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ASSESSMENT OF PARTISANSHIP ON DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC NORMS IN GHANA

RANSFORD BROBBEY
(220016337)

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DECLARATION

Candidatet's Declaration

I, Ransford Brobbey, declare that this thesis, except for 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 thesis was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Ebenezer Teye Amanor-Lartey

Signature : ……

Date : ……...

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my sisters; Anita, Esther, Emmanuella, and Sandra.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP	Convention People's Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EC	Electoral Commission
CDD	Ghana Centre for Democracy and Development
CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interview
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
PIAC	Public Interest and Accountability Committee
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations

ABSTRACT

This thesis set out to assess partisanship effects on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. Grounded in agonistic theory of democracy, examines how partisanship influences core democratic norms in Ghana—namely, political participation, civic accountability, electoral behaviour, and institutional trust. Using a survey design approach, the study operationalizes "appreciation of partisanship" through attitudinal measures and behavioural indicators. Data were analysed with cross-tabulations and chi-square tests to assess associations between partisan identity and each democratic norm.

Key findings reveal that most Ghanaians—partisans and independents alike—define politics primarily as government decision-making, yet strongly favour including independent voices in policy debates. While electoral turnout is driven by civic duty rather than party loyalty, partisans exhibit higher vote loyalty even as one-third report conditional swing-voting. Over 75 percent accept election outcomes unconditionally, and the majority view petitions as legitimate tests of justice. Both groups engage robustly in civic activities—contacting officials and critiquing policy—but attend demonstrations infrequently. Partisans criticize government more often, though active citizenship does not require party attachment. Trust in the courts (over election petitions) and the Electoral Commission remains high, especially among independents. Crucially, large majorities agree that partisan conflict fuels violence at the polling station, in communities, and within households, while deterring broader participation and fostering out-group disregard.

The thesis concludes that partisanship in Ghana is a double-edged sword. It energizes political engagement and accountability yet reinforces polarization, undermines inclusion, and escalates conflict. Recommendations include institutionalized bipartisan forums, targeted civic-education for swing-voter stability, transparent adjudication of electoral disputes, real-time accountability tools, and cross-party liaison structures to foster mutual respect and sustain democratic resilience.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

More than seven decades ago, Schattschneider (1942) asserted in his book, *Party Government* that "political parties created democracy and…modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties (Stokes, 1999; Muirhead and Rosenblum, 2020). Indeed, it is hard to imagine any modern democracy without the existence of political parties and partisanship. Political parties are necessary for contemporary representational democracy to exist, and they are a crucial tool and institution in democratic politics (Asunka, 2016). Muirhead and Rosenblum's (2020) examination on the evolving role of political parties in modern democracies suggests that parties are among other things agents of public reasoning. They contribute to deliberation, uphold regulated political rivalry, democratize representative government, and keep the gates of democracy by providing legitimacy and stability.

The consequence of multiparty democracy is the creation of partisan identities. Partisanship is deemed to be sharp in the politics of western democracies although in Europe, the lines are frequently described as being far more defined than in the United States (Schmitt, 2009). Bankert's (2020) study on negative and positive partisanship in the US reports that most Americans display aspects of both partisan identities. According to Bankert (2020), negative partisanship is the presence of strong out-party hostility, while positive partisanship refers to strong party attachments. Both forms of partisanship having distinct effects on political behaviours. First, it is possible to be strongly attached to one's party without opposing bipartisan efforts. Second, political engagement on behalf of the in-party is driven by the strength of one's attachments to that party rather than the opposition to the out-party, and last, that stronger effects of positive partisan identity on the vote.

Whether partisanship in developing democracies operates like that in developed democracies, Lupu (2014), suggests that it is reasonable to anticipate that the trends of widespread political allegiance in emerging democracies should mirror those in mature democracies. His study of political allegiance in Latin America indeed showed significant similarities. Just like in mature democracies, partisans in Latin America were typically more seasoned, better informed, more observant, and more involved. They also tend to be more politically active with their political affiliations having a significant impact on their voting decisions.

Ghana is a young democracy (Stoecker, 2021) in West Africa and one of Africa's top democracies. Democracy in Ghana is promulgated as consolidated. The country has experienced election turnovers with relatively peaceful transitions from a ruling party to the opposition party. Generally, the conduct of elections is unreservedly the acceptable means amongst Ghanaians to choose their national leaders (Afrobarometer, 2023). According to Osae-Kwapong (2023), most (86%) Ghanaians surveyed by Afrobarometer between 2002 and 2022 supported choosing leaders through elections. Similarly, 70 percent of Ghanaians surveyed within the same period also supported multipartyism (Osae-Kwapong, 2023).

The essence of Ghana's democratic dispensation is defined by the participation and activities of political parties. Indeed, the formation of, and association with political parties is constitutionally guaranteed in Articles 21(3) and 55 of the 1992 Constitution, with their activities and operations also regulated by the Political Parties Act, 2000, (Act 547). Parties are regarded as key stakeholders and partners in the implementation of the directive principles of state policy (Constitution, 1992: Art 34(1)).

Political parties heavily contest general elections in Ghana. Since 1992, all five (5) Presidents of the Republic have been elected on the tickets of political parties. Similarly, over 95% of parliamentarians are also elected on party tickets. With parties

oiling the wheels of democracy in Ghana and having massive support, Stoecker's (2021) investigation into partisanship in young democracies, using Ghana as a case study, revealed that Ghanaians exhibited strong and stable patterns of partisanship. Probing further, he found that the political changes in 2008 and 2016 caused partisan motivated reasoning, indicating profound partisan divide. According to him, while this may depict signs of a matured democracy, the polarization effect is likely to hinder smooth operation of government in the face of mounting opposition.

The wider adverse effect of political polarization in a young democracy caused Osae-Kwapong (2023) to label his observation of a declining partisanship, from 67 percent in the 1999 Afrobarometer survey to 48 percent in the 2022 survey (2022), as an 'asset' on Ghana's democracy balance sheet. The thesis of his position is that partisans' perceptions and attitudes towards governance change when their party of affiliation is or not in power. It is mostly negative when they are in opposition, and positive when they are the incumbent (Stoecker, 2021; Osae-Kwapong, 2023). The partisan divide present in Ghana does not only dabble around perceptions and attitudes towards governance. In fact, Fridy (2006) in disaggregating partisanship in Ghana found out that partisanship also cleaved along rural and urban demography.

Nevertheless, is it not the nature of people to be partisan? National emergencies and tragedies may bring both sides of the political divide together, but this union is always shortlived and soon the line begins to resurface. As Geer (2000) recounted, the tragic event of 9/11 attacks on the US did for a brief moment bring partisans together, especially Democrats to rally behind a Republican president. Likewise, in Ghana, the sudden demise of Late President Mills brought the nation together in July 2012. However, soon after the elections in December 2012, the two major parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) were battling out against each other in a long-drawn election petition in the Supreme Court.

Political parties are seen as essential institutions in the administration of modern democracy (Prempeh & Asare, 2017). Although, Stoecker (2021) notes that the presence of strong partisan identities can be seen as a sign of a maturing democracy, the high partisanship and partisan attitudes toward democratic values constitute alarming double standards that could harm Ghana's efforts to consolidate democracy, notwithstanding. As party affiliations seem to drop, does it offer hope of a less polarised political atmosphere in Ghana? This requires a contemplative disposition on the essence of parties and partisanship in the political development of young democracies like Ghana.

This research work on the assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana is conceived on the assertion by Osae-Kwapong (2023) that the decline of party attachment among citizens, per the Afrobarometer survey (2022), is an asset on Ghana's democracy balance sheet as it has the potential of making the national debate impassionate, more hygienic, and oriented towards development. In the light of rising misgivings about the role of partisanship in Ghana's democracy giving it polarising tendencies, this research work is opportune to conceive a critical analysis of the often-overlooked themes in the assessment of partisanship vis-à-vis democracy and democratic norms in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The stability of Ghana's young democracy depends not only on competitive elections, but on a broader constellation of democratic norms: political participation (active engagement in party affairs and public reasoning), civic participation and demand for accountability (from protests to petitions and public critiques), electoral participation and voter behaviour (turnout, swing voting, and acceptance of results), and institutional

trust (confidence that courts will adjudicate election petitions impartially, and that the Electoral Commission will conduct free and fair polls).

