020 in Ghana as part of a PhD programme at the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba. You are invited to take part in the study by responding to the questionnaire or interview schedule. Please be informed that any information you give will be strictly for research purposes only and will be handled confidentially and professionally.

1.   What are the causes of electoral violence in your constituency? Seek examples if possible.

2.   What are the causes of electoral violence in your constituency? Investigate the reasons.

3.   What abuses are carried out during electoral violence in your constituency? Seek examples if possible.

4.   What medium of redress is mostly employed by those affected directly by electoral conflict?

5. What role does your institution play in the conduct of elections in Ghana's fourth republic?

6.   Have there been any measures put in place by your institution to prevent electoral conflicts?

7.   What are some of the challenges faced by your institution in the management of electoral violence?

8.   What efforts were made by other stakeholder institutions in Ghana to prevent electoral conflict?

9.   What is your assessment of the efforts of your agencies to prevent electoral violence? Probe for an explanation.

10.   What is the impact of electoral conflicts on human rights? Seek examples if possible.

11.   Why has electoral violence in Ghana not degenerated into armed conflicts as witnessed in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, etc?

APPENDIX IV

In case of reply the
Number and date of this
Letter should be quoted

20 AUG 2020

National Operations Directorate
Ghana Police Service
Accra.

Email: hq.operations@police.gov.gh

Tel: 0299210224

My Ref. No. NHQ/OPS/ELEC/265//VOL.3/ ᵀ꜀

2ⁿᵈ August, 2020.

Executive Secretary
National Commission ON Small Arms & Light Weapon
P. O. Box MB 689
Ministries – Accra

RE – NATIONAL ELECTION SECURITY TASK FORCE

1. I forward herewith, the attached document containing lists of Area/Constituencies

identified as hotspots or flashpoints in the upcoming 2020 General Elections for your

information and necessary action, please.

2. Best Regards.

MOSES GYAN MPETTEY, ASP
Staff Officer/Operations
For: Director-General/Operations

SPO(P)

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GHANA POLICE SERVICE LIST OF HOTSPOT CONSTITUENCIES WITH AT LEAST 25 HOTSPOTS

	G. ACCRA	HOTSPOTS		NORTHERN REG.	HOTSPOTS
1	Ayawaso Central	50	1	Yendi	55
2	Odododiodio	50	2	Tamale Central	50
3	Ablekuma West	30	3	Gushugu	40
4	Okaikwei Central	30	4	Tamale South	30
5	Tema East	25	5	Wulensi	28
6	Weija-Gbawe	25	6	Sagnarigu North	25

	OTI REGION	HOTSPOTS		ASHANTI REGION	HOTSPOTS
1	Nkanta North	54	1	Offinso North	56
2	Biakoye	34	2	Asawase	53
3	Nkwanta South	34	3	Effiduase/Asokore	53
4	Buem	32	4	Ejura/Sekyredumase	50
5	Krachi East	30	5	Bekwai	39
			6	Obuasi West	33
	AHAFO REGION	HOTSPOTS	7	Old Tafo	33
1	Asunafo North	29	8	Obuasi East	31
			9	New Edubiase	25

	BONO	HOTSPOTS		NORTH-EAST REGION	HOTSPOTS
1	Tain	41			
2	Gyaman South	31	1	Chereponi	30
			2	Walewale	30

	CENTRAL REGION	HOTSPOTS			
1	Awutu-Senya East	72		BONO EAST REGION	HOTSPOTS
2	Gomoa West	61	1	Atebubu Mantin	36
3	Heman/Lower Denkyira	51	2	Techiman South	29
4	Twifo Ati Morkwa	49			
5	Mfantsiman	45		EASTERN REGION	HOTSPOTS
6	Assin South	32	1	Mpraeso	58
7	Ekumfi	30	2	Upper/W Akim	56
			3	Asene/Akroso	38
	SAVANNAH	HOTSPOTS	4	Akim Oda	27
1	Daboya/Mankarig	35	5	Nsawam/Adoagyiri	27

	WESTERN NORTH	HOTSPOTS		VOLTA REGION	HOTSPOTS
1	Sefwi Wiawso	48	1	Ketu South	66
2	Bia West	25	2	Anlo	45
			3	Keta	45
	WESTERN REGION	HOTSPOTS	4	Hohoe	25
1	Ahanta West	86			
2	Jomoro	33			
3	Amenfi East	29			
4	Evalue/Ajomoro/Gwira	28			
5	Shama	25			

Source: Ghana Police

APPENDIX V

ELECTION HOTSPOTS MATRIX

REGIONAL FLASHPOINT MATRIX	
POLICE REGION	**NO. OF FLASH POINTS**
ACCRA	500
AHAFO	50
ASHANTI	975
BONO	179
BONO EAST	118
CENTRAL	906
EASTERN	891
NORTH	393
NORTH EAST	60
OTI	261
SAVANNAH	129
TEMA	189
UPPER EAST	345
UPPER WEST	292
VOLTA	275
WESTERN	323
WESTERN NORTH	292
TOTAL	6,178

Top four regions prone to electoral violence:

REGION	Out of 6178 flashpoints	Out of 4098 flashpoints
Ashanti Region	975	635
Central Region	908	537
Northern Region	393	287
Greater Accra Region	500	264

Source: Ghana Police

TOP THREE DISTRICTS IN THE TOP FOUR REGIONS PRONE TO ELECTORAL VIOLENCE:

Region	Districts	Hotspots
Ashanti	Offinso North, Asawase, Effiduase/Asokore	56, 5353
Central	Awutu-Senya East Gomoa West Heman Lower Denkyira	72, 6151
Northern	Yendi Tamale Central Gushegu	55, 5040
G. Accra	Ayawasao Central Odododiodoo, Ablekumah West	50, 5030

APPENDIX VI

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

NPP NDC vigilante groups in Ghana

Communiqué:

The National Peace Council met with key members of the two main political parties in Ghana, namely, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), in response to a call by the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in his State of the Nation address to eradicate political vigilantism.

After an open and exhaustive deliberation, the parties agreed that vigilantism is inimical to Ghana's democratic system and must be eradicated;

With respect to the immediate focus of the mediation or dialogue, the NDC is of the view that it should be the eradication of "political vigilantism in all its ramifications," while the NPP is of the opinion that the focus should be "political party vigilantism in all its ramifications." Significantly though, both parties agree to engage in deliberations aimed at:

1. Disbanding vigilante groups operating within political parties or for political purposes;
2. Prohibiting the ownership, hiring, or utilization of such groups by the political parties or members thereof;
3. Cooperating with state agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups or incidence of vigilantism in the country.

It should be noted that the two parties are also committed to exploring other processes in relation to the elimination of vigilantism.

Signed (NDC):... Signed (NPP):...

Samuel Ofosu-Ampofo-
Chairman (NDC)

Freddie Blay
Chairman
N.P.P.

National Peace Council (NPC):...

Dated this 9th day of April, 2019.