

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL VIGILANTISM: A STUDY OF
KUMASI METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY**



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KUMASI METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY**



**A Thesis in the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies,
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**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Obed Ankomah Gyimah, 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

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Gabriel Botchwey (Ph.D.)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Mr. James Ankomah, Mr. Thomas Gyimah and Mrs. Comfort Ankomah, you are a true meaning of sacrifice. I say God bless you all for your incomparable parenting and true sacrifice.



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ABSTRACT

The rationale of this study was to determine the underlying reasons for youth involvement in political vigilantism and to explore the threat political vigilantism poses to the peace of the country. The qualitative paradigm was adopted for the study. The design was a case study. Twenty-five (25) respondents were sampled through purposive sampling techniques. Field data was collected with the aid of interview-guide and analyzed using content and thematic analysis. It was found through the study that political parties form vigilante groups due to the mistrust they have in state security apparatus. The study also found out that vigilante groups are formed to perpetuate the rule of political parties. It was revealed through the study that political vigilantism poses threat to the maintenance of law and order in the country. Political vigilantism and its associated violent activities are a great threat to the maintenance of law and order and the general peace and security of the country. Political violence, which is a major component of political vigilantism, jeopardises political stability, democratic reform, prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases degenerates into civil war. The study therefore recommends that political parties desist from interfering in the work of the police and the judiciary and that the law should apply squarely to the perpetrators of the political violence if arrested by the police.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Political vigilantism is one of the most upsetting challenges societies are facing today (Tankebe, 2009). According to Swanepoel et al (2011), the 21st century has witnessed more political violence, perpetuated by political vigilante groups. Straus and Taylor (2012) noted that political vigilantism and its associated violent activities have arisen as one of Africa's most persistent security issues. Teshome (2009) averred that political vigilantism in Africa has received much attention in academic as well as media space. To him, it endangers political stability, democratic reform, the prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases may degenerate into civil war.

According to Agbelengor (2015), the beginning of the fourth republic was another major step forward in the political life of this country, as far as democracy is concerned. It is a major step that put an end to several years of military rule; the days of the culture of political intolerance, human right abuses and media censorship. Since the inception of the fourth republic, Ghana has organised eight presidential and parliamentary elections dating from 1992 to 2016 (Bob-Milliar, 2017). John Jeremiah Rawlings under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) won both 1992 and 1996 presidential elections after ruling Ghana under military rule as the Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). The then opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won the 2000 and 2004 elections. The NDC made a good come back to win the 2008 and 2012 elections led by John Atta Mills and John Mahama respectively (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009,

2014, Hottor 2010). In the 2016 elections, the NPP under the leadership of Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo won the election with an overwhelming majority seats in parliament, making it the third transfer of political power from one government to the other under the fourth republic.

Even though Ghana's elections have been described as peaceful and credible, some media houses and election observer groups reported some election related violence perpetuated by the two major political parties (NPP and NDC). Post-Election Observation Statement released by Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) pointed out among other issues that there were isolated cases of acts of violence allegedly perpetrated by some supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) against some advocates of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), as well as the unlawful and forceful seizures of public and private property in some constituencies across the country (Gyampo et al., 2017).

The rate of political violence before, during and after presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana has attracted much attention from both local civil society organisations and international organisations. This is due to the fact that Ghana is a member of United Nations (UN) and is therefore enjoined to respect the provisions in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights especially article three which states that:

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person” (United Nations, 2002).

Similarly, article five of the UNDHR also states that:

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”

CODEO, in a Communiqué released on 6 April 2017, expressed concerns about the propagation of the activities of vigilante groups and blamed the two major political parties, the NPP and NDC as being culpable for creating such dangerous party militia in Ghana. The activities of these groups pose a considerable danger to Ghana's electoral politics, democratic governance and development (CODEO, 2017). It must however be noted that vigilante groups do not spring up in a vacuum. They are created by these political parties to perform specific roles and are therefore resourced and protected by their respective parties.

For about twenty- five years after the start of the fourth republic, these vigilante groups have been major elements of Ghana's politics both during and after elections. Bob-Milliar (2014), in his research, highlights report of widespread stealing and stuffing of ballot boxes in 1992, 1996, 2000 and the 2004 elections; activities carried out by these political vigilante groups. He further throws lights on the presence of "macho men" who perpetuate the act of molestation and intimidation of voters of the two main opposing parties in the stronghold of each opponent, due to dissatisfaction with results in some polling stations.

Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh (2012) noted that the problems escalated when they took to the streets to seize control of local income-generating community facilities (such as municipal toll booths and pay toilets) from appointed overseers, who are often identified as supporters of the erstwhile government and chase government officials out of their offices.

The Minister of Interior, on the 16th of August 2009, had to imposed a curfew on Akwatia constituency to avert further clashes between supporters of National Democratic

Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) during electioneering period towards electing a member of parliament (Ghana News Agency [GNA] 2009). Also, on the 3rd of September 2008, six people lost their lives and 19 houses were burned during a political violence at Gushiegu in the northern Ghana, 900 km away from the capital Accra and dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed on the town (Afrol news, 2008).

Moreover, according to Naatogmah (2011), the late Nang-Lana Abubakari Ziblim, a sub-chief in Gushiegu, was murdered on September 1, 2008 during a political clash between NDC and NPP supporters in Gushiegu. Again, on the 14th of November 2000, it was reported that there was a political violence in Berekum in the Brong-Ahafo region and in the Northern region of Ghana. In the case of the latter, a supporter of the People's National Convention (PNC) was stabbed to death allegedly by an NDC youth. The same source said at least eight people were seriously injured in Accra, following a violent clash between supporters of the governing NDC and the main opposition NPP, in which most of the injured received cutlass wounds during the attack, which took place at Alajo in the Ayawaso Central constituency (Sakyi-Addo, 2000).

It is a fact that the youths are the agents of political vigilantism in Ghana. They are the section of the population who do the “dirty works” for political parties and leaders. These vigilante groups as well as their activities have received several condemnations from civil society groups, the media, the general public as well as international organizations. Yet their formation and activities continue. What factors explain their formation? How do activities of political vigilantism affect the maintenance of law and order in the country? How do their activities threaten the peace of the country? Why do the youth continue to

avail themselves for political vigilante groups? These are the broader questions this thesis seeks to answer.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The deepening of democratic governance was expected to mitigate the continent's conflicts. Despite efforts by states in Africa to consolidate democratic rule, political vigilantism remains an obstacle to the consolidation of democratic institutions for many states especially in Sub-Sahara and Eastern Africa (Teshome, 2008). Although, a problem that is global in scope, political vigilantism and its root causes, profiles and intensities differ in each country context (Schatzberg, 1993). The case is not different in Africa as already mentioned. Jastad (2008), contends that in much of Africa, political vigilantism, seems to create or exacerbate conditions for conflict and violence during elections which considerably threaten human security.

Frempong (2012) averred that almost 1000 lives have been lost within the past five years through activities of political vigilante groups. To him, the issue of youth in vigilantism should be given a priority in the politics of this country. In support with this assertion, Appiah (2018) claimed that without a proper line of political action, the name that Ghana has attained in democracy will die because of the prevalence of political vigilante groups in the country.

Kumasi metropolis is noted for violent clashes during and after elections since the inception of Ghana's fourth republic (Danso, 2018). According to Mensah (2016), this is largely due to the activities of political vigilante groups. Frempong (2017), argues that the 2016 general elections did not record much violence in the metropolis unlike the previous elections. He further posited that the 2012 general elections recorded four

critical incidents which included among other things voter intimidation, tearing of opponent posters, exchange of insults, and obstruction of political opponents from campaigning, looting of peoples' shops and other violent related acts.

A lot of scholars in the field of political science such as Ayee (2002), Frempong (2012) and Gyimah-Boadi (2009) have researched and provided extensive discourse on democratic development, democratic consolidation and electoral politics. In furtherance, attention has also been given to the prospects and trials of democratic consolidation in Ghana (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010; Fobih, 2008). However, these works focused on Ghana's democracy without a touch on the issue of political vigilantism. For instance, a study undertaken by Gyimah-Boadi (2009) on the consolidation of Ghana's democracy revealed that a major threat to Ghana's democracy is illiteracy and lack of political awareness on the part of the ordinary Ghanaian. His study only employed the quantitative approach to achieve its objectives. Similarly, Amissah (2015) did a cross sectional survey on elections and violence in Ghana's fourth republic with a particular reference to the Amansie East district in the Ashanti region. His study revealed that electoral violence is caused by the youth who are mostly supporters of political parties. Amissah (2015) did not investigate into youth involvement in political vigilantism.

A preliminary survey of the literature on youth involvement in political vigilantism in the Kumasi metropolis revealed that there is little literature in this area, and I am yet to find any research that deals with youth involvement in political vigilantism using Kumasi as a case study. From the identified gap in research, the main issue that this study would address is the underlying factors for youth involvement in political vigilantism and the threat it poses to the peace of the country.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine the underlying reasons for youth involvement in political vigilantism and to analyze the threat political vigilantism poses to the peace of the country. The specific objectives that guided the study were to:

1. Examine the factors that warrant the formation of vigilante groups by political parties.
2. Determine the reasons for involvement of the youth in political vigilantism.
3. Examine the manner in which political vigilantism threatens the general peace and security of the country.
4. Explore ways in which political vigilantism could be ended in Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions

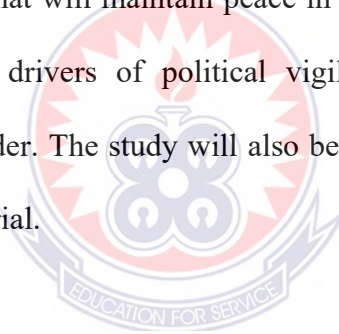
To be able to accomplish the goals of the study, the research was guided by the following research questions;

1. What factors warrant the formation of vigilante groups by political parties in Ghana?
2. What factors could account for the continuous youth involvement in political vigilantism?
3. How does political vigilantism threaten the general peace and security of the country?
4. In what ways can political vigilantism be ended in Ghana?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study would arouse the consciousness of the state, political leaders and relevant stake holders to take a critical look at the extent to which political vigilantism could jeopardize the relative peace of the country in order to put in robust measures to curb it if not eradicate it. The study would also provoke extensive discussions on the factors that account for the continuous youth involvement in political vigilantism.

The findings of the study will also assist the government to formulate policies that could aim at redirecting the minds and energies of the youth towards activities that promote peace and community development. The study will also assist the national peace council in developing a paradigm that will maintain peace in Ghana. The study will also deepen our understanding of the drivers of political vigilantism and how they affect the maintenance of law and order. The study will also be beneficial to future researchers by serving as a reference material.



1.6 Justification of the Study

Over the years, there has been an ongoing discussion on the proliferation of political vigilantism groups and their activities. Activities of these vigilante groups are largely undertaken by youth ranging from 18 to 30, and their activities have become very pervasive. By discussing the youth and political vigilantism, the researcher seeks to bring into limelight an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and discuss the reasons that explain youth involvement in political vigilantism. Despite the risk of arrest and imprisonment, injury, and even death, the youth continue to make themselves available

for use as agents of political vigilantism. It is thus expedient that a study is conducted to understand the situation and find possible remedies.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

According to Berg, Lune & Lune (2004) every research work comes with its peculiar challenges. The researcher encountered some challenges during the collection of field data.

Some respondents were unwilling to participate in the administration of the questionnaires. Some respondents even declined at the later part of the study after accepting to participate at the earlier stage. Nonetheless, the quality of the study was not affected since every effort was made to operate within these constraints to produce excellent work.

The study was also restricted to the subjective views, opinions and perceptions of the research participants. The consequence is that important and needed information for the study may not be given or misrepresented by the respondents because of the sensitive nature of the topic under study. Nevertheless, the researcher corrected this issue through member checking to verify the authenticity of their statements.

Another challenge was the withdrawal of some of the participants since they were told they could withdraw at any given time. Some of the participants declined after their affirmation to engage in the focus group discussion. The researcher realized that they wanted some monetary rewards and because they were not given, they found some excuses not to be available for the discussion.

Finally, the data collected was no doubt influenced by the researcher's own preconceptions, despite all efforts at objectivity. It was difficult to completely suppress the human mind's extraordinary capacity to see and hear only what it expects to, resolutely suppressing the noise of ordinary contradictory instances.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study focused on youth involvement in political vigilantism and how it affects the peace of the country with a particular reference to Kumasi Metropolis. The study was limited to the public and officers of the Ghana Police Service living in Kumasi. The rationale is that those living in Kumasi have a fair idea of activities of political vigilantism, as the phenomenon is rampant in Kumasi. Again, the officers of the Ghana Police Service are mostly at the forefront of maintenance of law and order in the area. This means they are likely to provide firsthand information about the issue.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five main chapters. Chapter One covers the introductory part of the study. This includes the background information of the research, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions as well as the significance of the study and justification of the study among others.

The second chapter discusses the review of related literature. It is concerned with review of vital and related literature on political vigilantism at the global stage, then to Africa, and narrowed down to Ghana with a case study of Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti

region of Ghana. Chapter Two further looks at the theoretical framework that informed the study.

The research methodology and other issues related to data collection methods and analysis procedures are discussed in the third chapter. Chapter three also covers the population, instrumentation, sample, sampling techniques as well as ethical considerations. Chapter four focuses on the presentation of data and analysis of the data collected from the field. The chapter also looks at the findings and the discussion of the findings. The last chapter contains the summary of findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the study. The review of the relevant literature is in three parts. The first section discussed some basic concepts related to the study such as vigilantism and political vigilantism. It further looked at the causes of political vigilantism from global perspective. The second section also looked at political vigilantism in Ghana and further considered in detail common activities of political vigilante groups in Ghana. The third section explored the effects of political vigilantism as well as the youth and political violence within the Ghanaian context. The theoretical framework that informed the study is also examined in this chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

There are various theories that seek to explain the root causes of political vigilantism (Teshome, 2008). Three theories namely the theory Political Decay, the Marxist theory of conflict and the Youth Bulge theory were used to explain why political vigilante groups are formed, the characteristics of vigilante groups and why they are able to undertake certain activities. The youth bulge theory explains why the youth are involved in political vigilantism.

2.1.1 *The Theory of Political Decay*

According to Swanepoel, Duvenhage and Coetzee (2011), vigilantism is a feature of political decay. Duvenhage (2003) asserts that political decay is a negative political

change and is as a result of the state's inability to provide law and order, stability, security and good governance to all its citizens. The lack of law and order, existence of weak governance and the failure of the state to provide adequate security and social needs, social organizations (vigilantes) having their own rules, low bureaucratic abilities and the state failing to perform all its functions, account for the manifestations of vigilantism.

Swanepoel, Duvenhage & Coetzee (2011) identified two criteria for the occurrences of vigilantism; specific criteria and contextual criteria.

According to Swanepoel; Duvenhage & Coetzee (2011), the context criteria support the argument that political vigilantism is a major characteristic of a political decay. Political decay is described by Duvenhage (2003:44) as "negative political change and is associated with an inability of the state to provide law and order, stability, security and good governance to all its citizens". Within this context, the authors provide two criteria that explains the formation of vigilante groups. The first is when a society experiences negative change/disequilibrium and there are low levels of need satisfaction. According to Duvenhage (2003), a state of disequilibrium is associated with the inability of the state to provide order, stability, security and good governance from which the need for people's courts may grow to establish order again This implies that, activities of political vigilantism are carries out by groups and political parties because of the failure of the state to fully ensure the provision of proper and robust security for the citizens in the state. Activities of political vigilantism is also carried out when the state fails to ensure strict compliance of the law. The second criterion is a dysfunctional state and refers to a state with low levels of institutionalisation or low bureaucratic abilities and high levels of

corruption. This gives vigilante groups the energy to carry out their activities with very little or no fear of punishment. Swanepoel et al (2011) posit that, vigilantism is more than a sporadic act, as it involves premeditation, planning and organization. It is conducted by private citizens acting on a voluntary or contract basis and that their activity is undertaken without the state's authority or support. In other words, vigilantism is not a spontaneous act. It is an act that is well calculated and thoroughly thought through. It is conducted by private citizens acting on a voluntary or contract basis. The activity is undertaken without the state's authority or support and force is either applied or threatened.

2.1.2 *The Marxist Theory of Conflict*

According to the Marxist theorists, the society is an incorporated class of individuals with aggressive ideals, beliefs and concerns (Bluwey, 2011). There is the bourgeoisie; encompassing a dominant class with a lot of influence (power and money) and the proletariat-comprised of subordinate class without influence. The relationship that exists between the two classes is that of perpetual antagonism; as a result of struggle for the limited resources in society. Domination and power maintain social order as the wealthier and the powerful suppresses the poor and the powerless. The Marxists define the state as a committee of bourgeoisie, which governs for the interest of the superior class (Hirst, 1975). Max Weber also reflected on the state as human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber, 2002). But to Lenin (1932), the state is a legal order where exploitation does exist. It is an institution with established apparatus purposely and directly meant to defend and uphold class domination and class exploitation. Conflict emerges when the proletariat class feels marginalized and underrated by the dominant class despite being

heavily taxed (Bluwey, 2011). This subordinate class too desires to be handled with dignity and furthermore provided with state services. The Marxist theory of conflict postulates that if the state fails to ensure owners of labour (the sub-ordinate class) benefits from the resources in society, the feeling of marginalization and sidelining may germinate amongst them. As a result, they might seek for means of ensuring they also benefit in their own special way, which could a revolution.