Yet existing Ghanaian scholarship has examined these elements in isolation. Fridy's (2006) work on ethnicity and party choice illuminates how Asante and Ewe identities shape loyalties, but stops short of linking ethnicised partisanship to trust in institutions or to swing-voting patterns. Asunka (2016) demonstrates that "unattached" voters demand greater procedural accountability in local government audits, but fails to define who qualifies as "unattached" or to explore whether these independents differ from opposition partisans in their electoral behaviour or civic activism. Stoecker (2021) documents growing polarisation and its potential to obstruct governance, yet does not trace how partisan divides translate into declining turnout, weakened acceptance of election outcomes, or mistrust of the courts and the Electoral Commission.

Equally, normative defenses of partisanship (Prempeh & Asare, 2017; Rosenblum, 2008) celebrate parties as engines of public reasoning and moral obligation, but remain abstract and untested in the Ghanaian context. Key concepts—partisanship (a strong affective or programmatic attachment to a political party), independents (voters without firm party allegiance), swing voting (shifting one's vote between elections), election petitions (legal challenges heard by the High Court or Supreme Court), and institutional trust (belief in impartial and competent public agencies)—have yet to be consistently defined and operationalized across studies.

Not much has been done to develop a coherent framework that measures how party attachment amplifies or undermines each of these democratic norms. We lack systematic, quantitative evidence on whether partisanship drives higher political and civic participation, whether it cements vote loyalty or fuels swing voting, whether it

erodes or bolsters acceptance of electoral outcomes, and whether it sustains or weakens trust in the courts and the Electoral Commission.

This study fills that gap. It operationalizes "appreciation of partisanship" through attitudinal and behavioural indicators—ranging from engagement in party-based decision making and civic accountability actions to swing voting intentions, outcome acceptance, and confidence in election-related institutions. By integrating these measures into a unified, Ghana-specific empirical assessment, the research reveals how partisanship simultaneously enriches and strains the democratic norms that underpin Ghana's political stability.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overarching objective of this research work is to provide a critical assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. In the pursuit of this broader objective, the specific objectives of this research work are to:

1. Evaluate the influence of partisanship on political decision making and engagement.
2. Examine the relationship between partisanship and civic participation.
3. Understand the role of partisanship in institutional trust and violence.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research work is important because it will add to knowledge on partisanship through an investigation of its effects on Ghana's democracy and democratic norms. This research work seeks to provide empirical evidence on what parties and partisanship is good for in Ghana's democracy. Additionally, it seeks to ascertain the contribution of both partisans and independents in strengthening democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. Lastly, this study will seek to understand the polarization

effect of partisan banter on government operations in Ghana, as a multiparty democracy.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will have both theoretical and practical implications for the future studies on partisanship and democracy. Theoretically, the study is expected to contribute to the advancement of knowledge assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. Practically, the study will further provide stakeholders in Ghana's multiparty democracy—the government, political parties and their candidates and supporters, civil society and advocates and deliberative democracy, and voters and electorates—additional data for contextual analysis and inputs for democratic sustainability.

In terms of academics, the literature from this study will serve as the basis for future studies for researchers and also a reference point for students interested in the study of multiparty democracy and democratic sustainability. Thus, findings and recommendations of this study may inspire other studies on partisanship, democracy and democratic norms in Ghana.

1.5 General Layout of the Study

The study is organised in six chapters. Chapter One provides the background to the research work, the statement of the research problem, research objectives and questions as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter Two presents a conceptual review of related literature. It defines and discusses the situation of parties and partisanship in democracy with keen focus on the themes per the objectives in this research work. Subsequently it discusses the theoretical framework that underpins this research, that is, Agonistic Theory of Democracy. It also explores the propositions and criticisms of the theory, contemporary concerns of bridging the gap and the deployment of the theory to develop the hypotheses.

Chapter Three discusses the research methodology of the study. This comprises the researcher's philosophical worldview, that is, positivism. The chapter also discusses the research design (survey research design), sampling (simplified random sampling) and sampling size, data collection, and the procedures for analysis.

Chapter Four analyses the data collected and presents the findings. Chapter Five summarises the findings, concludes and discusses the implications of the findings for the theory and practice in the assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana and makes recommendations in light of the findings for democratic sustainability.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to the study. It discusses the concept of democracy in Ghana, democratic norms and consolidation. It further discusses key elements of democracy such parties, partisanship, and elections. Additionally, it discusses the antithesis of parties and partisanship and the appreciation of both. Lastly, it discusses the agonistic theory of democracy which underpins this study.

2.2 Democracy in Ghana

The roots of democracy in Ghana trace back to pre-colonial chieftaincy systems, where consensus-building and consultative councils underpinned political legitimacy. Under colonial rule, indirect governance by British administrators co-opted chiefs into colonial hierarchies, laying groundwork for representative institutions post-1945 (Asante, 1997). Upon independence in 1957, Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) championed mass participation but gradually consolidated power, curtailing opposition through statutory instruments (Oquaye, 1995). The CPP era thus exemplifies an early tension between populist mobilization and executive overreach.

Between 1966 and 1992, Ghana experienced a cycle of military coups interspersed with brief civilian rule. The National Liberation Council (1966–1969) and subsequent Progress Party administration reintroduced multiparty elections yet failed to consolidate institutional checks on the executive (Fridy, 2007). Rawlings' December 1981 coup led to the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which suspended the constitution and political parties, emphasizing "development first" over liberal politics (Boafo-Arthur, 2006). Scholars argue that the PNDC's technocratic governance

inadvertently preserved spaces for civil society mobilization, setting the stage for constitutional revival in 1992 (Whitfield, 2005).

The 1992 Constitution inaugurated the Fourth Republic, embedding separation of powers, an independent Electoral Commission, and entrenched fundamental rights (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Since then, Ghana has held seven peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections, with alternation of power between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP). Electoral turnover in 2000 marked the first democratic handover, a milestone analysed as evidence of consolidation (Ninsin, 2011). Yet, institutional critiques highlight persistent gaps in judicial independence and partisan appointment of commissioners, which can undermine perceived neutrality (Musah & Sam, 2010).

A vibrant civil society and free media sector have emerged as bulwarks against authoritarian relapse. Non-governmental organizations such as the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition and the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development foster accountability through monitoring, voter education, and legislative advocacy (Oduro, et al., 2012). Meanwhile, private radio and online platforms have expanded public deliberation, though ownership concentration and occasional regulatory pressures pose risks to pluralism (Livingstone & Louw, 2019). These actors collectively contribute to democratic deepening by amplifying marginalized voices and exposing governance failures.

Despite institutional advances, democracy in Ghana contends with entrenched clientelism, regional voting patterns, and occasional electoral disputes. Party elites deploy patronage networks that reward loyalists with state resources, weakening programmatic competition (Lindberg, 2010). Electoral outcomes still map onto ethnic and regional cleavages—for instance, the Ashanti region's strong NPP support versus

the Volta's NDC leanings—raising questions about the truly issue-based nature of campaigns (Boone, 2011). Although the Electoral Commission has improved logistical efficiency, allegations of irregularities and selective enforcement of campaign finance rules persist, necessitating further reform.

2.2.1 Democratic Norms and Consolidation in Ghana

Ghana's democratic trajectory since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992 has been widely hailed as one of Africa's most resilient. Scholars emphasize institutional reforms, peaceful transitions of power, and an active civil society as hallmarks of democratic consolidation (Asante & Asare, 2016). However, a deeper interrogation of democratic norms—such as citizen engagement, adherence to constitutional procedures, and the role of political parties—reveals a more layered journey, marked by both commendable progress and persistent fragilities.

Media convergence has emerged as a significant driver of democratic engagement in Ghana. Fosu and Akpojivi (2014) argue that the fusion of traditional and digital media platforms has broadened spaces for citizen participation, empowering Ghanaians to demand accountability and transparency. Yet, this media-enabled democratization is challenged by the spread of misinformation and propaganda, especially during election cycles. Kwode (2022) illustrates how fake news fuelled by economic and partisan incentives undermines informed decision-making and weakens democratic discourse, thereby threatening the normative foundation of a participatory democracy.

Ghana's 2012 election petition represents a landmark moment in constitutional democratic consolidation. The Supreme Court's adjudication of the dispute—endorsed by all parties despite partisan tensions—signalled a strengthening of judicial institutions and democratic culture (Asante & Asare, 2016). Still, the ability of political parties to uphold such norms consistently remains questionable. While parties play an essential

role in mobilization and competition, their deep-rooted partisanship often skews public debate and hinders collaborative policymaking. This tension between party interests and national democratic norms complicates the consolidation journey.

The influence of democratic literacy also plays a critical role in sustaining democratic norms. Kodah (2020) identifies widespread "democratic illiteracy"—a limited understanding among citizens about their rights, institutional functions, and civic responsibilities—as a major barrier to deepening democratic culture. When political engagement is driven more by allegiance than informed choice, partisanship becomes a corrosive force. This highlights the need for continuous civic education that builds democratic consciousness beyond party narratives.

Finally, democratic consolidation in Ghana appears resilient in the face of latent ethnic and communal tensions. Musah (2021) credits institutional mechanisms such as the Electoral Commission and decentralized conflict-resolution platforms for ensuring that these tensions do not escalate into national crises. The consolidation of democracy, in this sense, is not only about elections but about embedding norms of tolerance and peaceful contestation across diverse communities. However, Musah (2021) argues that political parties have not always been proactive in promoting these norms, and their silence or selective interventions in conflict-prone areas have raised questions about their commitment to inclusivity.

2.3 Parties and Partisanship

Political parties, well organised groups of people with the sole of aim of capturing political power through elections in order to control state resources and implement their policies, are a subject of intrigue. Particularly, with their partisans who are citizens with affinity towards the parties (Lupu, 2014). Muirhead & Rosenblum (2012) highlight the pivotal role of political parties in democratic societies. They argue that these entities

serve as conduits of information, catalysts for mobilization, and platforms for organized participation. Furthermore, they underscore the concept of "the partisan connection," which encapsulates the crucial link that parties establish between the government and its citizens.

According to Efthymiou (2017), in the research of political behaviour, partisanship is a concept that is extensively defined and applied. Mainly, he expressed that the value of partisanship lies in its ability to foster political dedication and competition (Efthymiou, 2018).

White and Ypi (2016) propose that partisanship extends beyond mere organizational elements of a political party. They offer a unique perspective on the essence of being a partisan, exploring the concepts, attitudes, responsibilities, and behaviours that define partisanship. On the essence of being a partisan, White and Ypi (2016) posit that partisanship, in its own right and not merely as a catalyst for involvement, is considered a civic virtue (in Muirhead and Rosenblum, 2020). It is this that Muirhead and Rosenblum extrapolate that "to be a good citizen, one needs to be a partisan" (p. 104), in that it embodies a dedication to diversity—it acknowledges the validity of differing views, adheres to the guidelines of controlled competition, and accepts the biased nature of partisan assertions. Similarly, Bader and Bonotti (2014) assert that Bonotti (2012) defended the idea that partisanship generates special political obligations. According to Bonotti (2012), citizens who participate in party politics (e.g., qua candidates, members, supporters, activists, etc.) enjoy certain benefits that are not enjoyed by non-partisans. This places them under a special moral duty to comply with the laws of their political community. This duty, Bonotti (2012) claims, is grounded in the fair play theory of political obligation and is more easily justifiable in the case of partisans as opposed to ordinary citizens.

In their assertion, Muirhead and Rosenblum (2020) delve into the intricate relationship between political parties and partisanship, painting a picture of mutual dependence and reciprocity. They posit that these two entities are so deeply intertwined that they cannot exist independently, suggesting an inherent connection that is crucial for the functioning of democratic political systems. They argue that partisans, individuals with a strong commitment to a particular political party, are indispensable in realizing the value of parties. Without partisans, political parties would lack the support base necessary to drive their agendas and achieve their goals. It is through the loyalty and active participation of partisans that political parties thrive and are able to make their mark on the political landscape.

Conversely, Muirhead and Rosenblum (2020) also contend that parties are necessary to realize the value of partisanship. Without a party to support, the concept of partisanship loses its meaning. Parties provide a platform for partisans to express their political beliefs and engage in the political process, thereby giving substance to the notion of partisanship.

In essence, this assertion underscores the symbiotic relationship between political parties and partisanship. Each gives meaning and value to the other, creating a dynamic and reciprocal relationship that is integral to the functioning of democratic political systems. This interplay between parties and partisanship is not only fascinating but also crucial for understanding the complexities of political dynamics. It is through such insights that we can begin to fully grasp the intricacies of political engagement and the role it plays in shaping our societies. This is the foremost objective (RO1) that the study seeks to achieve.

2.3.1 Parties, Partisanship and Democracy

In both political science and normative political theory, the question of the relevance of political parties has been the subject of normative inquiry (Rosenblum, 2008; Dawood, 2013; Bader & Bonotti, 2014; Efthymiou, 2017) with mounting thesis on the value and relevance of parties and partisanship in democracy.

Parties as agents of public reason play a crucial role in contributing to political justification and democratic governance (Muirhead & Rosenblum, 2020). They serve as platforms for articulating the interests and values of the public, representing diverse viewpoints, and engaging in reasoned debate and discourse. By connecting citizens to the political process, parties facilitate the exchange of ideas, promote transparency, and help shape public policy through deliberative processes. This role highlights the importance of parties in fostering a democratic culture that values open dialogue, accountability, and the pursuit of common good through rational argumentation and public engagement.

Partisanship influences public policy in a democracy by shaping policy choices, priorities, and implementations based on party ideologies, power dynamics, and the institutional context in which decisions are made (Schmidt, 1996). In exploring how partisanship influence policy diffusion, recent study by Butler and Pereira (2018) asserts that the role of partisanship in policy diffusion can be due to its use as an informational shortcut or simply due to imitation of co-partisans. According to them officials are more likely to consider policies endorsed by co-partisans.

Efthymiou (2018) discusses the role of political parties in democracy and justice, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and contestation. He argues that political commitment leads to contestation among partisans and non-partisans, which is beneficial for democratic societies, and that “a world containing no contestation of

political commitments would be worse than one in which there is such contestation" (p.193). He defends the idea that partisanship can have moral content and contribute to a civic ethos of political commitment, and urges that partisanship should be based on civic commitment rather than mere party fidelity, suggesting that commitment leads to healthy political contestation among citizens.

Dawood (2013) examines the challenges that partisanship—characterized by loyalty to a political party—poses to democratic principles, such as political polarization and extremism. He explores the idea that partisanship has overlooked virtues and is indispensable for democratic functioning, inviting a reconsideration of traditional views on partisanship. His study raises the question of when and under what conditions partisanship should play a role in democratic politics, given the expectation that the state should act impartially and not as a partisan entity.

More critically, Dawood (2013) differentiates between primary level partisanship, which is concerned with the choice of public policies and representatives, and secondary level partisanship, which deals with the establishment of regulations for the selection of policies and officials and suggests that while the primary level partisanship could be justifiably present in a democratic system, the secondary level partisanship could pose more challenges. These challenges include electoral redistricting, political polarisation, compromising the impartiality of the state, and legislation and decision-making based on partisan influences.

2.3.2 Partisanship and Elections

Rau (2022) explores the relationship between partisanship and voter turnout, questioning whether voting fosters partisanship or if partisanship encourages voting. He introduces the concept of "partisan duty—the sense of duty or obligation to do one's part to contribute to a partisan group's success" (p.1029) to understand how partisan

social identities influence the decision to vote, suggesting that partisanship mobilizes voters through expressive benefits and a sense of duty. Employing regression discontinuity test, to establish causality between partisanship and voting, he finds that partisanship mobilizes voters rather than voting creating partisanship.