These theorists may interpret the vigilante response as the desperate lashing out of the dominant group which sees that it is losing to others its control of the state apparatus (Rosebaum and Sederberg, 1976). Vigilante violence could be analyzed as a normal section of exploitation by the dominant class. The Marxist theorists view this violence as a normal part of politics at least up to the time the proletariat revolution takes place (ibid). Brown (1995) argues that class conflict involving the American rich cattle tycoons and the deprived farmers and herders resulted in the formation of vigilante groupings. In relation to the Ghanaian political party vigilantes, the rich barons created a gang that favoured quick justice through the use of violence. The group would deter and even frighten the lower class threatening their interests. Lenin draws a picture of what are these vigilante groups by asserting that, “a state is formed, a special power is created in the form of special bodies of armed men and every revolution by shattering the state apparatus, bodies of armed men to create a new organization of its brand capable of serving not the exploiter but the exploited” (Bluwey, 2011:119). Vigilantes have severally been criticized for steering their own selfish interest.

This vigilante-based self-interest creates another level of conflict in our society. Therefore, the vigilante groups germinate as a result of this conflict between the dominant and the subordinate classes.

2.1.3 The Youth Bulge Theory

The concept of youth bulge developed out of the debate in social science circles regarding delinquent youth (Roche, 2010). A German sociologist and economist named Gunnar Heinsohn developed this theory. According to the sociologist and genocide researcher Gunnar Heinsohn, youth bulges provide the motivation for civil war (Roche, 2010). His research, based on historical studies, led him to conclude that if a society has young people (aged 15 to 24) constituting more than 20 per cent of its population, it will probably experience a civil war. Explaining further, he uses the analogy of inheritance patterns; if a father has more than one son, he may be headed for trouble if his wealth is not sufficient to satisfy all of his sons' needs and their demands for a decent future. As a result, the dissatisfied sons will begin to stir up conflict within the household and eventually in the world outside the household. The Youth Bulge Theory is a concept that identifies young men or women as a historically volatile and ever-increasing population. It explores the idea that the presence of more than 20% of young people raises the potential for rebellion and unrest. The concept specifically equates a large percentage of young men with an increased possibility of violence, particularly in the global South where youths often account for 60% of the population (Hendrixson, 2003). Roche (2010) opines that, the debate over 'youth bulges' as a source of conflict has developed only in the second half of the twentieth century. The French conflict researcher Bouthoul (1968), one of the major proponents of this theory through the concept *le Complexe de*

l'Encombrement, argues that while the French population underwent only a moderate increase in the 1950s, the number of students tripled a decade later, giving rise to enormous competition for the same resources. According to Bouthoul (1968), conflicts are an inevitable fallout of the destruction of the demographic–economic equilibrium. Supporting the argument, Moller (1968) in his analysis of European revolutionary movements alluded to the fact that the youth were the major drivers of the revolution.

Goldstone (1991) in his book “Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World” examines four aspects that he believes are responsible for state crises as well as revolutions: the problem of taxes and severe financial crises in the state; the inter-elite conflicts that arise from these state crises; the increasing population pressure and competition for land; and the emergence of ideologies of ‘rectification and transformation’. Goldstone (1991) postulates that “youthfulness” is a demographic concept and that young men are naturally aggressive. Goldstone (1991) thus believes that as the youthful population increases, violence become inevitable as there is the struggle for access to natural resources. The youth believe that it is their right to have access to the state resources and that anything that prevents them from getting what they want is caused by human. They must therefore deal with them.

With Ghana having about 57% of her population being youth, the possibility of youth engagement in political related violence is higher. Majority of people who are members of various political vigilante groups are youth. They are always available due to their numbers which makes them easily accessible.

2.2 Defining Vigilantism and Political vigilantism

Vigilantism is one of the most abused phenomenon in the world. Etymologically, the word “vigilante” is originally a Spanish adjective meaning “watchful”, and as a noun is mainly used to mean a “watchman” or “guard” in that language. Its Latin root is the adjective “vigilantem” (nominative vigilants), which means “watchful, anxious or careful”. The word “vigilante” was adopted into North American English in the nineteenth century, entering popular vocabulary through the (1866) writings of Thomas Dinsdale (Nel, 2016). He wrote about the 1860s Vigilantes of Montana, a group of concerned citizens who organised themselves against a corrupt local sheriff and other “undesirables” who crossed their path (Abrahams 1998). Other early vigilante groups were referred to as “regulators” and “moderators”, or had more specific titles such as “White Caps” and the notorious Ku Klux Klan (Nel 2016). Abrahams (1998) records that, it is only more lately that there has been a growing trend in North America that the term “vigilantism” is seen to be more disapproving.

In English, the collection of words that include “vigil”, “vigilance” and “vigilante” co-exist with a second set that has partly overlapping meanings, including “wake” “watch” and “watchful” (Nel 2016). Even though these words are of German origin, they seem to share the same ancient Indo-European roots as their Latin counterparts (Abraham, 1998).

Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) noted “Vigilantism simply means taking the law into one's own hands as well as violent display of brute force to protect the interest of a group that one belongs to. Tankebe (2019) postulates that popularly, people view vigilantism as an act that involves incidents in which people take the law into their own hand, as they use (or threaten to use) violence against others who pose a threat to a particular version of

the social order. This means that vigilantism is merely the usurpation of law and order by groups in order to prevent people from interfering in their agenda. According to Johnston (1996), vigilantism entails the formation of groups by private citizens, which use force and violence to put across their frustrations with the state of affairs in a country. Johnston (1996) also supports the argument that vigilantism is mainly the employment of violence by a sect of the society in their quest to lay their grievances before the state. There seems to be a scholarly agreement on the fact that vigilantism is characterized by the pursuance of activism outside the confines of the law, which is mostly associated with violence (Nivette, 2016; Phillips, 2016; Silke and Taylor, 2000).

Tankebe (2019a) opines that, all vigilante activities are not politically neutral. Every act of vigilantism is inherently political in the sense that it always involves the use of power against other persons and in pursuit of certain interests. This means that vigilantism is synonymous to political vigilantism. However, this assertion cannot be true. For instance, a group of young men who put themselves together as community watchdogs to provide security for their community cannot be said to be a political vigilante group. This is because, even though they could be classified as a vigilante group, they neither seek to influence the political order of the country in anyway or get undue political advantage. In the same way, a group of young people who create a speed ramp with a heap of sand by themselves in order to prevent frequent knocking down of people by vehicles cannot be said to be a political vigilante group. I then believe that political vigilantism is the use of violence by groups to influence the political order to their advantage or that of their employers. This could involve the formation of groups by political parties or actors. It could also involve a section of members of political parties putting themselves together

attack party leadership as way of expressing their frustration or seizing public offices and moneymaking properties as their reward for their hard work and loyalty to the party.

2.3 Modus Operandi of Vigilante Groups

Humans perpetuate political vigilante activities. This section is to establish the claim that groups and not individuals perpetuate political vigilantism and act in private capacity and not a state sponsored activity. The leading issue to be addressed is whether vigilantism is necessarily a group phenomenon. Despite the fact that individual vigilantes are not strange, vigilantism is more frequently carried out as part of a group (Abraham, 1998). Terms like “mob justice” used synonymously with vigilantism cement the popular perception that vigilante acts are committed collectively (Nel, 2016). Truly, writers such as Senechal (1996) regard vigilantism purely as a form of group conduct, categorizing it as a form of “collective violence”. Similarly, Baker (2004) is of the view that vigilantism requires some degree of organised action, which suggests that a group rather than single individuals execute it.

The communal outlook of Ghana’s vigilantism is also reflected in recent media reports about vigilante conduct, which focus on seemingly ubiquitous spontaneous mob justice in the vast majority of instances. An explicit example is the mob action that happened in Denkyira Obuasi, where a military officer was lynched to death by a section of the town folks who claim that they thought he was a thief. Another explicit examples include rampage locking and complete takeover of some state institutions illegally in Tamale, Kumasi and Accra by some youth of the governing NPP (Danso, 2018).

The “invincible forces” as they were called claimed that, they were exacting vengeance for what they went through in the hands NDC when it won power in the 2008 elections.

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 National Disaster Management Office (NADMO) in Sagnerigu district (Ijon, 2020).

Johnston (1996), proposed six requirements for vigilantism. One of them is that vigilantism is undertaken by private individuals not state agents. Johnston’s proposal has been lauded by scholars like Bakar (2004), Abraham (1998) and Swanepoel & Duvenhage (2007). On the contrary, other authors assert that vigilantism includes abuses of power by state agents (such as policemen) who identify with the established order and use excessive force to maintain that order (Cooper-Knock & Owen, 2015; Bruce & Komane, 1999). Scholars who do not subscribe to Johnston’s assertion that vigilantism is necessarily carried out by only private individuals, subscribe to the concept of vigilantism in a narrow sense. However, describing vigilantism broadly to include all forms of establishment violence (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1976) without taking into consideration its source, whether public or private, confuses the significant differences between public abuse of power and private vigilantism, and runs the risk that neither phenomenon is expounded adequately (Johnston, 1996). Johnston (1996) also posits that state agents such as the police are “automatically barred” from performing vigilante actions. His view is that police officials continue to enjoy full police powers even when off duty; thus, their conduct can never truly be “private”. It is acquiesced, however, that determining whether state agents can be termed vigilantes or not should not depend on whether they possess (nominal) off-duty state powers (Nel, 2016). Instead, what is

decisive is whether they view themselves (subjectively) as “willingly accountable” to the state for their actions, and also whether (objectively) they are acting within the course and scope of their employment at the time of the relevant conduct.

2.4 Political Vigilantism in Ghana: A Historical Overview

According to Asamoah (2019), the emergence of political vigilantism in Ghana could be traced to pre-colonial days. He further explains that, most of the vigilante activities in the pre-colonial era were regime protectionist in nature. Asamoah (2014) opines that, in colonial period, because the British Colonial Administration used violence to protect colonial rule, the young people of Ghana also retaliated by organizing violence to frustrate the colonial system, which indirectly had the potential of transitioning the colony into political independence and republic rule. One such incidence of protectionist vigilantism was the killing of some veterans by the colonial administration, which led to the February 1948 riots that gained popular support and led to the boycott of foreign goods, which incurred the wrath of the colonial administration.

Asamoah’s (2019) account of the history of political vigilantism in Ghana further explains that, the attainment of independence did not end the activities of vigilantes by the youth groups of political parties. Shortly after independence, Nkrumah faced strong opposition from political parties like the National Liberation Movement (NLM) and some other ethnic-based political parties which engaged in acts classified as vigilantism. The Action Troopers was a vigilante group, set up by the main opposition political party, the NLM. This group was involved in creating fear and panic and brutalizing members of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in the Ashanti Region, using dynamites, guns and other

deadly weapons to suppress and eliminate opposing political factions. There were other vigilante groups such as 'Tokyo Joes' to protect the interest of Ga Adangbe, and Ga Ekomefeemo Kpee to protect the interest of the CPP and make Nkrumah's government popular among Ghanaians in Accra. The prevalence of such vigilante groups serving as opposition to the CPP led to the promulgation of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, which barred the existence of any political grouping that was based on ethnic or religious affiliation. Also, there was the enactment of the Prevention Detention Act (PDA) in July 1958 which authorized the government to detain anyone in prison for not more than five years without trial. The lack of constitutional means for opposing the rule of Nkrumah led to a series of unconstitutional and vigilante-styled attacks on the first President of Ghana, like the Kulungugu bomb attack in 1963 in which Nkrumah sustained some injuries and several people died. Nkrumah's government was overthrown in 1966 in a military coup championed by Colonel E.K. Kotoka, Major A.A. Afrifa and Mr. J.W.K. Harley. After the overthrow of Nkrumah, there were coups and counter-coups, which were more violent and bloodier than those of the 1966 coups. The 1979 coup d'état for instance, resulted in the bloody execution of some former Generals of the Ghana Army by a firing squad authorized by the leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Jerry John Rawlings. In the Provisional National Defence Councils' Government, which was also led by Rawlings, there were the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, the Militia and the Civil Defence Organizations which all played the role of vigilantism.

2.5 Political Vigilantism in Ghana: A Synopsis

Political Vigilantism has its historical precedents from youth activism in politics during the British colonial epoch when the Convention People's Party youth faction, known as Nkrumah's 'Veranda Boys' set the pace for party youth crusading in Ghana (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). Kwame Nkrumah navigated his 'Veranda Boys' (who were mostly youth) to successfully attain political sovereignty from the British (Paalo, 2017). This has become the order of the day in Ghana.

Several political parties have resorted to engaging the services of youth groups. In the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) era, some vigilante groups such as the "Mobisquad", Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), Workers Defense Committees (WDCs), Peoples Defense Committees (PDCs) and others were trained and armed to defend the revolution (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). Many wings such as the Women's and Youth Wings of Political Parties, mainly the two major ones (NPP and NDC), were formed around the nucleus of stick-in-the-mud party members usually known as foot soldiers (Gyampo, 2010).

Currently, there are over twenty-four (24) registered political parties in Ghana some of which include Convention People's Party (CPP), People's National Convention (PNC), NDC and NPP (Paalo, 2017). Both NDC and NPP have gained national and international notoriety for their continuous association with youth arms such as 'Azoka' (for NDC) and 'Invincible Forces' (for NPP) (Bob-Milliar, 2014). There have been several instances of political vigilante activities in Ghana's twenty-nine (29) years of democratic rule. Their activities mainly take place before, during and after election. In some instances, their activities take place during compilation and review of voters' register by the electoral

commission, as some political parties, especially the two major one's fear that the other would bloat the register in their strong-holds. The two major political parties in Ghana (NPP and NDC) have vigilante groups scattered across the country, with special names given to some of them. The table below shows the list of vigilante groups by the two major political parties.

Table 1: Vigilante groups linked to the NPP

Groups	Location
Nana Addo Fun Club	Tamale
Invincible Force	Accra
Bamba Boys	Wenchi
Bolga Bulldogs	Navrongo, Sandema, Bawku, Bolga, Techiman
Kandahar Boys	Tamale
Delta Force	Kumasi
Action Troopers	Kumasi
Bugri Naabu Fun Club	Tamale
Western Crocodiles	Western Region

Source: Asamoah (2019)

Table 2: Vigilante groups linked to the NDC

Groups	Location
Pentagon	Tamale
Tohazie	Tamale
Bukurisung	Tamale
Aluta Boys	Tamale
Bench	Tamale, Yendi
Azorka Boys	Tamale
Gbewaa Youth	Tamale
Al Jazeera	Tamale
Al Qaeda	Tamale
NATO Forces	Tamale
Rasta Boys	Agbogloshie
Se Se Group	Nima
Aluta Boys	Tamale
Nima Boys	Accra
Salifu 11	Asunafo North Constituency (Mim and its environs)
Zongo Caucus	Ashanti, Western and Volta Regions
Untouchable Forces	Accra
The Hawks	Ellembelle Constituency

Source: Asamoah (2019)

These groups have resorted to illegal acts including confiscation of state property, forcible ejection of officials of state from their apartments, physical assault of former government appointees and other human right abuses, have filled Ghana's body politic with tension, rancor and acrimony within the first few months of new regimes (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017).

2.6 Common Activities of Political Vigilantism in Ghana

This section takes an overview of some activities that are undertaken by political vigilante groups in Ghana before, during and after general elections in Ghana. The activities include stealing and stuffing of ballot boxes, seizure of public assets, public disorder and destruction of party properties.

2.6.1 *Stealing and Stuffing of Ballot Boxes*

The stealing and stuffing of ballot boxes in election is a known phenomenon in the politics of Ghana in the second republic. As Bob-Milliar (2014) recounts that, incidence of ballot box stealing and stuffing were widespread in national elections conducted in Ghana in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. According to Bob-Milliar (2014), the stealing of ballot boxes is where ballots cast in an election are taken away by supporters of one of the challengers in an election, while stuffing of ballot boxes is the process of putting pre-cast ballots into the boxes prior to the scheduled voting.

It must also be amplified that ballot stuffing is also done during elections. In this case, electorates secretly carry with them already thump-printed ballot papers, add it to what the electoral officers give them at the polling station, and deposit them in the ballot box.

Political vigilante groups are mostly mandated by their respective political parties to undertake such activities in order to enhance their chances of either maintaining or capturing political power.

2.6.2 Seizure of Public Assets

Incidence of the seizure and unlawful control of public properties of political transitional period is one alarming activity undertaken by political vigilante groups in Ghana. This activity is always carried by pro-government vigilante groups. Benefaction objects such as bus terminals are political opportunities enjoyed by the incumbent parties' activists (Bob- Milliar, 2014). Subsequently, public property, including office buildings, cars, toll bridges, toilets, and lorry parks, have always been the target of the party vigilante groups. In early 2009, the foot soldiers of the NDC occupied several government buildings, evicted the occupants, and took over their jobs. The revenue collection jobs at many public toilets were forcibly taken over by the foot soldiers of the NPP in 2001 and the NDC in 2009 respectively.

The seizure and unlawful occupation of public assets by vigilante groups has become a recurring problem in Ghana's politics. The phenomenon has degenerated from party members finding ways of enjoying the 'fruits of their labour' to vengeance. Party boys seize public offices and money-fetching assets in order to pay their opponents in their own coins, and not just the economic benefits.

2.6.3 Public Disorder

Political vigilante groups, often times in the name of foot soldiers, clothing themselves with legitimate peaceful demonstrations, cause public disorder. Demonstrations are political rights which can be embarked on by any group of persons at any time provided all necessary protocols are satisfied. However, in the name of peaceful demonstrations,

political vigilante groups cause public disorder. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) describe such public political protest as contemptuous politics. Contestably, such behavior of political vigilante groups is contentious because their motive for engaging in public protests is to confront the ruling elites and not just express their grievances or canvass support for their opinions. To be sure, party foot soldiers and political vigilante groups demonstrated against Ministers of State, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) (Bob-Milliar, 2014). For instance, in March 2010, a group of NDC foot soldiers in the Agona West constituency demonstrated against the MCE, Jacob Felix Obeng-Forson, whom they alleged was “misguided and incompetent” (GNA, 2010).