Lupu (2014) also investigates the emergence of mass partisanship in developing democracies, particularly in Latin America, despite initial scepticism, and examines similarities between those in advanced democracies and the influences on political behaviour and political participation. Lupu's major findings suggest that first, Latin American partisans share similarities with those in advanced democracies, being more experienced, informed, attentive, and engaged in civic life; and second, partisanship significantly influences vote choices and political participation, similar to patterns observed in advanced democracies.

From the angle of electoral accountability, Jung (2022) suggests that partisanship generally weakens electoral accountability, with voters often biased by their party affiliation rather than government performance. Jung's study compared individual-level and aggregate-level effects across Western and post-communist regions, and found that partisanship's negative impact is more pronounced among post-communist voters, and that partisanship moderates the economy-vote linkage more in Western democracies than in post-communist ones in the sense that increases in partisanship lead to declines in the marginal effect of GDP growth on electoral results, with sharper slopes for Western countries. This posits that partisanship overrides the economy debate in determining the outcome of an election.

Furthermore, Dalton (2017) suggests that partisanship acts as a cognitive framework through which voters view politics, affecting their issue perceptions and resistance to change even in the face of significant political shifts. Additionally, partisanship can

lead to motivated reasoning, where voters selectively retrieve information to confirm their biases, rather than neutrally collecting and judging information. Strong party identification is shown to result in consistent voting patterns, with partisans often voting for their party regardless of the candidates or policies. In line with this, the study sets out to examine the relationship between participation and civic participation, as stated in the second objective (RO2) of this study.

2.4 Antithesis of Parties and Partisanship

Rosenblum (2008) discusses extensively the antithesis of parties and partisanship, providing comprehensive analysis of the traditions of antipartyism. She identifies the main lines of antipartyism—the two glorious traditions of holism, and fatal divisiveness. Concisely, holism sees parties as a threat to the unity and wholeness of the political community while the tradition of fatal divisiveness sees parties as inherently divisive and destructive to the social fabric.

Rosenblum (2008) points out that holist antipartyism, a concept championed by philosophers such as Hobbes and Rousseau, perceives all social and political entities as potential dangers to the cohesion and stability of the political system. This perspective regards all factions as morally corrupt and politically destructive.

Holist antipartyism harbours a unique disdain for political parties, which are considered the "most aesthetically displeasing, morally reprehensible, and politically unacceptable" (p. 25) due to their inherent divisiveness and oppositional nature. This tradition sheds light on elements of modern and contemporary politics that contradict the principles of pluralist democracy. Essentially, holist antipartyism embodies a school of thought that views the partisan nature and multiplicity of political parties as threats to the unity and integrity of the political community.

Disch (2009) in a review symposium states that Rosenblum identifies traces of holism in the advocacy for "parties of virtue" and in "one-partyism". She contends that majoritarianism exhibits "shadow holism" whenever the reality of having secured a majority is accompanied by the belief that one has also obtained a "morally compelling claim to speak for the great body of the people" (pp. 37, 55). The count of fatal divisiveness appreciates social cleavages but condemns parties for exploiting and deepening such cleavages to their advantage by creating “petty conflicts” (Disch, 2009, p. 621).

Barber and Davies (2022) studied whether partisanship affects willingness to sacrifice members of the other party in a variant of the trolley problem—a sequence of theoretical scenarios in the realm of ethics and moral philosophy that pose a predicament requiring a decision to sacrifice a single individual in order to rescue a greater number. Utilising a nationally representative survey in the US they asked participants about sacrificing individuals based on political affiliation to save others. The results indicated a reluctance to sacrifice a co-partisan for out-partisans, suggesting affective polarization extends to moral judgments. The implications of these findings raise questions about normative ideals in democratic theory, such as civic friendship and shared citizenship.

2.5 Appreciation of Parties and Partisanship

Deliberative democracy hushes parties and partisanship (Guerrero, 2010; Montanaro 2012). Parties and partisanship are “at risk” (Muirhead & Rosenblum, 2020, p.96) although they used to be the main tools for bringing together the beneficial aspects of democracy (Runciman, 2018).

Deliberative democracy, as defined by Bachtiger, et al. (2018), is essentially a form of mutual communication where preferences, values, and interests are weighed and

reflected upon in relation to matters of shared interest. This definition underscores the significance of dialogue and thoughtfulness in democratic procedures. It also stipulates that deliberation should occur in environments where there is equal acknowledgement, respect, reciprocity, and adequate balance of power for effective communication.

It highlights the significance of just and rational discourse among the populace. Deliberative democracy is characterized as any democratic practice that places a high value on deliberation. It moves the focus from the result of the decision (as seen in conventional democracy) to the integrity of the process. It proposes that political choices should be the result of collective communication that includes considering and reflecting on preferences, values, and interests related to issues of mutual interest.

On the hand, in her appreciation of parties and partisanship, Rosenblum (2008) holds the view that, in the midst of constant criticism and rejection of parties and partisanship, and the tendency to either overlook their benefits or completely ignore them, we often fail to recognize the significant contributions of parties and partisanship. According to Disch (2009), Rosenblum's (2008) posits two core arguments, first for the "creativity of party politics," and second for the "moral distinctiveness of partisanship" (p. 7).

On the creativity of party politics, she asserts that, "Parties create, not just reflect, political interests and opinions. They formulate 'issues' and give them political relevance. Party antagonism 'stages the battle'; parties create a system of conflict and draw the lines of division." (p. 7). Again, she stipulates on the moral distinctiveness of partisanship that, "…at the level of the polity, partisanship fuels collective discussion of men and measures; partisans are the agents of "trial by discussion. Partisanship is the only political identity—of representative democracy—that does not see pluralism and political conflict as a bow to necessity, a pragmatic recognition of the inevitability of disagreement. It demands severe self-discipline to acknowledge that my party's

status is just one part in a permanently pluralist politics, and hence the provisional nature of being the governing party and the charade of pretending to represent the whole." (p. 7).

2.6 The Decline of Partisanship

In his discussion on the significant increase in the impact of partisan loyalties on voting behaviour in American national elections since 1952, with a notable rise in the last six presidential elections up to 1996, Bartels (2000) challenges the conventional wisdom of the 'decline of parties' in American politics, showing that partisan loyalties have rebounded since the mid-1970s, especially among actual voters. Using probit analyses to measure partisan voting, which takes into account changes in the distribution of partisanship and its electoral relevance, Bartels finds a resurgence of partisanship in recent years—an indication that partisanship has become more influential over time, both at the presidential and congressional levels, contrary to the belief that party identification is becoming less relevant.

McDonald and Popkin (2001) also challenged the widely held belief that voter participation in American national elections had been declining since 1972. They contended that the perceived decrease in voter turnout is a misconception, resulting from the use of the Census Bureau's estimate of the voting-age population as the denominator in calculating the turnout rate. They developed a more precise estimate of the eligible voting population from 1948 to 2000, using official statistical data to account for groups that were ineligible but included, such as noncitizens and felons, and groups that were eligible but excluded, like citizens living abroad. Their study revealed that it was the population ineligible to vote, rather than the nonvoting population, that had been growing since 1972. Their research offered a new viewpoint

on the issue of voter participation, implying that the problem might not be as critical as commonly depicted.

Albright (2009) reviewed the cognitive mobilization (CM) thesis, which explains partisan dealignment in democracies. He investigated whether increased political knowledge and media access leads to weaker party attachments. His analysis showed that greater political knowledge and media exposure actually increase the likelihood of party attachments.

Afrobarometer (2022) recorded for the first since its inception in 1999, a drop in partisanship in Ghana below fifty percent. This, according to Osae-Kwapong (2023) is an asset on Ghana's democracy balance sheet as it provides a key foundation upon which democratic consolidation can be achieved. This is because it is supposed that partisanship may also lead to polarization that hinders effective governance (Stoecker, 2021). Although the drop is significant, it is however not the first-time partisan affiliations have dropped in the Afrobarometer survey. Analysing strategic responses, Stoecker (2021) further suggests that respondents may hide their true party affiliation, especially when their party is in opposition.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This section of the chapter is dedicated the probing further into the theoretical foundation of the research work. This research work adopts the Agonistic Theory of Democracy (ADT) to effectively dive into the assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms. The ATD is relevant to study as it underpins the explanation of the goodness and badness effects of contestation on democratic norms. The proposition and criticisms of the theory are, thus, discussed.