Also found within this category were several anti-government demonstrations, the popular ones being the “Kume Preko” (Akan Twi meaning “kill me instantly”) and “Wahala” (a Hausa word meaning “sufferings”) protests which were staged in the nation’s capital and other major towns. On May 11, 1995, an opposition pressure group, the Alliance for Change (AFC), organized the “Kume Preko” demonstration protesting against the then Rawlings administration decision to introduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) policy (Frimpong, 2007; Osei 2000). In 2005, the Committee for Joint Action (CJA), another pressure group aligned with the opposition NDC organized the “Wahala” demonstrations against fuel price increases, “bad governance,” “economic hardships,” and the “insensitivity of the NPP government” (Ghanaweb, 2005).

2.6.4 Destruction of Party Properties

Activities of political vigilante groups are not carried out against only political opponents or state officials. The contentious activities engaged in by political vigilante groups also affected party structures, campaign cars, and other party branded properties or paraphernalia (Bob-Milliar, 2014). In spite of the fact that party offices are privately

owned, they are not spared by political vigilante groups. In May 2011, for example, NDC foot soldiers attacked the offices of the mayor of Tamale and destroyed office equipment including computers, furniture, stationery, and exhibition stands (Bob-Milliar, 2014). This youth aggression was said to be in protest at a “decongestion exercise” undertaken by the assembly (Bob-Milliar and Obeng-Odoom, 2011). Again, in 2011, foot soldiers claiming affiliation to the NDC in Tamale burnt down a party office to register their displeasure over a court ruling that saw certain persons accused of the murder of an important local chief acquitted (Bob-Milliar, 2012).

2.6.5 Molestation and Physical Assault

National elections and internal political party in elections in the fourth republic has seen voluminous Molestation, physical assault, and violent intimidation. Evidence shows that during the pre-vote period, party foot soldiers engaged in molestations and violent intimidation of the electorate and rival supporters (Laakso, 2007; Mehler, 2007; and Straus & Taylor, 2012).

In August 2008, an NDC vigilant purportedly fired gunshots and scurried an NPP campaign rally at the Jubilee Park in Tamale (Frimpong, 2008). In the December 2012 election, for example, the main domestic observer group, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) (CODEO, 2012) received reports from its field agents of intimidation, harassment, and violation of the voting procedures in the Ashanti, Greater Accra, and Northern regions. The violence was aimed at disenfranchising the supporters of rival candidates so as to reduce the vote margins.

2.7 Causes of Vigilantism

Acts of political vigilantism do not happen in a vacuum. These activities are masterminded by some political leaders. It must therefore be stated that there is multiplicity of factors that motivate the formation of vigilante groups as well as the carrying out of their activities. The causes as discussed in this paper includes ineffectiveness of the security system, politicisation of security agencies, desire of leaders to perpetuate their rule and lack of trust in governance.

2.7.1 Ineffectiveness of the Security System

Ordinarily, peoples' perception has been that, police professionalism converts into public expectations that police officers will perform their duties within a set of fair and accountable guidelines (Seron et al. 2004). However, in many states, some section of the society's experience with legal institutions has rather been dehumanizing treatments, injustices, and abuse (Tankebe, 2009). Such experiences, according to Tankebe, can be felt as socially injurious, which in turn can engender moral anger as people seek to assert themselves and lay claim to the social recognition denied them. The police treat people procedurally unfairly when they deny them the opportunity to state their point of view, or when the police display bias and capriciousness. At worst, the police can sometimes show contempt for people as citizens when, for example, they go to a police station to report a crime. Indeed, such concerns may sometimes aggravate the significance of the police's lack of effectiveness because while the public may, in some situations, be sympathetic to genuine reasons for police ineffectiveness, they may be unsympathetic if and when police disregard what they consider to be their basic right to be treated as citizens with genuine issues to raise (Tankebe, 2009).

It is noteworthy that feelings of resentment against socially injurious treatment, which often result in cries of injustice, are never left without reply (Scott1990). The public reply may be no means other than public vigilantism. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974) opine that, vigilante actions are an effort to defend a given social order by turning to approaches that are in contrast with already existing rules meant to protection that order in the first instance. In this sense, vigilantism is commonly seen as the direct outcome of continuing police failure in the provision of physical security (Tankebe, 2009).

Harnischfeger (2003) provided an explicit illustration in the account of the antecedents of the Bakassi Boys' vigilante group in southeastern Nigeria. In the midst of an unmatched upsurge in violent crime, intimidation from gangs, and apparent police lack of effectiveness, local traders organized the youth in the neighborhood to procure security to rescue the local economy, which had been devastated by widespread violence.

Harnischfeger's account of the Bakassi Boys Vigilante groups gives a glaring picture of how ineffectiveness of security apparatus could be a recipe for the public's self-cry which is in most cases seen in violent action.

2.7.2 Politicization of Security Agencies

Political parties, especially opposition ones, tend to find alternative security measures for themselves when they come to a realisation that security agencies, especially the police are only dancing to the tune of the ruling party. Prior to the 2016 general elections in Ghana, the then opposition party, the New Patriotic Party hired the services of three security experts from South Africa to provide security training to their private security guards. The three South African nationals were arrested and deported by the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI); their charge was that, they have been involved in using

weapons to train personal bodyguards for the flagbearer and running mate of the opposition party (myjoyonline, 2016a). The BNI and the Police suspected that, they were not only training bodyguards but also, men who could be used for other undeclared purposes.

Again, the raiding of the premises of a think tank group, the Danquah Institute, an affiliate of the New Patriotic Party by the National security and the Police (myjoyonline, 2016b) triggered dozens of NPP supporters to gather at the Nima residence of the NPP flag bearer, Nana Akuffo Addo to protect him. This proves that, political parties form vigilante groups when they perceive that the ruling government is using state institutions to harass and intimidate them.

2.7.3 Desire of Leaders to Perpetuate their Rule

According to Lawal (2010) Sit-tight Syndrome, a situation in which an individual tries to hold on to power for personal embellishment contributes to political violence, which are often carried out by groups formed by the leaders. In an attempt to hang on to power, leaders often create a regime of violence, repression and bloodshed. They organise political brutes, hooligans and hunters to sing their praises, intimidate opponents and kill them if they become stubborn. Ivory Coast, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Togo, Egypt and Libya among other countries, the incumbents used undemocratic means to perpetuate themselves in power. In Kenya for example, the ruling party in December 2007 tried to suppress opposition political parties by recruiting and sponsoring tribal militias and gangs to terrorise and instigate ethnic violence (Kagwanja, 2003).

In Ghana, some politicians see politics as a field for making investments. Therefore, the politicians, having invested colossally on campaigns and other political activities, together with the existing winner takes all system, would want to win at all cost.

Subsequently, the need to employ the use of thugs to destabilise and rig elections becomes inevitable, especially when such politicians are not popular candidates. Teshome (2009) found that the major cause of the 2005 post-election violence in Ethiopia was the defeat of the ruling party in the election and its attempt to reverse the poll results by force. The ruling party had direct control over the army and the police. In many African emerging democracies, election management bodies, courts, police and army are highly politicised and are the instruments of the ruling party. Therefore, perpetrators of electoral violence who belong to ruling parties often escape justice. Unfortunately, the victims who may likely be members of the opposition party rather end up in jail, as in the case of Ethiopia in their 2005 elections (Teshome, 2009). According to Mbugua (2006), elections are by their very nature full of uncertainties. He observed that election-related violence could be ignited when there is high uncertainty about the result of the election, particularly when the margins of electoral victory are very close. In such situations, Sisk (2008) noted that, allegations of electoral fraud could lead to frustrations and violent clashes. Sisk (2008) explained further that, in such circumstances the incumbents could attempt to maintain their grip on power by resorting to violence, especially when they fear the possible majority support for opposition parties.

2.7.4 *Lack of Trust in Governance*

Das and Choudhury (1997) observed inefficiency of the governing elites as an important cause of conflict. When the governing elites are incapable of responding to the exigencies of life, the non-elites feel estranged from the ruler. Das and Choudhury (1997) asserted that the feeling of separation is an important precondition of conflict. Again, Buthdy (2005) explained four main issues that generated violence in national and local elections in Cambodia. The first issue was the immunity of civil servants. This included police

officers and military personnel who were often implicated in political violence. The second issue was the lack of effective institutions to maintain law and order. Thirdly, the media seemed to support lawlessness and acceptance of extrajudicial execution: newspapers always published violence acts; the television always showed the police killing suspects and wrote articles supporting the violent actions of the police. The fourth issue was that political violence was portrayed as personal conflict.

According to Kirwin and Cho (2009) an effective state is an organisation which claims monopoly over violence within its borders in order to maintain order. Kirwin and Cho argued that if the state is considered to be the set of institutions through which the citizenry is governed, then when governance fails, conflict prevention is mismanaged and political violence emerges. However, Kirwin and Cho noted that in Africa much has been said of the predatory state. Their position is supported by Chabal and Jean-Pascal (1999) who pinpointed that since in most countries the state not only fails to protect the population from crime but is itself responsible for a high level of violence, both through the direct abuse of power and because of its predatory nature, it is not surprising that ordinary men and women will seek to devise alternate strategies for coping with arbitrary force. Kirwin and Cho (2009) concluded that weak states inability to adequately project power leads to violence.

2.7.5 *Inciting Comments*

According to Dolan (2010: 2) Iraqi editors, managers and journalists, with the support of some international organizations developed a self-regulatory code of conduct to serve as a moral and professional guide for audio together with visual media in Iraq. The code defines incitement as “broadcasting that incites imminent violence, ethnic or religious hatred, civil disorder or rioting among the people of Iraq and carries the clear and

immediate risk of causing such incitement.” Benesch (2008) postulated that incitement operates by way of the exertion of influence and influence is a function of the processes of time. Benesch noted that incitement seems to play a critical role when intended victims live among the majority group, so that mass killings cannot take place without the participation or at least the tacit acceptance of many members of the majority group. According to Benesch (2008) in Turkey, there were plans to excite Muslim opinion by suitable and special means before the Armenian genocide.

Jean Kambanda, the Prime Minister, during the months of the Rwandan genocide confessed at his trial, four years later when he pleaded guilty to genocide that he had appeared on radio station “RTLMC” on 21st June 1994 to encourage the station to continue to incite the massacres of the Tutsi civilian population (Thompson, 2007). The trial judges noted, he incited prefects and burgomasters to commit massacres and killing of civilians, and visited a number of prefectures to incite and encourage the population to commit those massacres, including congratulating the people who had committed those killings (Organisation of African Unity [OAU] 1998). Mass killings of hundreds of thousands occurred in Rwanda, including women and children, old and young, who were pursued and killed at places where they sought refuge: prefectures, commune offices, schools, churches, and stadia (OAU, 1998).

In a speech given on 22nd November 1992 in Rwanda, Mugesera (an ethnic Hutu) allegedly talked about 1,000 party members that the Hutus were obliged to take responsibility themselves and wipe out the scum by killing Tutsis and dumping their bodies into the rivers of Rwanda. He implored his listeners not to leave themselves open

to invasion, and added that those people (Tutsis) called “Inyenzis” or cockroaches were now on their way to attack them (Benesch, 2008). The statement made by Mugesera contributed to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

In Ghana, political leaders are sometimes caught up with comments that potential to lead to acts of violence under the slightest provocation. One of such comments is the widely commented 'all-die-be-die' phrase which was uttered by the NPP flagbearer, Nana Akufo-Addo, in an address to party members in the Eastern Region capital, Koforidua. Another example is Prof. Mills’ comparison of Ghana’s post 2008 election period to that of Kenya in 2007. Comments like these increase the morale of party youth activists and political vigilante groups to take the law into their hand and act unlawfully.

2.8 Effects of Political Vigilantism

Political violence, which is mostly associated with political vigilante groups, particularly in Africa, has received much attention in academic as well as media circles. Political violence jeopardises political stability, democratic reform, prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases degenerates into civil war (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). The effects of political violence discussed include undermining election results, reduction of women participation in politics, human rights violations, trauma on people and jeopardising the growth of democracy and peace in the country.

2.8.1 *Undermining of Election Results*

Teshome (2009) observed that threats of electoral violence affect the outcome of elections. He further posited that candidates sometimes campaign by making threats to

return to war if they lose elections. In addition, Teshome stated that in 1997 presidential elections in Liberia, voters were intimidated and forced to vote for the most dangerous candidate - Charles Taylor. He indicated that similar threats were made in Ethiopia in the 2005 elections in favour of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Hoglund (2009) postulated that political violence can undermine elections. With the presence or threat of violence, voters may opt not to register or decide to stay away from the polls altogether, candidates may withdraw, or politicians may use it as a reason to cancel or postpone elections. As an example, Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast cited political violence and postponed presidential elections six times between 2005 and 2010. When domestic and international observers judge that an election has been marred by violence, the legitimacy of the results is jeopardised, as is the legitimacy of the elected officials. There are indications that elections with high degrees of conflict or continuous violence may slow the consolidation of democracy. An analysis by Logan, Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi (2006) on Africans' view of democracy suggests that poor elections are to blame for dissatisfaction with elections as means to attain political representation. Indeed, among the countries surveyed by Logan, Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi, the three countries where elections have been relatively free of violence - Botswana, Namibia and Ghana - are the most satisfied with elections. On the other hand, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Zambia, where elections have been more violent and controversial, the electorates were the least satisfied.

2.8.2 *Human rights violations*

Another dangerous effect of political vigilantism, which cannot be overlooked, is human rights abuse and physical assaults sometimes perpetrated by vigilante groups against officials of parties that lose elections. Both NPP and NDC vigilante groups and foot

soldiers are blameworthy. For example, on 24 March, 2017, the Delta Force of the NPP stormed the premises of the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council and demanded the removal of the Regional Security Coordinator, George Adjei. In the process, they inflicted multiple injuries on the victim and but for the timely intervention of the police, serious casualties would have been recorded (Nyabor, 2017a). Because of this some 13 thirteen members of the Delta Force were arrested for trial in court. They were however, compulsorily freed by other members of the vigilante group during their trial at the Kumasi Circuit Court on 20th April 2017 (Adogla-Bessa, 2017), an action which is against the adherence and practice of rule of law. Also, after the 2016 general elections the NDC National Organizer Kofi Adams alleged that two of their loyalists were murdered in Sefwi Wiawso and Dunkwa as a result of the rampage and forcible takeover of state property by the NPP foot soldiers and party loyalists (Nyabor, 2017b). Similarly, after the 2012 elections, there were reports of harassment, intimidations and violation of voting procedures in the Ashanti, Greater Accra and Northern Regions (CODEO, 2013a). Also, in August 2008 it was reported some NDC foot soldiers and vigilante group members fired gunshots and scattered supporters/ activists (Bob-Milliar, 2014).

2.8.3 Trauma on People

Trauma associated with political conflict is largely about the destruction of individual as well as social and political structures of a society (Hamber, 2004). Hamber noted that in an authoritarian regime, where violence is common, a range of controlling, rigid processes and structures are developed. According to Hamber, these can manifest in other diverse forms such as political opinions that preach violence or the exclusion of others, interpersonal aggression, demonisation of those perceived as other, discrimination, intolerance of the views of others, undemocratic forms of social control, together with

psychological bullying in the work place or elsewhere. In addition to inflicting psychological and physical harm, political violence often aims to undermine social relationships between individuals, as well as between individuals and society at large. In Chile, for example, it has been argued that political violence during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), undermined individuals' sense of belonging to the society (Becker, 2001). Simpson and Rauch (1991) observed that the culture of violence perpetuated by the Apartheid system quickly spread into all aspects of the social and civic arena of South African society as a result of enforced racial segregation. When violence seeps into everyday life, there is always the possibility that as a society comes out of the conflict the residue of violence will remain. Weingarten (2004) asserted that most children therapists readily recognise children are at risk if they are exposed to political violence. Weingarten (2004) found that if one lives with a parent who has suffered from political trauma, one might acquire a deficiency one might not otherwise have acquired. Weingarten observed that children of a parent with chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to political violence might be affected by their parents' experiences.

2.8.4 *Threat to Peace and Democracy of Ghana*

Political vigilantism is a major threat to the development of the peace and democracy of the country. Indeed, Gyampo; Graham & Asare (2017) recount that, the democratic gains of Ghana cannot be nurtured into maturity, when there are acts that undermine the expression of the sovereign will of the people, particularly during elections and voting. It is quite ill-fated that the activities of vigilante groups such as destroying ballot papers, snatching ballot boxes, amongst others transcend into elections in Ghana. None of the seven general elections held in the fourth republic has been spared of this unfortunate

practice of ballot box theft or snatching, amongst other negative activities by vigilante groups (Alidu, 2014; Bob-Milliar, 2014; Myjoyonline.com, 2016). For example, in 2012 general elections there were 137 incidences that undermined voting in the Ashanti, Greater Accra and Northern Regions (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). These incidences include snatching of ballot boxes, suspension of voting, persecution and destruction of the voting procedures coordinated by political vigilante groups (CODEO, 2013b).

Vandalizing of state or public properties by vigilante groups is another threat posed by political vigilantism to Ghana's flourishing democracy in the Fourth Republic. For instance, in May 2010, some NPP foot soldiers in Wa in the Upper West Region vandalized properties belonging to the party to register their displeasure over the award of a contract to members of the NDC members (ModernGhana.com, 2010).

By the same token, after the 2016 general elections there were several reports across the country of NPP vigilante groups destroying some state properties after their party won the elections (Adogla-Bessa, 2017b; Ansah, 2017). Indeed, some vigilante groups attacked some NDC supporters, vandalized some government properties including the portions of the fountain at the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in Accra (Allotey, 2016b).

Vigilante groups also pose a threat to Ghana's democracy through their constant protests and public disturbances. In all the general elections many of these groups affiliated to the winning party have in one way or the other, protested or caused public disturbances as a way of showing their displeasure for the policies or decisions of their government. For instance, in the year 2000 a vigilante group of Okai North Constituency Branch of the NPP vowed to 'fiercely resist' attempt by the leadership of the party to impose the

incumbent Member of Parliament Mr. Darko as the party's parliamentary candidate (Ghanaweb.com, 2000). Again, in April 2013, some NDC foot soldier numbering about 50 on motorbikes stormed the NDC's Ashanti Regional Office during a meeting to vehemently resist the appointment of Mr. Eric Opoku as the Kumasi Metropolitan Chief Executives (MCE) (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). They accused the regional executives of influencing the nomination of Mr. Bonsu who was not known to the party foot soldiers (Asare, 2013). These activities have created disturbances of the peace of the nation.

Furthermore, vigilante groups in Ghana have been involved in seizure or occupancy of public properties following the electoral victory of their preferred parties. For example, after the 2016 there were violent actions and the forcible seizure of public and private property by some NPP supporters. There were such acts as unlawful seizure of public installations and services such as tollbooths, lorry parks, public latrines and illegal entry and seizure of state properties in the custody of former government functionaries and political party opponents (CODEO, 2017, Paalo, 2017). Indeed, CODEO Observers reported incidents such as seizure of public places of convenience such as in Asokore market in the New Juaben North constituency of the Eastern region and another in Changni in the Tamale Central constituency of the Northern region. Additionally, on 9 January, 2017, an NPP vigilante group stormed the offices of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) in Juaboso in the Western region, drove away all workers and took over the two places. A similar group repeated same in the Tamale Metro NHIS office in the Northern region and demanded that the managers vacate their post. Furthermore, some NPP supporters

marched to the Bodi District Assembly in the Bodi Constituency of the Western Region and demanded the resignation of the District Chief Executive (DCE) explaining that the DCE's party was no longer in power. The group also demanded the car keys of the DCE's official vehicle (CODEO, 2017a).

It must be emphasized that, the NDC are not angle in this issue. Following the electoral victory of the NDC in the 2008 elections, their vigilante groups "captured" and forcibly occupied several government buildings. They evicted the occupants and took over their positions and jobs (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Several revenue collection jobs such as public toilets, tollbooths and others taken over by the foot soldier of the NPP in 2001 were revenged by the NDC in 2009 and clearly the did same when their party won the 2016 elections (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). Gyampo; Graham & Asare, (2017) account that, this cycle is tremendously treacherous to national solidity and could have major magnitudes of violent conflict and confrontations which could be a recipe for democratic relapse.

2.9 Youth Involvement in Politics in Ghana in the Fourth Republic

Youth in Ghana have been very instrumental in the country's quest to nurture political pluralism. One important role the youth have played in politics is their tenacity to ensure that the waves of their party is felt in every corner of the country. The youth are often seen intoning their party slogans and moving from house to house, campaigning for their parties in an attempt to win more supporters (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). The authors recount that, in the 2004 general elections, the NPP youth used the propaganda strategy to canvass vote their party. The propaganda was that, a vote for Professor Mills

of the NDC would mean a vote for former president Rawlings. Meaning if Ghanaians voted for Professor Mills, he was only going to work in the shadows of former President Rawlings and that Professor Mills would not have an independent mind to rule. The strategy worked for them, aiding their party to win the 2004 General Elections and giving their party a second term in office.

Another significant role the youth play is raising funds for their political parties. The youth in Ghana are mostly in charge of the sale of party souvenirs to generate income for the party. Additionally, in the event that the party hierarchy decide to organise a fundraising dinner for the party, they are often responsible for the organisation of venues and distribution of invitation letters amongst others.

The youth have also become the custodians of the party structure, beliefs and principles as well as the image of their political parties. Political party youths ensure that party structures and principles are maintained and not manipulated by any executive of the party to suite their personal interests. Some youth have battled attempts by party executives to impose parliamentary candidates on them in their constituencies (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). in the run up to the 2008 parliamentary elections of Ghana the youth in the ruling NPP in constituencies like Ablekuma South, Abirem, Bekwai and Suhum embarked on massive demonstrations, which sometimes resulted in violent clash with the security agencies, in an attempt to press home their disapproval of imposition of candidates on them by the party executives (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017)). The youth are also very instrumental in party internal campaigns. They are always likely to support a youth who contest for positions internally. It is from such support base that

Haruna Iddrisu, the National Youth Organiser, and Isaac Asiamah, Policy Analyst of the NDC and NPP respectively, secured their election to parliament (Asante, 2006).

In addition to the aforementioned, the youth have become effective carriers of the manifestoes of their political parties. The youth have played the role of carrying the manifestoes of their parties and transmitting them to the electorates, particularly those in the hinterlands (Gyampo; Graham & Asare, 2017). In all elections held under the Fourth Republic, the youth played a crucial role; serving as polling agents during registration and voting exercises. In this role, they have promoted fairness and transparency in the electioneering process especially during voter registration exercises which are crucial for the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and their acceptability. For example, Asante (2006) postulates that, the decision of some parties to use indigenous youth groups to monitor polling centres, especially in the rural communities, has contributed immensely towards the checking of impersonation. It is very explicit that the youth in Ghana are very instrumental in the partisan politics of the country. They are always readily available and get things done in order to get the wheels of their parties moving. They are a major fragment of Ghana's nascent democracy.

In spite of the several inevitable roles the youth play in partisan politics in Ghana, the youth are seen as just peripheries and not major actors in the game. The youth are just seen as cheer leaders who only provide support for candidates. Political party youth are not significantly assimilated into their parent parties (Paloo, 2017). I could not agree with Kanyadudi (2010) the more in his assertion that, youth groups in Sub Sahara Africa are at the peripheries regarding core matters of their parties.

2.10 Ghanaian Youth and Political Violence

Elections related violence such as snatching of ballot boxes, voter and opponent intimidation have characterized Ghana's elections since 1992. Bob-Milliar (2012) opines that, the series of politically related violence that has marred Ghana's nascent democracy could be directly or indirectly be traced to the youth. By the same token, Paloo (2017) postulates that, electoral violence, rioting and vandalism in Ghana's since the inception of multi-party system are also traced to partisan youth.

In the regime of both the NDC and NPP parties in Ghana, youth groups have engaged in violent, chaotic demonstrations or spontaneous acts. Party foot soldiers vandalize their own party property, including campaign cars, party paraphernalia, office buildings etc. For instance, some members of the NDC youth in the Wa West Constituency of the party in the Upper West Region set ablaze the party's office and the party chairman's car in the constituency, in protest against the appointment of District Chief Executive they did not favor (Adom online news, April, 2016). Similarly, some NPP youth vandalized their party's offices in Winneba constituency, locked up the offices, also in protests against an appointment by then president Kuffuor (General News, March 22, 2004). These acts of deviance, according to Paloo (2017) affect their respective parties more than their opponents or the general public.

Unlawful seizure and control over facilities of public good has become a common practice by party youth movements in Ghana, as victorious party foot soldiers usually unlawfully seize patronage facilities and objects such as bus terminals, in order to seek rents for themselves and their cronies, as rewards for their vigorous campaigns to win power (Bob-Milliar, 2014). The situation continuous unabatedly after NPP won the December 2016

elections, as its youth engaged in the confiscation and occupancy of similar ventures stated above across the length and breadth of the country. This perfectly agrees with Laakso's (2007) assertion that, political party youth submit to violence for recognition and reward thereafter.

A critical assessment of the role of the youth in politics shows that the youth exhibit violence, which is called destructive engagements (Paloo, 2017), such as vandalizing public property; rioting/violent protests, seizer and control over public property and election violence. Unarguably, such activities have political and democratic weakening effect, hence are not usually constitutionally acceptable. This politics of aggression limits domestic and international efforts to advance democracy in Ghana.

2.10.1 Why the Youth Engage in Political Violence

A common factor that easily plunge the youth into political violence is the attempt to manipulate or the manipulation of elections. The youth are most likely to resort to violence when electoral processes are not made transparent and gives them the reason to believe that there is a conspiracy to rig the election (against a candidate they support). Gyimah-Boadi (2007) postulates that, when there is high stakes and mistrust, party affiliated youth groups mostly challenge the legitimacy of the wining party, leading to clashes with the victor youth wing. Hence, the desire to manipulate electoral results in both internal party election (such as primaries and election of party executives) and general elections, especially in favour of the incumbents to monopolize political power results in youth mobilization, which usually characterised by violence.

Another factor that causes youth to resort to political violence is their inability to accept sectional dereferences (this could either be religious, ethnic, tribal amongst others). As

Paloo (2017:10) puts it, “uncompromising social cleavages (e.g., ethnic/religious/sectoral) in countries also count as a potent catalyst in spurring political violence through PYWs, as elites instrumentalise partisan youth thugs to attack rivals”. Paloo (2017) explains further that, it could be that states have failed to nationalize their citizens through civic education, or could be a tool by especially ethnic majorities to dominate the political field. Either ways, IDEA (2007) argues that, this happens due to crystalized or sharp divisions and ethnic hurting going on in most polities, as both ethnic or religious groups and political elites place expectations on each other.

In Ghana, Bossuroy (2011) observes that only traces of ethnic vote pattern, which by implication, does not breed political violence. But as an ordinary citizen of the country, the author still observes attempts by politicians and their party youth to make ethnocentric statements that sometimes seeks to label some parties as parties that belong to a certain ethnic group or religion. For instance, prior to the 2016 elections in Ghana, Mrs. Dzifa Aku Ativor, speaking at the launch of ‘Ketu South for Fifi and Mahama’ at Wodoaba in the Ketu South Constituency, the former minister, who resigned her position as a result of the Metro Mass Transit bus rebranding saga, said the NPP will arrest Ewes like her and Fifi Fiavi Kwetey (the Member of Parliament for the Constituency) if the Volta Region does not vote to retain the NDC (peacefmonline.com, 2016). Similarly, before the 2012 General Elections in Ghana, the then flagbearer for the NPP, Nana Nana Akufo-Addo, was reported to have made an “all die be die” inciting comment (ModernGhananews, 2011). Even though he kept explaining to the public that he did not mean that party youth should engage in hooliganism, it was a comment that could charge

the youth and increase their morale to engage in acts of violence with the feeling that they have the backing of their flagbearer.

One other factor that push the youth into political violence is poverty or the lack of economic opportunities. Laakso (2007) argues that the 1990s wave of democratization in Africa often coincided with dwindling economic opportunities especially for the bulging young population. She suggests that political mobilization of groups, including party youth has an economic dimension, as both elites and youngsters are incentivised by this scantiness of economic opportunities. Therefore, there is a significant connection between economic wellbeing and political violence.

Lastly, weak state security also gives the youth the strength to engage in political violence. Weak state security breeds uncontrolled youth action which is always likely to escalate into violent clashes. Paloo (2017) argues that, uncontrolled exhibition of violence by partisan youth indicates weak state capacities, and that does not give the state the capacity to have monopoly over the use of force. The youth have the motivation to engage in political violence because the states fall short in their capacities to design and implement rigorous political institutions backed by professional security to exercise their imperative of containing such nascent activities (Paloo, 2017). However, ACLED (2015) believes it is not always the case that the states do not have the capacity to contain the situation, but some states' failure to control political violence are deliberate moves by mostly incumbents to manipulate crucial state agents like the security to the politicians' advantage. Paloo (2017) observes in Ghanaian political circles is that, acts of political violence are either even backed by party communication teams or the parent parties keep mute while their opponents condemn, only to repeat similar incidents in their own turn.

Thus, even though acts of political violence are publicly chastised by all and sundry, the two major political parties seem not to be ready to put an end to it since they are both victims and perpetrators of the evil, depending on which side of the divide they find themselves.

2.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed literature on political vigilantism in Ghana. It brought to limelight the reasons why political vigilante groups are formed. It has been argued that Ghana's politics in the fourth republic has been marred myriad of activities of political vigilantism. The two leading political parties in Ghana are the major perpetrators of this evil phenomenon. Even though sometimes political party executives become victims of the phenomenon, the vast majority of people who are affected by this evil act are the ordinary people. Ghana's democracy has become a reference point in Africa, thus there is the need to strengthen the drivers of our democracy. The literature revealed that political vigilantism is one factor that is impeding the progress of Ghana's nascent democracy, therefore there is the need to have policies that are robust enough to curtail this problem. These policies must also be effectively implemented. It is based on this premise that, there was the need to undertake the study to gain insight into youth involvement in political vigilantism in Ghana and how this menace could be ended.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the approach and specific techniques adopted to achieve the objectives of the study. The chapter looks at the research approach, design, data instrumentation and procedure, the target population, selection of participants, sample size and sampling procedure, sources of data as well as method of data analysis. The profile of the study area is also included in the chapter. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the philosophical assumptions which informed the study. It further considers the rationale for the adoption of the research approach. Ethical considerations pertaining to the research are also discussed. The chapter culminates with the problems encountered during data collection.

3.1 Profile of the Study Area

Kumasi is located in the transitional forest zone and is about 270km north of the national capital, Accra. It is between latitude 6.35° – 6.40° and longitude 1.30° – 1.35° , an elevation which ranges between 250 – 300 metres above sea level. The land area of the Metropolis is about 254sq/km and approximately ten (10) kilometres in radius. The city has 103 communities.

The Kumasi Metropolis is the most populous district in the country. According to the 2010 population census, Kumasi has a Population of 2,035,064 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010) with an annual growth rate of 4.8% as against 3.1% of Accra.

3.1.1 Population Density of the Area

The Kumasi Metropolitan Area has a total surface area of 254 sq km with a population density of 8,012 persons per sq. km. The average household size in the Metropolis is 5:1. The average number of households per house is 3.4. This relatively large number of households per house is largely due to the large population in the metropolis.

Kumasi Metropolis is not only entirely urban. It is estimated that 48%, 46% and 6% of the Metropolis are urban, peri-urban and rural respectively. About 86% of the active population in Kumasi is economically active. The economic activities sustaining the livelihood of the residents in the Metropolis can be categorized into Service, Industry and Agriculture.

3.2 Research Approach

Creswell and Clark (2017) stated, “Research is all about gathering data in the quest to find the truth about an issue, event or a phenomenon” (p. 3). According to Lokesh (2009), research approach connotes the various steps to be adopted in solving a research problem such as, the manner in which the problem is expressed; the definition of terms; the choice of subject for investigation; the validation of data gathering tool; the collection of data, analysis and interpretation of data and the processes of inference and generalization.

“All research is based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research and which research method(s) is/are appropriate for the development of knowledge in a given study” (Bryman, 2008, p. 87).

The qualitative approach was adopted for the study. This was chosen because according to Berg (2007), it allows the researcher to share in the understanding and perception of

others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Historically, qualitative research was employed in fields such as sociology, history, and anthropology according to Miles and Huberman (2009).

Miles and Huberman (2009) further allude that qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events lead to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations. On this premise, the study rests on the qualitative interpretivist approach as its philosophical assumption. Andrade (2009) argues that the premise of interpretive research is that access to reality (whether given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. This paradigm is reinforced by observation and interpretation, thus to observe is to collect information about events, while to interpret is to make meaning of that information by drawing inferences. Reeves and Hedberg (2003:32) note that the “interpretivist” paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals. They use meaning oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. The interpretive approach, aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as a situated activity which finds the observer in the world. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, that is qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Qualitative research implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10).

In concurring with Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Patton (2001:39) defines qualitative research as “an approach that uses a naturalistic approach which seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real world settings, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena of interest...it is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification, but instead the kind of research that produces findings derived from real-world settings where the phenomena of interest unfold naturally.” According to Sutton and Austin (2015), the objective of qualitative research is to promote better self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition. Unlike quantitative research which has, as its objective, collecting facts about human behaviour that will lead to verification and extension of theories, qualitative research emphasizes the improved understanding of human behaviour and experience.

One advantage of this approach is what Weinreich (2009) craftily indicates as that which provides the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a culture or situation and direct interaction with the people under study. This also implies that in the qualitative paradigm the researcher becomes an instrument of data collection, and results may differ greatly depending on who conducts the research.

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the human side of an issue that is, the often-contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions,

and relationships of individuals. Another strength of qualitative approaches, according to Weinreich (2009), is that it generates rich, detailed data that leave the participants perspective intact and provide a context for the phenomena being studied. A disadvantage of data collection in the qualitative approach is that it may be labour intensive and time consuming.

3.3 Research Design

According to Durrheim (2004:29), research design is a planned framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research plan. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) in a different version define it as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). They further outline that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible. In this context, a case study design was adopted to provide a detailed in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study. This study adopted the case study design to explore the reasons for youth involvement in political vigilantism. Creswell (2017) noted that the primary purpose of a case study is to understand something that is unique to the case(s). Knowledge from the study is then used to apply to other cases and contexts” (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2012:15). The well-known case study researcher Stake (2006) sees cases as bounded systems that comprise a complex of interrelated elements or characteristics that clearly have identifiable boundaries. One value of case study to this study is its focus on individual or small groups and the ability to conduct a comprehensive analysis from a comparison of cases (Yin, 2009).

Case study design has been subjected to criticism on the grounds of non-representativeness and a lack of statistical generalisability. However, given the explanatory stance adopted in this research and the nature of the research question, the researcher believes that the case study design is the most appropriate research strategy for this study. The reason being that it reveals in detail the unique perceptions and concerns of individual participants in a real-world situation which would have been lost in quantitative or experimental strategies. The case study design is particularly well suited to situations where it is very difficult to separate a phenomenon's variables from its context (Yin, 2017).