2.7.1 Agonistic Theory of Democracy

Deligiaouri and Suiter (2019, p. 72) posit that, while theory of democracy and democratic theory are often used synonymously, they have a fundamental semantic distinction. The phrase “theory of democracy” refers to a theory concerning and derived from democracy, as the idea of democracy is supported by its core principles. The term “democratic” is essentially a derivative of the noun “democracy”. Therefore, its usage should be evaluated based on the speaker’s understanding of democracy, implying an assessment process.

For Dean et al., (2019) the question of what democratic theory is, is a question rarely asked and that the last instance of this exact question being raised in academic literature was four and half decades ago in Pennock (1979). They go on to say that providing an answer to this question proves to be more challenging than asking it, and in fact, Pennock (1979) did not provide an answer himself, instead, he deferred this task to future political theorists. According to them, it might be that the only consensus among democratic theorists is that democratic theory is characterized by its diversity and even its somewhat formless nature. Indeed, attempting to provide a unified interpretation of democratic theory with a singular focus and objective could potentially undermine the rich diversity inherent in such a complex field (Paxton, 2019).

This is why Deligiaouri and Suiter (2019) agreed that since a unified theory of democracy is not feasible, it is however plausible to delineate the standards and principles that should guide the dialogue of democracy, notwithstanding its variety and semantic diversity, while permitting its growth, enhancement, or further evolution. They refer to this as constituting the “democratic minimum,” citing Bohman (2005, p. 295). The goal of establishing the "democratic minimum" is twofold: first, to define the realm of political theory where the theory of democracy progresses, and second, to

protect democracy from potential misunderstandings, misconceptions, and abuses (Deligiaouri and Suiter, 2019).

2.7.2 Propositions of Agonistic Theory of Democracy

In her insightful exploration of democratic theory, Paxton (2019) poses a compelling question: where does the value of this theory lie? Her work serves as a bridge between the theoretical and practical aspects of democracy, with a particular focus on agonistic democracy. This form of democracy, which views conflict as both inevitable and potentially beneficial, aims to critique current democratic systems, i.e., deliberative democracy.

Paxton (2019) presents democratic theory as a broad field with multitude perspectives. As highlighted by Gagnon (2018) and cited by Dean et al., (2019), there are over 2,200 adjectival descriptors of democracy. These range from representative democracy, which contrasts with direct democracy, to participatory democracy, which stands in opposition to elite democracy. The spectrum also includes agonist democracy and deliberative democracy.

Among these various forms, Paxton (2019) argues that an agonistic approach is particularly effective in addressing pressing political issues. These include conflict resolution and enhancing democratic participation in diverse societies. Paxton's review includes an examination of the works of notable agonists such as Tully (1995), Owen (1995), Mouffe (2000), and Connolly (2005).

In Paxton's (2019) review, he discusses Connolly's (2005) assertion that the current state of democracy is marked by a lack of engagement among citizens with opposing views. This absence of conflict, rather than fostering harmony, can exacerbate tensions as it prevents individuals from addressing their deep-seated resentments towards each

other. Tully (1995) suggests that more direct interaction between these citizens could alleviate feelings of marginalisation and domination.

Paxton (2019) also examines Mouffe's (2000) critique, which posits that the absence of conflict does not provide citizens with sufficient opportunities to express their differences. This leads to political apathy, stemming from the depoliticisation of liberal democracy and an overemphasis on consensus. Rather than resulting in a society free of conflict, this situation encourages citizens to seek alternative collective identities, such as those based on ethnicity, religion, or nationalism. This can lead to extremism or confrontations between non-negotiable moral values and essentialist identities.

Mouffe's (2000) argument highlights the potential negative consequences of a lack of conflict, including democratic apathy and even fundamentalism. In her 2013 work on agonistics, a philosophy advocating for a radical and plural democracy, Mouffe argues that political conflict is not only inevitable in our society, but its outcomes can often be positive rather than negative.

According to Paxton's (2019) interpretation of Owen's (1995) perspective on agonistic democracy, the avoidance of conflict can impede the growth of personal and societal virtues. The concept of liberal toleration is seen as defective because it doesn't necessitate direct engagement with differing viewpoints. Such engagement is crucial for challenging our own beliefs against the standards of honesty and justice, thereby fostering and demonstrating virtue and integrity. Owen posits that our values are collectively formed by our community, and thus, a lack of conflict results in a deficiency of virtues.

In their in-depth analysis of agonistic democratic theory, theorists such as Deveaux, Kalyvas, and Wingenbach have made significant contributions. Deveaux (1999) examined the proposition that an agonistic model of democracy could better

accommodate citizens' social, cultural, and ethical differences than mainstream liberal theories. Deveaux (1999) argued that while agonistic democracy usefully highlights the importance of moral and political disagreement, the claim that it could more effectively include culturally diverse citizens is unfounded. However, she noted that recent liberal interpretations of agonistic democracy, which view legal and political institutions as tools for recognizing and mediating citizens' moral and cultural differences, could suggest ways to enhance our democratic practices in plural societies.

Kalyvas (2009) proposed a fresh perspective on politics and a unique vision of democracy. He delved into theories of democratic agonism, which prioritize plurality, contestation, and antagonism over the prevailing emphasis in contemporary political thought on rational deliberation, procedural neutrality, and public consensus. In his view, politics, defined agonistically, is a dynamic field of power relations, animated by disputes and struggles that shape identities, create exclusion zones, and establish new norms and practices of inclusion.

Wingenbach (2011) offered a clear overview of agonistic democratic theories and demonstrated the feasibility of this approach for institutional politics. He positioned agonistic democracy in relation to debates about radical democracy, foundationalism, liberal democracy, and pluralism. He suggested that a modified version of Rawlsian political liberalism outlines the institutional conditions most conducive to sustaining agonistic political practices. Once stripped of metaphysical commitments and separated from consensus aspirations, political liberalism provides a contingent and historically viable framework within which agonistic contestation can take place.

2.7.3 Weaknesses or criticisms of Agonistic Theory of Democracy

Critics contend that agonistic pluralism often underestimates the true complexity of conflict dynamics. In particular, the theory's focus on transforming antagonism into

agonism tends to gloss over critical dimensions such as intergroup cohesion, intragroup dissent, patterns of domination and subordination, and the potential for conflict escalation. By simplifying how conflicts emerge and evolve, agonistic theory may struggle to offer robust strategies for managing or containing deeply rooted antagonisms in plural societies (August, 2024). Moreover, this narrow framing can obscure the myriad ways in which power relations shape and intensify political disagreements, weakening the theory's capacity to address entrenched, systemic struggles.

Beyond its analytical scope, agonistic democracy has been critiqued for an institutional deficit: theorists have not sufficiently specified which institutional designs or procedures would best foster genuine agonism rather than reproduce existing hierarchies (Westphal, 2018). Without detailed proposals for organizing parliaments, courts, or civil fora to channel conflict constructively, the theory risks remaining an abstract ideal. Compounding this gap, some accuse agonistic pluralists of adopting a "fixed" critique—one that confines all novelty and renewal to the boundaries of contemporary liberal democracy. Such rigidity suggests that any meaningful transformation must occur within pre–given institutional constraints, undercutting the possibility of more radical reimaginations of political life (Glover, 2014). Coupled with an aversion to any form of determination or conditioning—an approach meant to safeguard emancipation from predetermined frameworks—the theory can inadvertently subordinate its emancipatory ambitions to the very structures it aims to transcend.