3.4 Study Population

Choosing subjects or respondents for research is an integral part of the research process. The target population is the complete group of specific elements relevant to the research project (Zikmund, 2003). Omari (2011), contended that population is the totality of any group of units which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. It encompasses a larger group of people, organisation or thing that has one or more characteristics in common on which a study focuses. It consists of all cases of individuals or elements that fit a certain specification (Kothari 2004). Austin and Sutton (2014) indicate that target population is defined as the group of individuals or participants with the specific attributes of interest and importance. The population for this study included all persons above 18years who live in Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Also, personnel from the Ghana police service who work in Kumasi were also part of the population for the study.

3.5 Sample Size and Sample Technique

Data gathering is crucial in research as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Cleary et al, 2014). It is therefore very imperative that selecting the manner of obtaining data, and from whom the data will be acquired be done with sound judgement, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Cleary et al, 2014). This idea of sample is based on the fact that researchers are not able to test all the individuals in a given population (Mason, 2002). He continues to reinforcement that the sample must be representative of the entire population from which it was drawn and it must have an appropriate size to permit statistical analysis.

A total of twenty-five (25) participants were interviewed for the study. Fifteen (15) out of the twenty-five (25) participants were inhabitants of Kumasi who were 18years and above and have lived in Kumasi for more than two decades. Five (5) of the respondents were branch executives of political parties in Kumasi. The remaining Five (5) participants were officers of the Ghana Police Service who are stationed in Kumasi and have worked in the area six months before and after elections. The researcher used purposive sampling to select respondents. This sample was carefully selected because according to Creswell (2013) purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative study where the researcher is interested in informants who have the best knowledge concerning the research topic. Therefore, when using purposeful sampling, decisions need to be made about who or what is sampled, what form the sampling should take, and how many people or sites need to be sampled (Creswell, 2013).

The purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. The researcher laid down some benchmarks to qualify as a participant. In the first place, participant must have been in the study area for a minimum of five years. Secondly, participant must have witnessed incidence of political vigilante activities. Moreover, participant must have been a political party executive and with regards to the police officers, they must have been in the study area for at least five years. The study sought rich information which can be studied in great depth about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. One disadvantage of purposive sampling is that it can be difficult for the reader to judge the trustworthiness of sampling if full details are not provided (Creswell, 2013).

3.6 Research Instrument

Field data was collected with the aid of an interview-guide. According to Koshy (2005), interview is considered one of the most powerful methods to comprehend human behaviour and for this reason, interviewing was used in this research. The researcher agrees with Denzin & Lincoln (2005) that, interview skills are not simple motor skills, but involve a high order combination of observation, empathic sensitivity and intellectual judgement of the interview situation and person being interviewed. The interview-guide consisted of semi-structured item questions based on the objective of the study. The instrument was constructed to consist of first, the demographic information of respondents as age, gender. The second section was formulated along open-ended questions based on the research questions. Berg (2007) suggested that open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get more detailed responses and therefore provides better

access to interviewees' views, understandings, experiences, perceptions and interpretations of events. The semi-structured interview was selected to give room for more clarifying, probing and cross-checking questions where the interviewer had the liberty to alter, rephrase and add questions according to the nature of responses from interviewees (Whiting, 2008). The semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for the recording of personal and more free-flow responses. The recording of the interview data took place by means of note-taking and audio recording as suggested by Miles and Huberman (2009) and De Vos et al. (2005). The note-taking served as an additional recording measure and as a back-up procedure if consent was not obtained from the interviewees to record the interview by means of an audio recorder.

3.7 Pre-testing of instruments

There was an initial stage of pre-testing of the interview guide. The researcher involved seven (7) people, (5) persons from the public and two (2) police officers from Winneba in the pre-test. The participants were asked to give their honest opinion on the clarity of the interview questions after reacting to the questions. The pre-testing was done to improve the reliability and validity of the research questions. Van Teijlingen & Hundley, (2001) allude that specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview guide is a mini version of a full-scale study. Numerous studies employed qualitative approach to investigate people's subjective experiences, opinions and beliefs that cannot be measured statistically (Percy, Kostere & Kostere, 2015). In all forms of the paradigm, most data are collected using interviews to allow the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the person's account (Merriam, 2016). Unlike quantitative study,

the researcher is the primary instrument in the data generation and interview questions are at the heart of interviewing. Moreover, an interview is widely acknowledged as a suitable technique for qualitative inquiry to seek insights of those who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). Moreover, the exercise gave the researcher an intuition of the duration for the interviews with the respondents. It also helped re-shape and re-structure the interview questions so as to obviate uncertain and confusing questions. Some of the questions were re-arranged to ensure logical ordering of questions and deletion of repeated ones. Again, face validity of the instruments was achieved as the supervisor was involved in checking the instruments. The supervisor examined the questions in the interview guides to substantiate their relevance to the research objectives and questions. Although pre-testing does not guarantee success in the main study according to Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) it does increase the likelihood of success of the study.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

The data was collected in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti region of Ghana between 20th April and 15th May, 2019. The researcher was also sensitive to the specific situation of each respondent, because of the nature of the study. The introductory task was to establishment of a welcoming, secure and accommodating relationship with the interviewee by a word of thanks for being willing to partake in the research. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their participation in the interview and the background of the research and related aims were explained to provide the interviewees with relevant and necessary

information about the research. The format and sequence of questioning were also explained before the actual interview. Also, as recommended by Breen, the pace and time during the interview were continuously monitored (Breen, 2006).

3.9 Trustworthiness

Birt et al (2016) contended that the trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research. According to Rourke & Anderson (2004), demonstration of the trustworthiness of data collection is one aspect that supports a researcher's ultimate argument concerning the trustworthiness of a study. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Polit & Beck, 2012). Elo et al (2014) have outlined several trustworthiness evaluation criteria that have been proposed for qualitative studies like Lincoln & Guba (1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four alternatives for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, that is, credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. In 1994, the authors (Elo et al) added a fifth criterion referred to as authenticity (Elo et al, 2014).

A brief summary of Lincoln and Guba; Polit and Beck trustworthiness construct outlined that, in the perspective of establishing credibility, researchers must ensure that those participating in research are identified and described accurately. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions. Conformability refers to the objectivity, that is, the potential for similarity between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance, or meaning. Transferability refers to the potential for extrapolation. It depends on the cognitive that findings can be generalized or

transferred to other settings or groups. The last criterion, authenticity, refers to the extent to which researchers, fairly and faithfully, show a range of realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012).

Member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. In addressing credibility, all participants were taken through the same main question, same introduction, debriefing with informants and any additional information were taken into consideration during analysis. The participants were interviewed to the point at which there were data saturation and the interviews were audio-recorded and transcription was made for each interview. To allow transferability, the researcher provided sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing condition is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to another setting. To achieve confirmability, the researcher paid keen attention to the data analysis so that the findings that emerged from the data were true and not from personal predispositions. Again, dependability is the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wants to replicate my study, they should have enough information from my research report and also obtain similar findings as my study did. For this reason, the data was organised in themes and sub-themes.

3.10 Sources of Data

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data are for a specific purpose or for a specific research study. The primary data was taken from

respondents from the field of study with the aid of the interviews. In the same vein the secondary data was based on library research, books and articles from journals.

These materials were drawn from University of Education, Winneba Library. Electronic resources were also used and formed part of the data gathered for the study. The secondary data in conjunction with the primary data (interviews) provided better understanding of the issues of the study.

3.11 Data Analysis

Sparkes & Partington (2003) state that there is little standardisation with no absolute criteria where a specific type of qualitative data relates to a specific type of analysis. With the preceding ideas in mind, the data analysis of this research (responses from the interviews) was done according to a qualitative content analysis process. According to Cohen et al. (2003), the data analyses involve transcribing the recorded data, coding and organizing the data under themes in the case of the qualitative data. The data collected in the study from the respondents during the interview was analysed by the thematic approach. The responses were transcribed verbatim, and then read several times and in the process a list of various themes emerged and sub-themes were formulated and discussed accordingly. This started with field editing to check the appropriateness, consistency, and accuracy of the information provided by respondents. On several occasions the researcher had to re-listen to the tapes whilst reading the transcript so as to identify the participants' feelings that came with certain responses. Sorting, coding, and categorisation were assigned to the major identified themes to arrive at a meaningful interpretation.

3.12 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations form a major element in a research. The researcher needs to adhere to these ethics in order to promote the aims of the research, discover authentic knowledge and truth and prevent of errors (Kumar, Priya, Musalaiah, & Nagasree, 2014). Therefore, the researcher maintained the ethical considerations in the study by observing the following standards.

First and foremost, informed consent was obtained from the participants. The researcher informed the participants about the purpose, nature, data collection methods, and the extent of the research prior to commencement. Secondly, the researcher guaranteed and made sure that no participants were put in a situation where they might be harmed as a result of their participation, physically or psychologically.

Other important ethical consideration that was duly observed include privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The researcher ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants would be maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics. The researcher made it clear that the participant's names would not be used for any other purposes, nor will information be shared that reveals their identity in any way. In addition to the above-mentioned precautions, it was made clear to the participants that the research was only for academic purposes and their participation was absolutely voluntary. No one was forced to participate. Adhering strictly to all the ethical guidelines served to uphold ethical standards, including honesty and trustworthiness of the data collected, and the accompanying data analysis.

3.13 Challenges of Fieldwork

It is a fact that every research work comes with its peculiar challenge (s). The researcher encountered a number of challenges in course data collection. A major challenge was the withdrawal of some of the participants since they were told they could withdraw at any given time. The researcher inferred from their actions that they wanted to be given “something” or material reward. In some cases, some of the respondents constantly asked for incentives when they realized that it was a research study. They might have thought that the researcher would get remuneration in one way or another somewhere.

Also, despite booking interview appointments with respondents, some of the interviewees did not give room for enough time for the interview as expected by the researcher due to their work schedules. They were of the view that they have always been interviewed by researchers on different issues and yet, nothing positive has happened to them as individuals and even to the Agbogbloshie community.

Another challenge encountered by the researcher during the collection of the field data was language barrier. The dominant languages of the respondents were Dagaare or Dagombe and Hausa which were entirely foreign to the researcher. Nevertheless, with the help of an interpreter, the problem of language barrier was addressed.

Furthermore, the interviewees were most of the time not available to be interviewed even though, interview sessions were booked. This brought financial pressure on the researcher because of the cost of series of journeys made for data collection.

Finally, the researcher initially intended to use focus group discussion but later discarded the idea. This was because, the researcher found it difficult to get respondents who were willing to spend some time for the discussion. Most of the potential respondents

contacted were of the view that, they could not make time for the group discussion because of the nature of their job schedules. This necessitated the researcher to rely on only face-to-face interview as the method for data generation.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the primary data collected from the fieldwork. The chapter begins with respondents' background information which have the potential to affect their views on the subject matter of the study. Such background information includes respondents' educational level, positions at their respective work places and age. The chapter also attempts to delve into the individual and organizational reflections on political vigilantism which has become a cancer in the politics of Ghana. Here, informant's reflections were used to examine the underlying reasons for the formation of vigilante groups by political parties. Again, respondents' reflections were also used to examine why the youth continue to avail themselves to be used as agents of political vigilantism and how it affects the relative peace of Ghana.

Data was collected from twenty-five (25) respondents with the aid of an interview-guide. There were three sets of interview guides. The first set was administered to the general public to ascertain their knowledge on political vigilantism, why political parties form vigilante groups, why the youth avail themselves to be used for vigilante activities and the effects of political vigilantism. The second set was administered to security personnel to discover the effect of political vigilantism on the maintenance of law and order and the difficulties they face in containing political vigilantism. The last set was administered to political party executives to discover why political parties form vigilante groups and the nexus between the mandate given to the groups by the political parties and what the

groups actually do. Data collected from the research participants was transcribed and coded after carefully studying the responses.

The cases presented in this chapter are linked to the guiding concepts of this study. The aim is to find answers to the research questions which are indicated in chapter one. Findings are supported with quotations from the interviewees.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In order for effective decision to be made about the background of the respondent, it was important to collect the demographic characteristics of the respondent. This is imperative because the demographic data gathers information about respondents according to certain attributes such as age, gender, place, occupation, education level which may influence the findings of study. At the introductory part of the interview session, the participants were asked to provide some information such as their age, gender, institution (the name of the tertiary institution), and their respective levels in the tertiary institutions.

This section discusses the frequency distribution of respondents, paying more attention to their gender, age group, educational level and occupation.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographics	Category	Gender					
		Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age Group	20-30	3	12.0	1	4.0	4	16.0
	31-40	3	12.0	3	12.0	6	24.0
	41-50	3	12.0	1	4.0	4	16.0
	51-60	4	16.0	3	12.0	7	28.0
	61+	2	8.0	2	8.0	4	16.0
	Total	15	60.0	10	40.0	25	100.0
Edu. Level	Middle School	2	8.0	1	4.0	3	12.0
	Secondary	4	16.0	3	12.0	7	28.0
	Tertiary	6	24.0	5	20.0	11	44.0
	Vocational	3	12.0	1	4.0	4	16.0
	Total	15	60.0	10	40.0	25	100.0
Occupation	Self-Employed	5	20.0	4	16.0	9	36.0
	Civil Servant	2	8.0	2	8.0	4	16.0
	Public Servant	4	16.0	3	12.0	7	28.0
	Unemployed	2	8.0	0	0.0	2	8.0
	Retired	2	8.0	1	4.0	3	12.0
	Total	15	60.0	10	40.0	25	100.0

For the study a total of 25 respondents, including 15 males, representing approximately 60% and 10 females representing approximately 40% were interviewed for the study. In Ghana, every citizen who is eighteen years and above is eligible to register and take part in national elections.

4.1.1 Age Distribution

Age of the respondents is one of the most important characteristics in understanding their views about the particular problems. Significantly, age indicates level of maturity of individuals in that sense age becomes more important to examine the response (Kirtiraj, 2007).

In this study, the age range of respondents was from 20 years and above. As evident on Table 3, respondents between the age range of 20-30 were 4, representing 16%, 31-40 were 6, representing 24%, 41-50 were 4, representing 16%, 51-60 were 7, representing 28%, and 61 and above were 4, representing 16%.

4.1.2 Gender Distribution

There is common agreement that encouraging diversity is essential to innovation in research, and gender equality is key to achieving this. In view of this, the researcher ensured that both male and female respondents were used for the study. Out of the 25 respondents for this study, 15 of them were males while the remaining 10 were females.

Most of the respondents were males because, the vast majority of youth that are involved in political vigilantism are males. Cases where females are found involving themselves in the practice are very rare. It is therefore important to concentrate more attention on them in order to understand the situation.

4.1.3 Educational Level

Education is one of the most important characteristics that might affect the person's attitudes and the way of looking and understanding any particular social phenomena (Kirtiraj, 2007). In a way, the response of an individual is likely to be determined by his educational status and therefore it becomes imperative to know the educational background of the respondents. Hence the Educational level of respondents was

investigated by the researcher and the data pertaining to education is presented in Table 3.

It can be concluded from the Table 3 that by and large the respondents were progressive in education and about 44% of them had attained higher education which is so important today to creating a knowledge-based society.

4.1.4 Occupation

A person's occupations do have a bearing on his or her personality and so also the ways of looking at the problem before him. The quality of life is also determined by an individual's occupation and the incomes he derives from it. Occupation of an individual also socialized him or her in a particular fashion which in turn reflects his or her pattern of behaviors and his/her level of understanding of particular phenomenon. In other words, the person's response to a problem is possibly determined by the type of occupation he or she is engaged in. Thus, the occupation of respondents was investigated by the researcher and data pertaining to occupation is presented in Table 3.

4.2 Defining Political Vigilantism: The Views of Respondents

While collecting respondents' views on the issue under study, it was imperative that the researcher gets the individual views of respondents on the concept of political vigilantism. This section discusses views of respondents about political vigilantism. From the data collected from the field, about 20 out of a total of 25 respondents had a fair knowledge or idea of political vigilantism. The remaining 5 even though could mention some of the names of the vigilante groups, only referred to them as party foot soldiers or macho men and not vigilante groups. Generally, respondents suggested that, vigilante

groups are groups that are formed and sponsored by political parties, made up of young men and always use violent means.

4.2.1 Formed and Sponsored by Political Parties

Data collected on the field suggested that, political vigilante groups are deliberately formed and sponsored by political parties to seek their parochial interests. Political parties form and incorporate vigilante groups into their system. They deploy them anytime they need their services.

“In Ghana, political vigilante groups are formed by political parties. In fact, some of the groups are even named after leaders of political parties who recruit people and sponsor their activities. For instance, the Azoka Boys vigilante group in the Northern part of Ghana is Named after one NDC executive who does the recruitment and sponsors their activities”, said a male respondent (Respondent “A”, 20/06/2019).

Political vigilante groups are formed by political parties to perform factions determined by the rank and files of the party. In Ghana, political parties begun to form political vigilante groups during the British colonial epoch when the Convention People’s Party youth faction, known as Nkrumah’s ‘Veranda Boys’ set the pace for party youth crusading in Ghana (Gyampo; Graham & Asare,2017). The “Action Troopers” was also a vigilante group, set up by the main opposition political party, the NLM (Asamoah, 2019). The author further explains that, the group was involved in creating fear and panic and brutalizing members of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in the Ashanti Region, using dynamites, guns and other deadly weapons to suppress and eliminate opposing political factions.

Under the Fourth Republic, the two major political parties, the NPP and NDC have formed political vigilante groups across the length and breadth of the country. Some political vigilante groups that associate themselves include Nana Addo Fun Club, Invincible Forces, Bamba Boys, Bolga Bulldogs, and Delta Force amongst others. On the other hand, groups such as Azorka Boys, Aluta Boys, Pentagon, Nima Boys, amongst others associated with the NDC.

4.2.2 Mostly Made Up of Young Men

Respondents also suggested that, political vigilante groups are mostly made up of men. A huge majority of 23 respondents, out of 25, refused to agree that young ladies could be part of vigilante groups. In the interview, a respondent said that;

“political vigilante groups are mainly formed by young men who usually between the ages of 18-30. The males are the ones who are mostly recruited by political parties. I have never seen and do not believe that young women would and could be involved” (Respondent “B”, 20/06/2019).

According to respondents, acts of political vigilantism are mostly perpetrated by young men between the ages of 18 and 30. Goldstone (2002) observed that historical episodes of political instability and violence have often been associated with the demographic phenomenon of an unusually high proportion of 15–24-year-olds relative to adults in a population. Moller (1968) in his analysis of European revolutionary movements alluded to the fact that the youth were the major drivers of the revolution.

Respondents also suggested that, politicians use these categories of people because they are cheap to be paid and always readily available. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have pinpointed that large youth cohorts may reduce the opportunity costs of engaging in

violence by making rebel or gang recruitment easier or more attractive as a livelihood strategy.

The respondent also added that,

These political parties are smart and exploitative. They mostly employ these young boys because they are cheap to maintain and always available

(Respondent “C”, 20/6/2019).

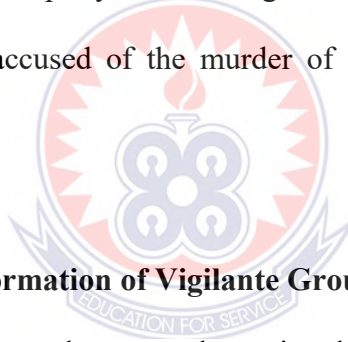
4.2.3 Use Violent Means

In an attempt to analyse the knowledge respondents have on activities of vigilante groups, one thing that became very explicit was that, vigilante groups always resort to the use of violent means in their operations. Respondents unanimously suggested that, vigilante groups always use violent means in achieving their aims, which often leads to death and destruction of properties.

“vigilante groups never use peaceful or constitutional means in achieving their aims. They always resort to the use of violent means such as beating people, snatching ballot boxes, victimizing and harassing political opponents, seizing public offices and asserts, and in the process flogging public servants, amongst others. They never use peaceful means in attaining their aims and objectives” (Respondent “D”, 20/6/2019).

Political vigilante groups are known for the use of violent means in achieving aims. Evidence shows that during the pre-vote period, party foot soldiers engaged in molestations and violent intimidation of the electorate and rival supporters (Laakso,

2007; Mehler, 2007; and Straus & Taylor, 2012). For instance, In August 2008, an NDC vigilante purportedly fired gunshots and scurried an NPP campaign rally at the Jubilee Park in Tamale (Frimpong, 2008). In the December 2012 election, for example, the main domestic observer group, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) (CODEO, 2012) received reports from its field agents of intimidation, harassment, and violation of the voting procedures in the Ashanti, Greater Accra, and Northern regions. Again, in May 2011, NDC foot soldiers attacked the offices of the mayor of Tamale and destroyed office equipment including computers, furniture, stationery, and exhibition stands (Bob-Milliar, 2014). In the same year, foot soldiers claiming affiliation to the NDC in Tamale burnt down a party office to register their displeasure over a court ruling that saw certain persons accused of the murder of an important local chief acquitted (Bob-Milliar, 2012a).



4.3 Reasons for the Formation of Vigilante Groups

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the rationale behind the formation of vigilante groups by political parties. This section deals with the reasons why political parties form vigilante groups. From the interview with respondents on the field, three main reasons were given for the formation of vigilante groups by political parties; lack of trust in the security services, desire of political parties to win power at all cost as well as distrust in the Electoral Management body.

4.3.1 *Lack of Trust in the Security Services*

In the interview with respondents, 18 out of the 25 respondents suggested that political parties form vigilante groups because they have little or no trust in the security system in the country. According to the respondents, political parties believe that the security

services in Ghana, especially the police are not trustworthy. They mostly become bias politically. They dance to the tune of the political party in power to the detriment of the opposition parties. The respondent believe that the police have allowed themselves to be manipulated by politicians. Reflections from respondents suggest that political parties form vigilante groups due to their lack of trust in the security services of the country.

A respondent posited had this to say; “Political parties form vigilante groups because the police in Ghana cannot be trusted. They are always quick to act if the issue affects the political party in power. If it does not affect the party in power, they act slowly. They even decide not to act at all in some cases”. (Respondent “B” 23/06/2019)

Another respondent, a female also said that

“the security agencies, especially they police are to blame. They are the major reason why political parties have resorted to forming political vigilante groups. They have always allowed themselves to be controlled by political parties whenever they are in government. If the opposition party in attacked violently by the ruling party, they would never act. Even if they do, the suspects would be released as soon as their party members organize themselves to the police station or a high ranking of the government makes a call to them. Even if a group is demonstrating against the ruling party, they are always quick to stop them by all means possible. They even go to the extent

of applying force which even cause injuries to some of the demonstrators”

In Ghana, political parties, especially those in opposition have very little or no trust in the state security apparatus and always find a way of providing private security for the leaders of their parties. The three South African nationals were arrested and deported by the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI); their charge was that, they have been involved in using weapons to train personal bodyguards for the flag bearer and running mate of the opposition party (myjoyonline.com, 2016). Again the raiding of the premises of a thick thank group, the Danquah Institute, an affiliate of the New Patriotic Party by the National security and the Police (myjoyonline.com, 2016) triggered dozens of NPP supporters to gather at the Nima residence of the NPP flag bearer, Nana Akuffo Addo to protect him. This proves that, political parties form vigilante groups when they perceive that the ruling government is using state institutions to harass and intimidate them.

An interview with a respondent from one of the two major political parties reiterated this point. According to him his political party has formed their various groups to find security for their candidates because they do not have trust in the security services.

“the security services in Ghana, especially the police are not trustworthy. They always support the government in power. For instance, some time ago, one of our parliamentary candidates was brutally attacked in Kumasi. When the police were informed, it took the more than seven hours for them to come to the scene. Meanwhile, from the place of the incident to the regional police

office was just about 300 metres. This was just because we were in opposition” (Respondent “C”, 21/06/2019).

The responses executives of the political parties gave suggested that, they use boys from the vigilante groups to provide security for the party only while they are in opposition. However, most Members of Parliament, even Presidents and their vice continue to use their personal body guards while in government, even though the state security apparatus provide security for them. In light of this, the researcher probed further to find out why Presidents, their Vice and Members of Parliament continue to use their personal body guards beside the state security apparatus.

The interview with executives of the two major political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) revealed that, the body guards used by political leaders are not party boys and are also not employed for the leaders by the party. According to the respondents, they are hired by the leaders themselves to strengthen their security since they cannot solely rely on the security provided by the state.

This is what a respondent had to say;

“Once our presidential and parliamentary candidates win political power and our sworn into office, the party does not become responsible for their security anymore. Their security is left in their hands and that of the state. Therefore, any other security you see them with are not party boys or members of our vigilante groups. They are employed by the leaders themselves

and are accountable to them not the political party”.

(Respondent “G”, 25/6/2019)

4.3.2 *Desire of Political Parties to Win Power at All Cost and mistrust in the Electoral Management Body*

Another reason why political parties form vigilante groups, according to the respondents, is the burning desire of political parties to win power at all cost. From the data gathered from the field, 16 out of the 25 respondents, representing 64%, expressed this opinion. The respondents believe that political parties, driven by the desire to win political power no matter the cost and mistrust in the Electoral Commission of Ghana account for their formation of political vigilante groups. Political parties are only focused on one thing; to win political power, and they are ready to avert anything that may be an impediment to achieving their goal.

“it is the sole aim of these political parties to amass vote and win political power at all cost. Unfortunately, political parties in Ghana do not trust the Electoral commission. They always have their own reason to believe that the commission may side with any of the parties involved in the contest and help them rig the election. Because of this strong desire, coupled with their distrust in the Electoral Commission, they form political vigilante groups to stop anyone who would want to prevent them from winning political power”. A male respondent made this accession” (Respondent “K”, 23/06/2019).

A female respondent also opined that, *“it is the aim of every political party to win political power and always ready to get to their goal no matter what. But the political parties in Ghana do not Trust the Electoral Commission. So, they form vigilante groups to stop any attempt to prevent their success in the elections”*. (23/06/2019)

The youth are most likely to resort to violence when they have the hunch that there is a hatched plan to rig the elections against their political party or candidate. Political parties form vigilante groups in order to ensure that results of elections are not tempered with. Political vigilante groups are also formed by political parties to ensure transparency in the electoral processes. Gyimah-Boadi (2007) postulates that, when there is high stakes and mistrust, party affiliated youth groups mostly challenge the legitimacy of the winning party, leading to clashes with the victor youth wing. Hence, the mistrust the political parties have in the Electoral Commission to provide a credible election without tilting the playing ground to the advantage of the incumbent mostly lead to the formation of political vigilante groups. These vigilante groups mostly provide additional security for the ballot boxes and also ensure that people whom they believe would vote for their party or candidate are not molested at the polling station, especially at places considered to be the strong holds of their opponents.

The youth also help check common electoral fraud such as impersonation, which the electoral officers may turn a blind eye to because of their desire to favour a candidate or political party. They ensure that prospective voters who come to the polling station are who they say they are. Asante (2006) postulates that, the decision of some parties to use indigenous youth groups to monitor polling centres, especially in the rural communities, has contributed immensely towards the checking of impersonation.

4.3.3 *A Mean of Getting a Pool of the Youth*

Apart from the fact that political parties form political vigilante groups because of their distrust in the security services, they form vigilante groups in order to get a pool of youth for the political party. Interview with respondents from the political parties revealed that they form vigilante groups to get a pool of youth where some could be used as errand boys and polling agents during elections. According to them, their parties form vigilante groups to get readily accessible and loyal group of young people who they could use to run errand for party leaders and serve as polling agents during elections. One of the respondents from the political party said.

“we do not form political vigilante groups only for our security.

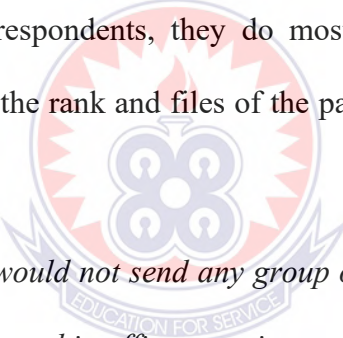
We put the youth together so that from amongst them, we shall get some to send on errands and also train some to serve as polling agents for our party during elections” (Respondent “J”, 27/6/2019).

Indeed, political vigilante groups perform several functions to support the party. The youth perform roles such as arranging grounds for party rallies, moving to remote parts of the country to campaign for the party, serving as polling agents for the part amongst others. In congruence of the respondent’s response, Gyampo; Graham & Asare, (2017) postulate that, the youth are often seen intoning their party slogans and moving from house to house, campaigning for their parties in an attempt to win more supporters. Moreover, Gyampo (2010) opines that in 2008, political vigilante groups were instrumental in monitoring polling centres, specifically in the remote rural districts,

which contributed massively towards the checking of impersonation. Paolo (2017) also observes that, both NPP and NDC vigilante groups, youth groups and party activists have served as polling agents and monitoring agents throughout the electioneering cycle such as voter registration, voting and coalition of votes from 1992 up to 2016.

However, when respondents from the political parties were asked whether their respective vigilante groups do exactly what their parties send them to do, they admitted that indeed most activities the vigilante groups do are outside of the orders given to them by the party. According to them, most of the things they do defeats the purpose for which they were formed and damages the image of the party.

According to one of the respondents, they do most of the things to announce their presence. They do it to tell the rank and files of the party that they are alive and ready to do anything at any time.



“of course, we would not send any group of young men to drag any public officer from his office or seize any public asserts. Acts like this perpetuated by our vigilante groups are done for their personal gains. They do some of these things to tell the leadership of the party how ready they are to work for them. Admittedly, some of these things soil our names in public and is not always good for us”
(Male, 26/6/2019)

“our boys sometimes go overboard. They sometimes undertake activities on our darker side. We sometimes only here of them in the media. They are humans, and some extreme ones among them do

things that are not sanctioned by the party". (Respondent "G", 27/6/2019)

Even though political vigilante groups are formed and sponsored by political parties, data from the field suggest that some of the activities undertaken by the groups are not sanctioned by the party. Activities such as seizure of income-generating public establishments and brutalizing of a public servant are not sanctioned by the party. Those actions are undertaken by groups for their own personal gains.

4.4 Common Activities Undertaken by Vigilante Groups

In the interview, a vast majority of the respondents, who said they have been eye witnesses of the actions of vigilante groups suggested that, political vigilante groups engage in activities such as electoral malpractices, molestation of political opponents, seizure of public properties and wrecking of party properties.

4.4.1 Electoral Malpractices

One of the activities political vigilante groups engage in according to the respondents is electoral malpractices. Data collected from the field suggested the political vigilante groups are engaged in electoral malpractices such as stealing and stuffing of ballot boxes and multiple voting. Respondents suggested that, members of political vigilante groups who are mostly 'macho men' are seen stealing ballot boxes during elections.

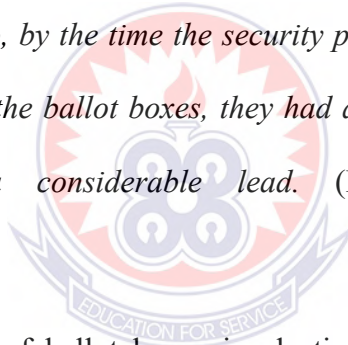
Members of political vigilante groups are known in this municipality for perpetuating acts of electoral malpractices. They sometimes go to the extent of bringing macho men to steal ballot boxes while the voting process is ongoing. They

sometimes arrange with the electoral officers at the polling station to give them more than one ballot paper to vote.

(Respondent “G”, 25/6/2019)

In a further probe, the researcher asked respondents what the ‘macho men’ do with the ballot boxes after stealing them. Respondents suggested that, the ballot boxes are staffed with already thumb printed ballot papers. They further explained that it is done to increase their party’s chances of winning the elections.

after stealing the ballot boxes, what they do is to put ballot papers they have already thumb printed for their candidate. So, by the time the security personnel find them and retrieve the ballot boxes, they had already given their candidate a considerable lead. (Respondent “K”, 25/6/2019).



The stealing and stuffing of ballot boxes in election is a known phenomenon in the politics of Ghana in the second republic. As Bob-Milliar (2014) recounts that, incidence of ballot box stealing and stuffing were widespread in national elections conducted in Ghana in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. According to Bob-Milliar (2014), the stealing of ballot boxes is where ballots cast in an election are taken away by supporters of one of the challengers in an election, while stuffing of ballot boxes is the process of putting pre-cast ballots into the boxes prior to the scheduled voting. It is very unfortunate that this phenomenon has traveled with our democracy for over two decades. This act really exposes the inadequacies in our security system, or probably, the security apparatus allows them to happen so they could please the politicians.

4.4.2 *Molestation of Political Opponents*

Another vigilante activity that is undertaken by political vigilante groups is the molestation and victimization of political opponents. From the data collected from the field, 19 out of the 25 respondents suggested that, political vigilante groups molest their political opponents before and during general elections. According to the respondents, political vigilante groups are found of brutalizing their political opponents in order to put fear in them so that they do not turn up to vote for their parties. This act is done to reduce the number of vote their political opponent may accumulate.

What these macho boys normally do before and during elections is to beat people who they know or suspect to be supporters of their political opponents. They beat them just to frustrate them not to turn up and vote at all. They sometimes do not only beat the supporters of their opponents but the opponents themselves. This mostly works for them so they are able to win the elections. (Respondent "M", 27/06/2019)

This act of political vigilantism suggested by respondents is in line with assertion made by Laakso, 2007; Mehler, 2007; and Straus & Taylor, 2012 that, during the pre-vote period, party foot soldiers engage in molestations and violent intimidation of the electorate and rival supporters. In August 2008, an NDC vigilant purportedly fired gunshots and scurried an NPP campaign rally at the Jubilee Park in Tamale (Frimpong, 2008). Also in the December 2012 election, the main domestic observer group, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO, 2012) received reports from its field agents of intimidation, harassment, and violation of the voting procedures in the Ashanti,

Greater Accra, and Northern regions. The violence was aimed at disenfranchising the supporters of rival candidates so as to reduce the vote margins. This act is carried out in the strong holds of the mother party of the perpetrators.

4.4.3 Seizure of Public Properties

The seizure of public properties is another activity carried out by political vigilante groups. From the data collected, 20 out of the 25 respondents suggested that, political vigilante groups whose party win elections seize public properties that generate income for the country. The respondents further explained that the vigilante groups seize public properties that generate income because they see that as a way of getting their reward for their good work that has brought the party to power.

Political vigilante groups begin to seize public properties like toilets, toll booths and lorry parks as soon as the electoral commission announces that their party has won the presidential election. They seize those properties because they see it as a means of getting their share of the gains the party is going to make while in power. Therefore, they illegally control the income that may be realised from the property.

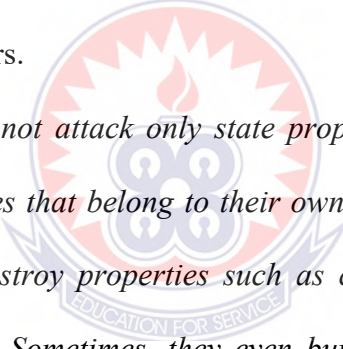
(Respondent “G”, 26/06/2019)

Incidence of the seizure and unlawful control of public properties of political transitional period is one alarming activity undertaken by political vigilante groups in Ghana. In early 2009, the foot soldiers of the NDC occupied several government buildings, evicted the occupants, and took over their jobs. The revenue collection jobs at many public toilets were forcibly taken over by the foot soldiers of the NPP in 2001 and the NDC in 2009

respectively. The seizure and unlawful occupation of public assets by vigilante groups has become a recurring problem in Ghana's politics. This problem has become an act of vengeance for both the NPP and NDC. Anytime any of the two parties win the Presidential Elections, party boys are quick to seize public properties to repay their opponents in equal measure.