Finally, agonistic democracy is sometimes faulted for its relentless critique of present democratic practices, particularly deliberative ones, without offering practicable blueprints for change. By emphasizing normative ideals of contestation and pluralism, agonistic theorists risk painting a utopian picture that practitioners find difficult to

realize (Paxton, 2019). In turn, the theory's appeal may remain largely academic, distancing itself from the everyday institutional challenges faced by political actors. This overemphasis on critique at the expense of actionable guidance can limit agonism's traction in real–world reform efforts, leaving its transformative promise unfulfilled.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed relevant literature on the concept of democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. It highlights the precarious state of partisanship in young democracies like Ghana yet draws on both defence and criticisms of partisanship to discuss where partisanship gives meaning to democracies. It discusses the agonistic theory of democracy which precludes that conflict arising out partisanship help in the creativity of partisanship and its moral distinctiveness.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach adopted for this study. It first discusses research methods and philosophical world view. Since this study is quantitative, it discusses the quantitative paradigm of positivism and its justification and importance to the study. Additionally, it discusses the survey design used, it the data collection including the instrument and analysis of the date. Included in this chapter, is a justification of the sampling technique selected and the sample size used for the data collection. Lastly, it discusses the framework for the data analysis and delves into the ethical considerations of this study.

3.2 Research Method

Greg et al., (2001) present research as a unique exploration embarked upon to broaden our knowledge and comprehension. This concept is further elaborated by Chege and Otieno (2020), who articulate that the methodologies of research are the blueprints of study design and the techniques for data scrutiny. The act of conducting research, as Graziano et al., (2012) puts it, is a methodical and structured endeavour to probe into a particular issue that necessitates a solution or response. It involves a thought process to generate or acquire knowledge. The researcher, in this context, needs to be equipped with certain competencies and capabilities that aid in meticulously defining the problem, pinpointing the crucial variables, procuring pertinent information, and subjecting the proposed resolution to stringent examination.

Chege and Otieno (2020) further describe the scientific method as a four-step iterative process that a researcher undertakes while seeking a solution to a scientific problem. These steps encompass observing a phenomenon, formulating provisional explanations

or cause-and-effect statements, observing or experimenting to eliminate alternative explanations, and refining and retesting the explanations. This comprehensive approach ensures the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Novikov and Novikov (2013) present a compelling argument that the methodology, viewed as the theoretical framework of any activity, is inherently grounded in scientific knowledge. They assert that any researcher engaged in scientific pursuits must possess a lucid and conscious understanding of science, its organizational structure, the principles governing its evolution, and the architecture of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, they argue that a researcher must comprehend the criteria for scientific knowledge, which is the new knowledge expected to be derived from investigations. They must also understand the forms of scientific knowledge that will be utilized to articulate the results of these investigations.

Novikov and Novikov (2013) view the methodology of scientific research as an offshoot of epistemology, the philosophical theory of scientific cognition. Epistemology, in its broadest sense, explores the laws and capabilities of cognition. It scrutinizes the stages, forms, methods, and tools of the cognition process, as well as the conditions and criteria for the validity of scientific knowledge. According to them, the general methodology of science, as the theoretical framework for organizing scientific activity, is seen as a branch of epistemology that concentrates on the process of scientific activity (its organization). To identify a researcher's activity, it is sufficient to specify the subject of their research and the methods they employ. Essentially, Novikov and Novikov (2013) provide a comprehensive and thought-provoking exploration of the intricate relationship between methodology, scientific knowledge, and epistemology.

In their work, Zukaukas et al. (2018) present a comprehensive exploration of the paradigm of scientific research, which they argue is composed of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. They delve into the intricate relationship between these components and how they collectively shape the landscape of scientific inquiry. Drawing on the insights of Holden and Lynch (2004), Zukaukas et al., (2018) underscore the importance of aligning methodological choices with the researcher's philosophical stance and the social science phenomenon under scrutiny. They argue that this alignment is not merely a procedural necessity but a fundamental aspect of conducting meaningful and impactful research.

3.3 Philosophical World View

Zukaukas et al. (2018), citing Saunders et al. (2007), define research philosophy as the development of research assumptions, knowledge, and nature. They view assumptions as preliminary statements of reasoning, grounded in the knowledge and insights of the philosophizing individual, born out of intellectual activity. Furthermore, they describe scientific research philosophy as a method that enables scientists to transform ideas into knowledge within the context of research. They identify four main trends of research philosophy: positivist, interpretivist, pragmatist, and realistic, each offering unique perspectives and approaches to knowledge creation. This underscores the diversity of perspectives within the scientific community and the importance of philosophical underpinnings in shaping research goals (Chege and Otieno, 2020).

In their comprehensive exploration of research philosophy, Mbanaso et al (2023) present research as a systematic and logical journey towards the discovery of new knowledge and a deeper understanding across various disciplines. They emphasize the pivotal role of the philosophical worldview in shaping the research study, influencing

the selection of research methods, and guiding the interpretation of findings. They comment on the philosophies that:

Positivism asserts that only "factual" knowledge gained through observation (including measurement) is trustworthy. Positivists aim for objectivity, prefer working with an observable social reality, and the product of such research can be law-like generalisations similar to those produced by natural scientists.

Post-positivism, a critique and extension of positivism, recognizes that the way scientists think, and work is fundamentally laden with bias, which cannot be eliminated completely. Thus, it argues for multiple methods of inquiry instead of relying on a single method that could be biased.

Interpretivism, on the other hand, advocates for the necessity to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. This emphasizes understanding the subjective world of human experience.

Pragmatism, as the name suggests, puts the research question as central and applies all approaches available to understand the problem.

Uddin and Hamiduzzaman (2020) delving further into the realm of social science research, see the philosophies as a tool for understanding generalized meanings, and facilitating the sharing of experiences about the social world. They also highlight the diversity of perspectives that exist within this sphere as reflecting the rich tapestry of human experiences and perceptions. Chia (2002) underscores the primary role of the philosophies in establishing, regulating, and enhancing the methods of knowledge creation across all intellectual fields. He presents philosophical inquiry as a rigorous process where facts, theories, alternatives, and ideals are synthesized and evaluated to create knowledge.

3.3.1 Adoption of Positivism

For this research study, the researcher adopted the Positivist worldview. This philosophical worldview shapes the researcher's understanding of reality—ontology—and the nature of knowledge—epistemology—and the ways he can gain knowledge —methodology.

According to Chia (2002), the concept of 'positivism' was first introduced in the 19th century by the French social philosopher, Auguste Comte. He selected this term due to its advantageous implications. Comte envisioned the evolution of knowledge from a theological phase to a metaphysical one, and ultimately to a positivist stage. In this final stage, abstract principles and non-observable entities were dismissed, giving precedence to pure observation as the foundation of knowledge.

In the realm of positivism, the only genuine knowledge is that which is grounded in tangible sensory experience, thereby asserting a monopoly on knowledge within the scientific domain (Uddin and Hamidzzuman, (2020). According to them, within the framework of positivism, knowledge is derived solely from the validation of theories through rigorous scientific methods, eschewing metaphysical speculation. To the positivist, social science is an endeavour to acquire predictive and explanatory knowledge of the external world, and to achieve this, social scientists are tasked with formulating theories composed of broad statements that express regular relationships.

3.3.2 Criticisms of Positivism

Positivists' wholesale dismissal of metaphysics—viewed as speculation beyond any possible empirical validation—has drawn sharp rebuke (Feigl, 2024). By refusing to entertain questions about the ultimate nature of reality, positivism risks narrowing its own vision. Critics argue that even if metaphysical claims cannot be directly tested, they often underlie the conceptual frameworks scientists use to interpret data, and

excluding such reflection can leave unexamined assumptions lurking beneath the guise of pure objectivity (Feigl, 2024).

This antipathy toward the unobservable spills over into a rigid insistence on restricting research solely to experiential data. Fields that grapple with theoretical constructs—whether in the deeper reaches of quantum physics or the intangible realms of social norms—find themselves constrained by positivism's tunnel-vision focus (Feigl, 2024). When hypotheses that extend beyond immediate measurement are dismissed outright, the scope of inquiry shrinks and potentially fertile avenues of investigation are foreclosed before they even begin (Feigl, 2024).

Equally contentious is positivism's tendency to overlook subjective experience. In its quest for measurable, repeatable facts, the paradigm sidelines individual perceptions, emotions, and narratives—elements that are often indispensable in understanding human behaviour and social dynamics (Dudovskiy, n.d.). By marginalizing first-person accounts, positivism produces a one-dimensional portrait of society that risks misunderstanding the very people and cultures it seeks to explain (Dudovskiy, n.d.).