4.4.4 Wrecking of Party Properties

Political vigilante groups do not only attack state properties and political opponents. They do not spare their mother parties as well. Data collected from the field suggested that political vigilante groups destroy party properties by their acts. Respondents averred that, political vigilante groups destroy party properties such as vehicles, offices, bill boards, voter register amongst others.



Those boys do not attack only state properties. They also attack properties that belong to their own political parties. They mostly destroy properties such as cars, motor bikes and bill board. Sometimes, they even burn a whole office building. (Respondent "P", 28/06/2019)

When respondents were asked why the vigilante groups attack properties that belong to their own political parties, respondents suggested that they destroy them to register their dissatisfaction. The respondents went further to suggest that this act normally happens when party executives fail to fulfil promises made to them or when the executives want to impose a parliamentary candidate on them.

"I believe these boys destroy party properties to send a message to the executives. The message may be to remind them about an unfulfilled

promise made to them by the party executives. It could also be to reject a particular candidate the party want to impose on them. Again, these boys attack party properties when the party does not give a member they love an appointment after the party has won the elections” (Respondent “K”, 27/06/2019)

The contentious activities engaged in by political vigilante groups also affected party structures, campaign cars, and other party branded properties or paraphernalia (Bob-Milliar, 2014). In May 2011, for example, NDC foot soldiers attacked the offices of the mayor of Tamale and destroyed office equipment including computers, furniture, stationery, and exhibition stands (Bob-Milliar, 2014). These acts of lawlessness are a threat to Ghana’s growing democracy. It does not really promote political plurality in the country.

Contrary to the information gathered on the field, Paalo (2017) is of the view that political vigilantism groups do not always engage in activities that retrogresses the democratic development of the country. Political vigilantism groups also contribute to the development of democracy in Ghana. Political vigilante groups act as a bridge between people and the government and help integrate citizens into the political system. They also inform citizens about politics through socialization and mobilization of voters. Additionally, they have the capacity (including a large pool of political talents, intellectual resources and cross-sectors relationships) to organize governments and set policies so as to work for the people’s quality of life.

4.5 Reasons for the Continuous Youth Involvement in Political Vigilantism

This section deals with why the youth continuously avail themselves to be used as agents of distraction by politicians. It looks at why the youth continue to follow politicians and be used as vessels to carry out political vigilante activities, regardless of the possibility of arrest and detention, injury or even death. Data collected from the field suggested four main reasons for the youth's continuous involvement in political vigilantism; unemployment, proof of party loyalty, low level of education and attractive promises from political parties.

4.5.1 Lack of employment

Newbury (1998) recounted that the youth in Rwanda mainly young men, joined militia groups as a result of job insecurity and unemployment in both modern and traditional sectors in 1994. Again, Fox and Hoelscher (2010) postulated that poverty creates positive conditions for individuals to use any means necessary to acquire needed resources including political violence. Brett and Specht (2004) also noted that young soldiers join a rebel group as a result of poverty and low alternative income opportunities. Data collected from the field affirmed the views held by the two literatures cited above. About 90% of the respondents suggested that most of the youths continue to be available for use by politicians to pursue their "evil agenda" because they do not have any job to do. According to them, the youth are constantly responding to the call from the politicians at any time regardless of the risk because they do not have any work doing for living.

"the devil always find work for the idle hands. These boys who are being used by the politicians do not have any

employment. They do not also have any source of income.

Therefore, it becomes easier for the politicians to constantly use them in spite of the risk; after all, man must eat”

(Respondent “K”, 25/6/2019)

The high rate of unemployment in the country serves as a catalyst for the easy mobilization of young people in the formation of political party militia. Scholars agree that the lack of genuine employment opportunities especially for young people makes them vulnerable to recruitment by illegal groups like terrorist organizations and other outlawed militia, like the vigilante groups (Nivette, 2016). Due to the limited employment opportunities in the country, supporters of the winning political parties sack the existing workforce and take over operation’s public institutions. In December 2017, there was the occurrence of such takeovers at the Tema Motorway Toll Booth, where supporters of the ruling NPP sacked the existing workers and started collecting tolls at the booth (Daily Graphic, 12 December 2017). Again, some members of the Invisible Forces made strong threats to the ruling government for their failure to offer them jobs, this occurred during the maiden edition of the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Local Government town hall meeting held in Tema (Daily Graphic, 1 August 2017). If young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are more likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating an income.

4.5.2 Low level of Education

Data collected from the field revealed that the youth continue to be available for the use of politicians to carry out vigilante activities due to their low level of education. According to respondents, because the youth who are mostly involved in political

vigilantism do not have higher education, they are not able to think deep into their actions and set goals for their lives.

“Education they say, is a total process of learning where faculties are trained... Therefore, education broadens your horizon of thinking and empowers you to plan for your life. These guys for their lack of education just follow politicians and have made them thin Gods. They are ready to work for them any day.” (Respondent “N”, 25/6/2019)

According to the respondents, they will continuously be available for use because most of the youth who are members of vigilante groups do not have the necessary qualifications to be offered employment. Most of them are school dropouts who cannot even boast of a Junior High School certificates and have also not acquired any vocational skills. Due to this, the politicians will continue to exploit them and make them agents of violent.

“these boys will constantly be used by the politicians. Because they have barely no formal education. In fact, most of them cannot even boast of a Junior High School (JHS) certificate. In addition, they have also not acquired any vocational skills. So, they will always be available for use by politicians”

Cinotta, Engleman and Anastasion (2003) and Goldstone (1991) have observed that, sizeable youth cohorts may lead to violence or aggression where access to education and job opportunities are scarce. Higher levels of education among men may act to reduce the risk of political violence. Since educated men have better income-earning opportunities than the uneducated, they would have more to lose and hence be less likely to join a

rebellion (Collier, 2000). A recent study based on interviews with young soldiers presents strong micro-level support for the expectation that poverty, lack of schooling and low alternative income opportunities are important reasons for joining a rebel group (Brett and Specht, 2004). Rebel recruitment is thus more costly and rebellion less likely the higher the level of education in a society (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

4.5.3 Perceived Ineffectiveness of the Security Agencies

Respondents also suggested that, the youth constantly avail themselves for use by politicians because they have realized that they can always get away with it. According to respondents, people who unleash violence on others through vigilante activities mostly, if not always, get away with it. The police and even the judiciary in Ghana fear to crack the whip. In Ghana, any time people are arrested by the police for politically related violence, supporters of their respective parties gather themselves at the police station to force the police to release them. The case becomes worse if the fellow is a member of the ruling party. That means the party hierarchy can just order the police to end the case without prosecuting the suspects. Due to this, the youth are always available to be used by politicians trusting that even when they are arrested in course of the activity, their party leadership will help them out.

In an interview, a male respondent said that,

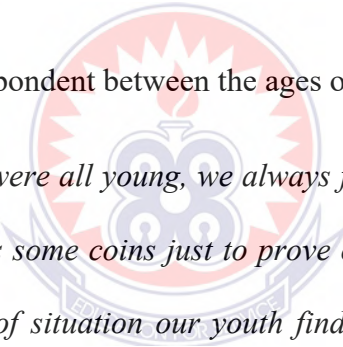
“the youth continue to be involved in political vigilantism because they always trust those who hire them to come to their rescue. They are aware, and it so happens, that anytime they are caught, even in the act, their employers will help

them escape justice. So why won't they always avail themselves if they have something to lean on?"

4.5.4 Proof of Party Loyalty

Data collected from the field suggested that, the youth continue to avail themselves to politicians to be used as instrument of political violence through the formation of political vigilante groups because they want to prove their loyalty to the political party. According to the respondents, the youth are always ready to answer to the call of politicians and act in accordance just to prove their loyalty to the party. They just want the rank and files of the party to believe in their abilities and see them as people who would even die to the cause of the party.

In the interview, a male respondent between the ages of 60-70 said that,



"when we were all young, we always fought for the big men who gave us some coins just to prove our worth. I think this is the kind of situation our youth find themselves in. These youths are always giving themselves out for their respective political parties just to prove their loyalty. They are just desperate to prove their worth to party leaders. They only want to be seen by their party leaders as loyal".

A female respondent between the ages of 60-70 also reiterated this point:

"I remember when we were young. Young men who were interested in us were always ready to fight for us only to prove a point to us. That is exactly the case of our youth. They

are always ready to prove their loyalty to their party leaders by doing anything such as joining vigilante groups and perpetuating violence” (Respondent “H”, 26/06/2019)

4.6 Impacts of Political Vigilantism on the Maintenance of Law and Order in the Country

The maintenance of law and order is one of the primary functions of every state. The sustenance and maintenance of law and order is very crucial in ensuring the sustainability of the democracy of every country or society. In Ghana, the judiciary arm of government and the Ghana police service are two institutions who bear the primary duty of maintaining law and order. Against this backdrop, the data collected from the field suggest that political vigilantism has a gross adverse effect on the maintenance of law and order in Ghana. Political vigilantism and its myriad violent activities militate against the country in the maintenance of law and order. The study suggested that, political vigilantism leads to the disrespect of the law court and politicization of the security services, especially the police and the military and the political manipulation of the police service.

4.6.1 Disrespect of the Law Court

The Ghana Constitution (1992) recognises the Judiciary as an institution that bears primary responsibility for defending the rule of law. This duty is performed through the law court. However, political vigilante activities have often led to the disrespect of the judiciary. Data from the field suggested that in the process of rescuing perpetrators of political vigilantism by their employers, they disrespect the court.

“The activities political vigilantism often times lead to the disrespect of the judiciary. When these boys are arrested and taken to court for possible punishment, their leaders with the backing from members in the government interrupt the process and rescue them. The other day, when 13 members of the Delta Force were taken to court, a few of them went to the court, obstructed the process and freed them”.

This statement and assertion suggest that once party boys are recruited into the security service, they are always there to seek the interest of their party and not the state. Thus, it will become extremely difficult for them to arrest members of their party who will engage in acts of political vigilantism. Hence, affecting the maintenance of law and order in the country.

4.6.2 Politicization of the Security Services

Almost every year, successive governments recruit people into the security services in order to build robust security that will keep citizens and properties safe. However, more party boys, who are often members of their vigilante groups are recruited into the security services. Data collected from the field suggested that, this is often done to fulfil promises made to party boys and also to say a thank you for their loyalty to the party. This led to the politicization of the security services as persons recruited into it often political party boys.

A respondent asserted that:

every government that come to power recruit her boys into the security services, especially the police and the military.

When they need to get the boys to form vigilante groups, they often promise them of appointment such as recruiting them into the security services. When they win political power, these boys are recruited into the security services as a reward for their loyalty. (Respondent “S”, 25/6/2019)

4.6.3 Political Manipulation of the Police Service

Another institution that cannot be thrown out in the maintenance of law and order in Ghana is the Police Service. The police in Ghana are a key institution for upholding the rule of law through offering protection to innocent citizens while doing all within the law to bring wrongdoers to face the full rigours of the law. It is rather unfortunate that the police service has become an entity controlled by successive governments. Data collected from the field suggested that, whichever government comes to power manipulate the police service act in their favour. Owing to this, the police find it very difficult to bring culprits of political vigilantism to book.

An interview with a police officer suggested that even when they have been able to manage to arrest persons involved in act of vigilantism, powers that be always order them to be freed and that does not even give the motivation to act even when they gather intelligence on political vigilantism.

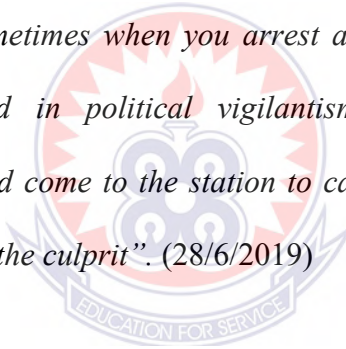
The police officer had this to say:

“In fact, the politicians make our work very difficult. Often times the public think the police service is not on top of their job, but that is not the case. We sometimes gather intelligence that a particular political vigilante group is going to

undertake an operation. We react to it stop the operation and make arrest. But even before you reach the police station, a higher authority just places a call and ask you to free the suspect.” (Respondent “H”, 27/6/2019)

The data also suggested that, ruling parties are not the only ones that militate against the police in maintaining law and order. The data suggested that major opposition parties are also problem. Another police officer added that:

“the ruling parties are not the only political parties that hinder our work. The major opposition parties disrupt our work too. Sometimes when you arrest any of their boys who were involved in political vigilantism, they will gather themselves and come to the station to cause mayhem to force the release of the culprit”. (28/6/2019)



4.7 The Effect of Political Vigilantism on the General Peace and Security of the Country

The study also seeks to analyse the effect the continuous youth involvement in political vigilantism on the peace of the country. This section deals with the ripping effects the continuous youth involvement in political vigilante has on the peace Ghana has. Data collected from the field suggested that that, indeed, the continuous involvement in political vigilantism is worrying and adversely affect the peace of the country. From the data collected from the field, respondents’ views on the effects of political vigilantism on

the peace of the country suggested that, political vigilantism causes a general sense of insecurity, is a major catalyst for post electoral wars or conflicts and loss of lives.

4.7.1 *Creation of a Sense of Insecurity in the Society*

One of the objectives of this research is to analyse the effects political vigilantism has on the peace of the country. Political violence, which is a major component of political vigilantism, jeopardises political stability, democratic reform, prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases degenerates into civil war (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Data collected from the field suggested that, activities of Political vigilantism cause a general sense of insecurity. Political vigilantism is always associated with violence which causes general insecurity as people's rights are violated. According to the respondents, activities of political vigilante groups such as the clashes between vigilante groups of the two major parties in Ghana, intimidation and harassment of members from opposing parties, especially in their strong holds before, during and after elections create an atmosphere that can plunge the country into violence.

“Acts of political vigilantism causes insecurity in the country. In fact, anytime I here in the news that two political vigilante groups from opposing parties have crashed or one of the vigilante groups have perpetuated act of violence on another, I feel the country is going witness war. I even sometimes feel I need to stay in my room just to be safe.” A female respondent had this to say.

Another male respondent also said this;

“activities of political vigilantism are really disturbing for our country as far as our peace is concerned. Sometimes when I see footages of clashes of two opposing political vigilante groups, I feel it would be better I flee from the country before elections. A day before the 2016 elections, I went to the market to buy food items that could keep me indoors for at least one month. Because I was afraid of how the two major parties were attacking each other using their vigilante groups”.

4.7.2 A Major Catalyst for Electoral Violence

Another major effect of activities of political vigilantism is that, it is a major catalyst for post electoral wars. Activities such as vehement rejection of electoral results by vigilante groups of losing parties and seizure of public offices by winning parties are major ingredients for post electoral wars. For instance, the dispute over the November 28, 2010 presidential run-off in Ivory Coast plunged the country into serious post electoral conflict. United Nations staff in Ivory Coast found 536 bodies in the west of the country from end of March 2011 to April 12, 2011. The staff said at least 400 people died in the city of Abidjan before the capture of Gbagbo on April 12, 2011. Crimes committed such as the shelling of a market place in Abidjan's Abobo district and the murder of women peacefully protesting, as well as numerous other killings and abductions amounted to crimes against humanity (Reuters, 2011).

Data collected from field suggested that, continuous seizure of public offices and asserts by winning parties may one day throw the whole country into post electoral conflict. According to respondents, such activity makes people feel rejected and may fight back and that with possibly cause the whole country our relative peace.

In the interview, a respondent had this to say;

“the kind of insightful comments members of vigilante groups make before elections always beats a war drum for our country. Some of them even go to the extent of saying the country will fall apart their party does not win the election. Again, after elections when members of vigilante groups per their own calculations feel their party is on the verge of losing elections, they make some comments and take actions such as marching to the office of the Electoral Commission. This creates an atmosphere for war in the country”.

Another respondent said that:

I have observed critically that, anytime a party win political power, the young men and women use violent means to seize public offices and asserts that are managed by people they feel are their political opponents. This act can easily cause conflict in the country.

4.7.3 Loss of Lives and Maiming of Persons

The loss of lives and the maiming of persons is another tragic effect of political vigilantism. According to Smillie, Gberie & Hazlton (2000) the civil war of Sierra Leone between 1991 and 1999 saw boys as young as seven years old abducted into the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), supplied with weapons, trained to kill, shot up with cocaine and incited to raid villages throughout Sierra Leone. These raids targeted civilians, especially women and children. Their hallmark was crude amputations: feet,

hands, ears, lips and noses. The war claimed over 75,000 lives, caused over 500,000 Sierra Leoneans to become refugees, and displaced over half of the country's four and half million people at that period (Smillie, Gberie & Hazlton, 2000).

Data collected from the field suggested that, acts of political vigilantism can maim people for the rest of their lives or even end their lives totally. Respondents made it clear that several instances of acts of political vigilantism all over the world has led to the loss of several lives and disfigured many people.

In the field work in Kumasi, a male respondent had this to say;

“Acts of political violence can lead to loss of the lives of several people and the blemish of parts of bodies of many others. In Ghana here many people have been killed by political vigilante groups. Many others make also had parts of their bodies destroyed for good. Not too long ago, we heard on the news that people have been butchered in Agbobloshie, a suburb in Accra. Even here in Kumasi, many people have lost their lives due to acts of political vigilantism.”