Together, these critiques underscore a fundamental tension at the heart of positivism: its rigorous demand for empirical certainty has undeniably propelled science forward, yet it has done so by carving away the speculative, the theoretical, and the experiential, stumbling when confronted with the rich complexity of human meaning and the deep, often unobservable structures that shape our world.

3.4 Research Approach

Zukaukas et al. (2018) posit that each researcher is steered by their unique approach to research, which can be quantitative, qualitative, or a blend of both—known as mixed methods. Novikov and Novikov (2013) further elaborate that a qualitative approach seeks to delve into the entirety of attributes, properties, and distinct features of a studied

phenomenon or process. This approach aims to ascertain its uniqueness, singularity, and affiliation to a certain class of similar phenomena or processes. Conversely, a quantitative approach strives to investigate the characteristics of various phenomena or processes by assessing the level or intensity of properties inherent to them, expressed in quantitative terms. The evaluation of the quantitative characteristics of subjects, phenomena, or processes commences from identifying their common properties, intrinsic to either homogeneous or heterogeneous phenomena or processes.

For this research study, the researcher chose the quantitative approach. As Crossan (2003) points out, positivism employs a unique quantitative approach towards examining phenomena. In instances of positivist research, quantitative methods are predominant (Mertens, 2014). Kleene (2006) asserts that the quantitative approach is deductive in nature. It engages with numerical data, concrete facts, and statistics, within a positivist's worldview that adheres to a hypothetico-deductive approach. Unlike the qualitative approach, which is inductive, it commences with a theory and the hypothesis is firmly established before the research begins (Chege and Otieno, 2020). Furthermore, Boncz (2015) suggests that quantitative research is predicated on the assumption that extensive quantitative data collection, systematic, regulated, and unified measurements, and numerical expression are vital tools in the process of information acquisition as the research questions can be answered based on that.

3.5 Research Design

The design of research is to obtain objective and comparable data. Depending on the approach, a researcher selects a design appropriate for the research. Coming from a positivist worldview with a quantitative approach to this research study, the researcher adopted the Survey research design. Chege and Otieno (2020) suggest that survey research design was presented by Hyman in 1964 (citing Guthrie, 2010) as research

model which was later improved by Graziano et al., (2010) who suggest that a survey research design should follow idea-generating, problem-definition, procedures-design, observation, analysis, interpretation, and communication.

According to Leavy (2017), surveys are a research tool that involves posing uniform questions to individuals. These questions are designed in a way that their responses can be statistically analysed. Surveys enable researchers to gather a wide range of data from a substantial sample size. This data can then be extrapolated to represent the larger population from which the sample was taken. Commonly, surveys are employed to understand people's attitudes, beliefs, viewpoints, or to document their experiences and actions.

3.6 Study Area

The Efutu Municipality, located in the Central Region of Ghana, is a fascinating area for research due to its unique geographical, socio-economic, and political characteristics. Covering a total land area of 95 square kilometres, the municipality is bordered by the Gomoa East District Assembly on its western, northern, and eastern sides, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south.

Politically, the Efutu Municipality holds significant importance. It is a microcosm of Ghana's broader political landscape, with active participation in electoral processes and civic engagement. The municipality's political dynamics offer a rich context for understanding the influence of partisanship on political behaviour and civic participation. The area's political significance is further underscored by its role in shaping local and national policies through active citizen involvement and demand for accountability and sub-regional policies through hosting the ECOWAS Parliament.

Winneba, the capital of the Efutu Municipality, is a centre for higher education, housing the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). The University attracts students from

across the country and beyond, contributing to the municipality's cultural diversity and intellectual vibrancy. The presence of UEW enhances the municipality's reputation as an educational hub, fostering academic research and providing opportunities for higher learning and research.

The Efutu Municipality's unique geographical features, socio-economic activities, political significance, and status as a centre for higher education make it an ideal study area for research on partisanship and its influence on political behaviour and civic participation. The diverse and dynamic nature of the municipality provides a rich context for understanding the complexities of partisanship in a specific locality.

3.7 Study Population

A population is a group of elements about which you might later make claims (Leavy, 2017). The study population—the group of elements from which the sample is drawn (Leavy, 2017)—for this research study was persons who are politically active. A politically active person is any person who is participates in politics and has an understanding of the political process. Arguably, the best possible way to determine this population is using the age of Universal Adult Suffrage in Ghana. This age is best captured by the Electoral Commission in its number of eligible voters. The figures available as at the time of this research was figures for the 2020 election.

According to the Electoral Commission data from the registration exercise, the total number of valid voters for the 2020 Elections stood at 17,027,641. This figure, rounded to the nearest whole number is 17,000,000.

3.8 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

According to Boncz (2015), sample selection is an important element of quantitative research because reliable results are to be obtained only by using a sample that

represents the population studied. Sampling is the process by which a number of individual cases is selected from a larger population while a sample is the number of individual cases that is ultimately drawn and from which/whom data is generated (Leavy, 2017).

The researcher employs the probability sampling which relies on probability theory and involves the use of any strategy in which samples are selected in a way that every element in the population has a known and nonzero chance of being selected (Leavy, 2017). The sample derived is useful for generalizing findings to a larger population. In this light, the Simple Random Sampling strategy in which every element in the study population has an equal chance of being selected is used.

In survey research, determining a sample size requires values such the study population size, a confidence level, and a marginal of error or confidence interval. Leavy (2017) describes confidence level which is expressed as a percentage as a value that tells how confident one can be in their results and a margin of error which is also expressed as a percentage as how much error one is willing to accept. A computational value of 95% and 5% respectively for confidence level and margin of error is accepted as standard practice. However, the population size for this research work makes it inconvenient to stick to a margin of error of 5%. As such, a 230-basis point increase is applied to arrive at an error margin of 7.3%, all the while maintaining a 95% confidence level.

For this research study, the researcher calculated the sample size for a finite population using the formula:

$$n = \frac{N \bullet z^2 \bullet p \bullet (1-p)}{e^2 \bullet (N-1) + z^2 \bullet p \bullet (1-p)}$$

given that:
N = 17,000,000
z = 1.96 for a 95% confidence level
p = 0.5 as estimated proportion
e = 0.07 as margin of error

plugging in the values:

$$n = \frac{17{,}000{,}000 \bullet 1.96^2 \bullet 0.5 \bullet (1 - 0.5)}{0.073^2 \bullet (17{,}000{,}000 - 1) + 1.96^2 \bullet 0.5 \bullet (1 - 0.5)}$$

Simplify:

$$n = \frac{17{,}000{,}000 \bullet 3.8416 \bullet 0.25}{0.005329 \bullet 16{,}999{,}999 + 3.8416 \bullet 0.25}$$

evaluate numerator and denominator:

$$n = \frac{16{,}326{,}800}{90{,}629.9604}$$

arrive at (n):

$$n = 180.147 \approx 180$$

This means that a total sample size of 180 from the population of 17,000,000 was used for primary data collection.