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the research findings, conclusions and the recommendations from the study. The main purpose of the study was to examine the underlying reasons for the continuous youth involvement in political vigilantism and to analyze the threat political vigilantism poses to the peace of Ghana. The specific objectives that guided the study were to: examine the factors that warrant the formation of vigilante groups by political parties; analyze the factors that account for the continuous involvement of the youth in political vigilantism; examine the ways in which the activities of political vigilante groups pose a challenge to the maintenance of law and order in Ghana and finally examine the extent to which political vigilantism threatens the general peace and security of the country. The qualitative paradigm was adopted for the study. Twenty-five (25) respondents were sampled through purposive sampling technique. Data that was collected with the aid of interview-guide was analyzed using content and thematic analysis. The chapter concludes with areas for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The entire study was divided into five chapters. Chapter one sets the basis of argument of the study by presenting the problem from sub-regional and national perspectives on the political vigilantism. The background to the study therefore gave a little intuition of the concept of political vigilantism in Ghana as well as its violent related activities. It also identified the gap in continental and national research works on the issue of political

vigilantism. The statement of the problem of the study mentioned that even though many scholars have taken time to examine the numerous problems confronting Ghana's democracy such as the alarming rate at which political vigilantism is rising in Ghana, very few attention if not none, has been given to why the youth continue to be used as instruments of political vigilantism irrespective of the risks involved.

The chapter two covered an extensive review on the issue under study, putting into perspective broad themes such as a historical overview, why they are formed, perpetrators of phenomenon, and its effects, amongst others. This study is based on the contextual conceptual frameworks on political decay by Swanepoel; Duvenhage & Coetzee (2011). To these authors, vigilantism is a feature of political decay. Duvenhage (2003) asserts that political decay is a negative political change and is as a result of the state's inability to provide law and order, stability, security and good governance to all its citizens. The lack of law and order, existence of weak governance and the failure of the state to provide adequate security and social needs, social organisations (vigilantes) having their own rules, low bureaucratic abilities and the state failing to perform all its functions, account for the manifestations of vigilantism.

The Chapter three of the study highlighted the methods and principles underlying the study. The chapter consisted the research paradigm and design, population of the study, sampling procedures used for the selection of respondents and instruments used for the data collections. Other areas covered in the methodology were pre-testing of instruments, data collections procedures and how the collected data were analysed. A qualitative case study approach was chosen to help achieve the stated objectives.

The study sought the views of respondents using a semi-structured interview guide. Purposive sampling technique was used for the study.

The presentation and analysis were discussed in the Chapter Four. These were done using the primary data from the interviews and observations from the study. Some authorities in the field were cited to support and refute some responses from the respondents.

5.2 Summary of Main Findings

The study answered the four research questions that were asked in the chapter one. The findings of the study are presented below:

1. The study discovered that, many people were familiar with political vigilantism and understood the phenomenon. Respondents understood that political vigilante groups are formed by political parties, and usually with young men between the ages of 18 and 30. They also remarked that the main modus operandi of these vigilante groups in violence.
2. The study also revealed that political parties form vigilante groups due to the mistrust they have in state security apparatus. They therefore form political vigilante groups to toughen up the security of their party rank and file.
3. The study discovered that vigilante groups are formed by political parties to perpetuate their rule. Political parties in their quest stay in power for long use political vigilante groups to harass and frustrate their opponents in order to tilt the playing ground to their advantage.
4. The study revealed that, even though vigilante groups are formed and funded by political parties, sometimes the actions of these vigilante groups go beyond what

the parties actually demand them to do. Vigilante groups sometimes undertake activities that are outside the orders given to them. Respondents from political parties admitted that some of the activities of vigilante groups such as seizure of politic offices and properties are not part of the orders given to them by the political parties. Those are rather spillover effects.

5. The study also discovered that, political party vigilante groups provide security for only candidates of political parties and not elected officers. The study further revealed that, whenever a candidate win election, either as a Member of Parliament or President, and is sworn into office, the party stops providing security for such person. The person's security becomes the responsibility of the state. Therefore, any other person seen providing security for the elected person beside the state security apparatus is employed by the person himself and not the political party.
6. The study further found that, political parties also form vigilante groups to get a pool of youth who are always readily available to fall errands for the party. Political vigilante groups are formed not to perform the functions that are already perceived by the society but to get a pool of young guys which the party could fall on as errands boys.
7. The study revealed that, political vigilantism poses a key threat to the maintenance of law and order in the country. Activities of political vigilantism led to the disrespect of the law court, obstruction of the work of the police and politicisation of the police services.

8. The study uncovered that, the youth in Ghana continue to avail themselves to political parties as agents of political vigilantism because of the lack of employment. The youth are always readily available because they have no attractive employment that gives them a regular source of income and this make them fall on political party leaders or in turn recruit them into forming political vigilante groups.
9. The study further found that, the youth continue to allow themselves to be used by political parties for political vigilante activities due to their low level of education.
10. The study also revealed that, political vigilante groups engage in activities such as electoral malpractices, unlawful seizure of public properties, molestation of political opponents and distraction of party properties.
11. In addition to the aforementioned, the study discovered that the youth are always available for use by political parties, regardless of the risk of possible arrest imprisonment because of the ineffectiveness of the state security apparatus. The youth are ready to be used by political parties for vigilante activities which are mostly characterised by violence because they are sure of getting away with it because the security system in the country is ineffective. The study further revealed that even if they are unlucky to be arrested, they are sure of not facing trial and prosecution because their employers will always come to their rescue.
12. The study revealed that, the youth are mostly the ones who become the vessels political vigilantism due to their quest to prove their loyalty to the party. The youth are always ready to do anything for the party leaders to acknowledge their

loyalty, which has the propensity to open doors to greener pastures for them in the party.

13. The study found that, political vigilantism and its associate violence brought a general sense of insecurity in the country. Their activities put fear in citizenry.

14. Finally, political vigilantism is also a major ingredient for post electoral conflicts.

The study found that, a violent action of one political party, when met by a reply by another party or even that of a higher degree, has a great possibility of plunging the county into a major post electoral conflict. The study further renowned that, this would lead to the loss of lives and the maiming of persons for good.

5.3 Conclusion

The research was a case study conducted with the use of interview guide and a thematic analysis. Just like all other researches, it may not lack errors and these may have influenced the abovementioned findings of the study. Notwithstanding these observations, the following conclusions, which are of much relevance and implications for the maintenance of law and order, general peace and security, sustainable development as well as public order and safety of Kumasi could be drawn from the empirical evidence available from the study.

Democracy is a major tool for national development. It is also a phenomenon that gives citizens the chance to participate politically. It is also characterised by the formation of political parties who become the major actors. In this system, election is the only way by

which political parties gain legitimate power in order to control the affairs of the state and implement their agenda.

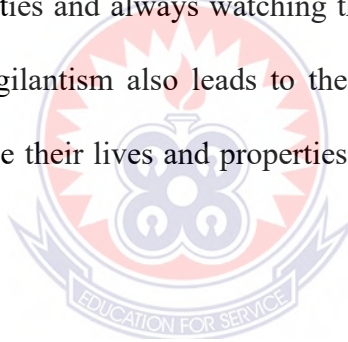
However, as a result of the winner takes all syndrome mostly associated with Ghanaian politics, political parties in Kumasi are not able to collectively define their problems and accomplish their goals on the basis of co-operation. They are more concerned with individualism than collectivism and therefore resort to the use of force to achieve a political outcome. Political parties form political vigilante groups in order to capture and retain political power. They also form political vigilante groups to provide security for their political candidates due to their lack of trust in the state security apparatus, and also to get a pool of youth to use as errand boys. These compelling factors have made activities of political vigilantism a recurring occurrence in Kumasi.

Goldstone (2002) observed that historical episodes of political instability and violence have often been associated with the demographic phenomenon of an unusually high proportion of 15–24-year-olds relative to adults in a population. Activities of political vigilantism are often carried out by the youth. The youth are used by the political parties because they are easy to get and very economical. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have pinpointed that large youth cohorts may reduce the opportunity costs of engaging in violence by making rebel or gang recruitment easier or more attractive as a livelihood strategy. The youth avail themselves to be used as vessels of political vigilantism due to their lack of employment, a way of proving their loyalty to the party and ineffectiveness and politicisation of the state security.

Political vigilantism and its associated violent activities are a great threat to the maintenance of law and order and the general peace and security of the country. Political

violence, which is a major component of political vigilantism, jeopardises political stability, democratic reform, prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases degenerates into civil war (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

In the maintenance of law and order, political vigilantism leads to the disrespect of the courts, politicization of the state security services and the manipulation of the police service politically. With regards to its effects on the general peace and security of the country, political vigilantism is a major catalyst for post war conflict. It also creates a general sense of insecurity; a situation where citizens do not feel secured while going about their daily life activities and always watching their shoulders for a possible attack on their lives. Political vigilantism also leads to the loss of lives and the maiming of persons for life. People lose their lives and properties while others become Persons with Disability.



5.4. Contribution to Knowledge

The primary aim of the researcher is to relook at reasons for youth involvement in political vigilantism and to explore the threat political vigilantism poses to the peace of the country. So far, most studies on political vigilantism in Ghana have focused more on the grass rooters. Data collection tools of such studies have been mostly questionnaires. In this study the researcher has tried to shift the focus to the youth in general and have also incorporated interview to collect data. A new thing that emerged from this study is that political vigilantism impedes the prospects of economic development, and creates human suffering and in some cases degenerates into civil war. Unemployment is the primary reason for youth involvement in such undertakings.

5.5. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and the conclusions of this study as outlined above, the following recommendations are made.

1. The study revealed that, political parties form vigilante groups to provide security for the rank files of their parties because of their lack of trust in the state security apparatus as well as the ineffectiveness of the police. Thus, in order to alleviate this cancer, the Kumasi Metropolis Security Council must sit down with political parties, and assign their candidates with special security persons from the state. Also, to avoid clashes between political parties during rallies and campaigns, it is recommended that the various political parties should form local Inter Political Advisory Committee (IPAC) together with the Municipal Security Council to formulate time table for political rallies and processions so that not more than one political party activity would be organised at a time. When political parties are

assured that the state is ready to provide their candidates with security, they may think twice and possibly disband their vigilante groups.

2. The study further revealed that the desire of political parties to capture and retain political power contribute to the political violence in Kumasi Metropolis. The study revealed that in an attempt to retain or recapture power, political activists use anything including violence, which is the main modus operandi of political vigilante groups. It is recommended that the National Commission for Civic Education and the Information Service Department in the Metropolis should intensify campaign on political tolerance.
3. The study identified unemployment and poverty on the part of the youth are the most compelling factors that influence the youth of Kumasi to be used as agents of political vigilantism. In the light of the above observations, the Metropolis should identify the unemployed in the Metropolis and assist those with employable skills to find employment while those with no employable skills should be trained by the metropolis in collaboration with the central government to get some employable skills.
4. The study revealed that, due to over politicization of the state security apparatus, especially the police, the perpetrators of the violence were not arrested and punished, and those who were arrested had “political release”. It is therefore recommended that the political parties should desist from interfering in the work of the police and the judiciary and that the law should apply squarely to the perpetrators of the political violence if arrested by the police.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher based on the findings and conclusion on the study hereby put forward the following suggestion for further studies.

This study covered only the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA). The researcher therefore suggests that there should be a replication of the study in other metropolises, municipal assemblies polling centers, constituencies and even regions in Ghana so as to ascertain the validity of a study of this kind and make the findings more generalized.



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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CENTRE FOR CONFLICT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE STUDIES

I.D Number	
Date of Interview	

Interview Guide for the General Public

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research. My name is Obed Ankomah Gyimah. I am a Masters student at the University of Education, Winneba at the Centre of Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies. I am conducting research on the topic “Youth involvement in political vigilantism. A case study of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly”. My aim to explore your understanding of political vigilantism, why the youths continue to be involved in the act and the effects on the country. It is my hope that the results would inform policy formulations and programme designs by various actors.

I would be grateful if you would permit me to tape record our session, as this will assist me to capture all your insights and observations. You are welcome to stop the machine at any point during the interview. The interview will be transcribed and anonymised so that you will not be recognised by other people. The interview will also be confidential and the recorded material will not be accessible to any other person than my supervisor and myself. Also, you are at liberty not to respond to any particular question you deem unfit.

Participant’s Statement of Acceptance

I have read and understood the content of this letter and that I have agreed to participate willingly in the study and agree to have the interview recorded.

Participant's Consent YES [] NO []

Demographic data

Age

- a. 20-30 [] b. 31-40 [] c. 41-50 [] d. 51-60 [] e. 61 and above []

Gender

- a. Male [] b. Female []

Level of Education

- a. Middle School [] b. Secondary [] c. Tertiary [] d. Vocational []

Occupation

- a. Self Employed [] b. Civil Servant [] b. Public Servant [] c. Unemployed []
d. Retired []

Overview of Political Vigilantism

1. Briefly describe your knowledge on political vigilantism
2. What are some of the vigilante groups you know?
3. What are some the activities they undertake?

Why political parties form vigilante groups

4. In your view, why do political parties form vigilante groups?

Continuous Youth Involvement in vigilantism

5. Why do the youth continue to get involved in political vigilantism?
6. Why do politicians target the youth?

Effects of Political Vigilantism

7. Does political vigilantism have effects on this country? explain your answer.
8. What effects does political vigilantism have on the maintenance of law and order in our country?
9. What effects does political vigilantism have on the general security of the country?
10. Can we as a country put an end to this behaviour? Explain

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CENTRE FOR CONFLICT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE STUDIES

ID Number	
Date of Interview	

Interview Guide for Political Party Executives

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research. My name is Obed Ankomah Gyimah. I am a Masters student at the University of Education, Winneba at the Centre of Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies. I am conducting research on the topic “Youth involvement in political vigilantism. A case study of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly”. My aim is to explore your understanding of political vigilantism, why the youths continue to be involved in the act and the effects on the country. It is my hope that the results would inform policy formulations and programme designs by various actors.

I would be grateful if you would permit me to tape record our session, as this will assist me to capture all your insights and observations. You are welcome to stop the machine at any point during the interview. The interview will be transcribed and anonymised so that you will not be recognised by other people. The interview will also be confidential and the recorded material will not be accessible to any other person than my supervisor and myself. Also, you are at liberty not to respond to any particular question you deem unfit.

Participant's Statement of Acceptance

I have read and understood the content of this letter and that I have agreed to participate willingly in the study and agree to have the interview recorded.

Participant's Consent YES [] NO []

Demographic data

Age

a. 20-30 [] b. 31-40 [] c. 41-50 [] d. 51-60 [] e. 61 and above []

Gender

a. Male [] b. Female []

Level of Education

a. Middle School [] b. Secondary [] c. Tertiary [] d. Vocational []

Occupation

a. Self Employed [] b. Civil Servant [] c. Public Servant [] d. Unemployed []
e. Retired []

Overview of Political Vigilantism

1. Briefly describe your knowledge on political vigilantism
2. What are some of the vigilante groups you know?
3. What are some the activities they undertake?

Why political parties form vigilante groups

4. Does your political party have a vigilante group?
5. What purpose do vigilante groups serve in your party?
6. Do the vigilante group undertake activities specified by party executives or otherwise?

Continuous Youth Involvement in vigilantism

7. Why do the youth continue to get involved in political vigilantism?
8. Why do you politicians target the youth?

Effects of Political Vigilantism

9. Does political vigilantism have effects on this country? explain your answer.
10. What effects does political vigilantism have on the maintenance of law and order in our country?
11. What effects does political vigilantism have on the general security of the country?
12. Can we as a country put an end to this behaviour? Explain

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CENTRE FOR CONFLICT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE STUDIES

I.D Number	
Date of Interview	

Interview Guide for Security Officers

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research. My name is Obed Ankomah Gyimah. I am a Masters student at the University of Education, Winneba at the Centre of Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies. I am conducting research on the topic “Youth involvement in political vigilantism. A case study of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly” My aim is to explore your understanding of political vigilantism, why the youths continue to be involved the act and its effects on the country. It is my hope that the results would inform policy formulations and programme designs by various actors.

I would be grateful if you would permit me to tape record our session, as this will assist me to capture all your insights and observations. You are welcome to stop the machine at any point during the interview. The interview will be transcribed and anonymised so that you will not be recognised by other people. The interview will also be confidential and the recorded material will not be accessible to any other person than my supervisor and myself. Also, you are at liberty not to respond to any particular question you deem unfit.

Participant’s Statement of Acceptance

I have read and understood the content of this letter and that I have agreed to participate willingly in the study and agree to have the interview recorded.

Participant’s Consent YES [] NO []

Demographic data

Age

- a. 20-30 [] b. 31-40 [] c. 41-50 [] d. 51-60 [] e. 61 and above []

Gender

- a. Male [] b. Female []

Level of Education

- a. Middle School [] b. Secondary [] c. Tertiary [] d. Vocational []

Occupation

- a. Self Employed [] b. Civil Servant [] b. Public Servant [] c. Unemployed []
d. Retired []

Overview of Political Vigilantism

1. Briefly describe your knowledge on political vigilantism
2. What are some of the vigilante groups you know?
3. What are some the activities they undertake?

Why political parties form vigilante groups

4. Why do political parties form vigilante groups?

Continuous Youth Involvement in vigilantism

5. Why do the youth continue to get involved in political vigilantism?
6. Why do politicians target the youth?

Effects of Political Vigilantism

7. Does political vigilantism have effects on this country? explain your answer.
8. What effects does political vigilantism have on your work as officer maintaining law and order in our country?
9. What threats do you face in curbing political vigilantism?
- 10 What effects does political vigilantism have on the general security of the country?
10. Can we as a country put an end to this behaviour? Explain