3.9 Data Collection Instrument

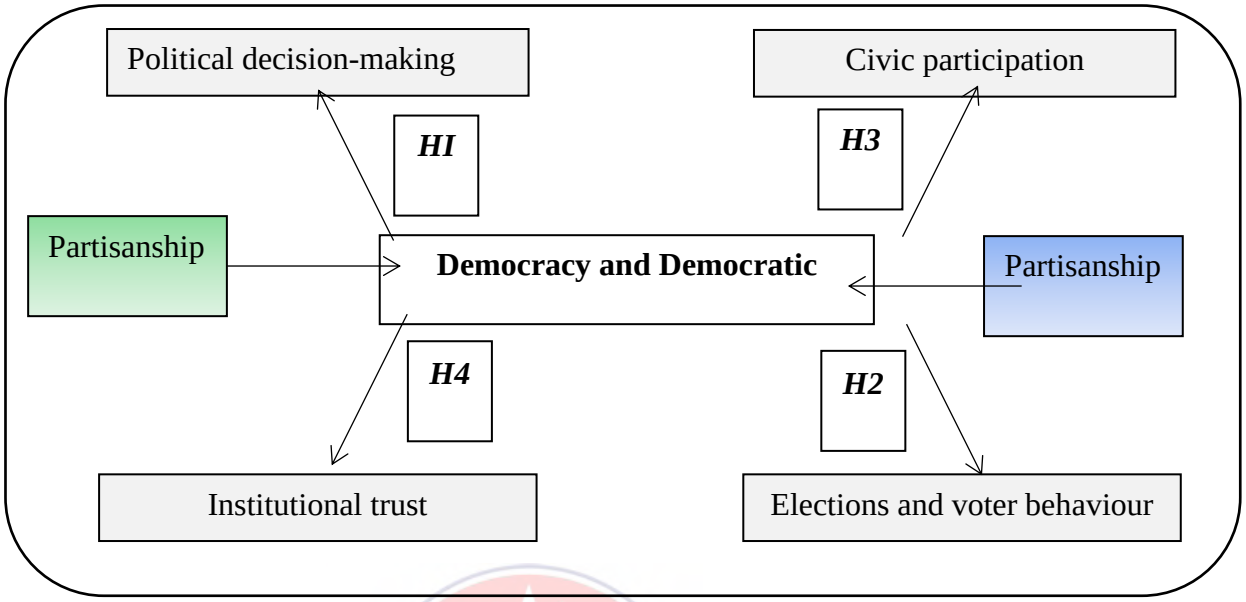
Questionnaires were the primary data collection tool in survey research. It is the survey instrument. The survey items (questions in the questionnaire) were designed to help test the hypotheses or research questions (Leavy, 2017). The researcher used a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) where an electronic device was used for the collection of the data. In this case, a smartphone or tablet will be used. The questions were scripted in Microsoft Forms and the responses exported to Microsoft Excel. The Excel raw data was cleaned, standardised and exported to IBM SPSS Version 26 for analysis.

3.9.1 Data collection Period

The primary data for this research was collected between May 2024 and July 2024. The researcher was assisted by two individuals. These individuals received training on data collection techniques and ethics. Both individuals were undergraduate students from the University of Education, Winneba.

3.10 Conceptual Framework

Figure. 1: Conceptual framework



***Source**: Researcher's Construct*

3.11 Framework for Data Analysis

The hypotheses (above) were constructed in terms of the variables to be measured. A variable is a case attribute that takes on a number of values and can be classified as dependent, independent or extraneous (Singh, 2007). For this research, the dependent and independent variables were as follows:

3.11.1 Dependent Variables

1. Political decision-making and engagements.
2. Civic participation.
3. Institutional trust and violence

3.11.2 Independent Variable

1. Partisanship

3.11.3 Statistical Inference

The statistical inference for this study will be based on an ordinary least square—multiple regression—model with unit (***i***) as it fixed effect. The analysis will identify the partisanship effect on the practice of democracy and adherence to democratic norms. It is expressed as:

$$depend_i = partisanship \times \beta\,(partisan_i + ind._i) + X_1, X_2 \ldots X_n + e$$

Where:

- $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ = vector of population parameters
- $\boldsymbol{X}$ = independent variables
- $\boldsymbol{e}$ = error component

3.11.4 Formulation of Hypotheses

Table 1: Table of hypotheses

HI:	Partisanship defines politics and shapes policy decisions.
H2:	Partisanship increases electoral participation and influences voter behaviour.
H3:	Partisanship increases civic participation and demand for accountability.
H4:	Partisanship undermines institutional trust when institutions do not favour them.
H5:	Partisanship conflict results in violence.
H6:	Partisanship inhibits inclusion and political equality.

Table 2: Mapped out hypotheses within the data analysis framework.

Hypothesis	Variable Label	Variable Name
HI: Partisanship defines politics and shapes policy decisions	**1.** Definition of politics	Q7
	2. Partisan views and considerations in decision making.	Q8A, Q8B, Q9
	3. Democracy is best without parties and partisanship	Q27
H2: Partisanship increases electoral participation and influences voter behaviour.	**1.** Voting in elections	Q4C, Q4D, Q12
	2. Swing voting	Q14
	3. Accepting electoral outcomes	Q15
	4. Perception on election petition	Q17
H3: Partisanship increases civic	**1.** Participation in civic activities	Q11B, Q11C,

	participation and demand for accountability.	**2.** Active citizenship	Q11A, Q11E, Q11G, Q21
H4:	Partisanship undermines institutional trust when institutions do not favour them.	**1.** Trust in the Court in handling election petition.	Q16
		2. Trust in the Electoral Commission in conducting free and fair elections.	Q18
H5:	Partisanship conflict results in violence.	**1.** In general elections	Q22
		2. In communities	Q23
		3. In households	Q24
H6:	Partisanship inhibits inclusion and political equality.	**1.** Partisanship deters participation.	Q25
		2. In group members disregard outgroup members	Q26

3.11.5 Variable Recoding and Exclusion from the Analysis

In order to avoid extremities in the analysis variables that sought varying degrees of agreement on the Likert scale were recoded into same variables with responses being discrete or binary. Additionally, one variable that asked for respondents' support for the government in power was excluded from the analysis because it could provide subtle result for party affiliations which respondents were highly assured in the confidential statement that they will not be asked. Similarly, responses for voting in elections 2008 and 2012 were also excluded from the analysis because it the focus was on the two most recent elections.

3.11.6 Descriptive Statistics: Cross-Tabulations

Cross-tabulation (or crosstabs) is a method used to examine the relationship between two or more categorical variables. Data analysis for this research will use descriptive crosstabs in IBM SPSS that cell displays column percentages and an ordinal regression to determine the association between the variables. For simplicity and clarity, crosstabs provide a straightforward way to visualize the relationship between the categorical

variables. The table format is easy to interpret, showing how different categories intersect.

By displaying column percentages, crosstabs allow seeing the distribution of one variable across the categories of another. This can reveal patterns and associations that might not be evident from raw data. The ordinal regression analysis helps determine if there is a significant association between the variables. This is particularly useful for hypothesis testing in ordinal data.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

According to Novikov and Novikov (2013), all human endeavours, including research, are inherently rooted in societal moral principles and must adhere to these ethical standards. While the ethical norms of scientific research may not be explicitly defined in formal codes or official mandates, they undeniably exist.

The study obtained consent from the UEW research board to proceed with data collection. Furthermore, the investigator ensured that respondents consented to be interviewed, were thoroughly informed about the research objectives, and were guaranteed confidentiality.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the essentials of the quantitative approach employed in this study. It has discussed the views of authors in relation to elements and considerations in quantitative studies, especially, the design, the method of data collection and analysis and its framework and the ethical considerations. It also provided a summary table of how the hypothesis mapped unto each variable.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter firstly presents the demographic analyses of the data and mainly presents the cross-tabulation results that displays the percentages over rows how partisanship informs the other variables under study. For each cross tabulation it performs a Chi-Square test to determine the significance in the association. Lastly, it presents a regression analysis to ascertain the relationship between the Partisanship and the other dependent variables.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

The demographic data collected on the respondents were gender, age, highest level of formal schooling, and attachment to political parties.

Table 3: Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	66	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Male	114	63.3	63.3	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were asked which gender they are. The analysis revealed that 36.7% of the respondents were females and 63.3% were males.

Table 4: Age of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	30	16.7	16.7	16.7
	26-35	73	40.6	40.6	57.2
	36-45	24	13.3	13.3	70.6
	46-55	24	13.3	13.3	83.9
	56 and above	29	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. The age categories were given as, 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years, and 56 and above. A respondent's age on their last birthday was selected under the corresponding category. The data revealed that majority of the respondents (57.2%) were young people 18-35 years, with the 36-55 years old and above representing 42.8% of the respondents. The largest age group were the 26-35 years old who made up 40.6% of the respondents.

Table 5: Educational level of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No schooling	34	18.9	18.9	18.9
	Primary	11	6.1	6.1	25.0
	Junior High	18	10.0	10.0	35.0
	Senior High	21	11.7	11.7	46.7
	Tertiary	96	53.3	53.3	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The question that was posed read that what was their highest level of formal schooling. The options included 'no schooling', primary', junior high', 'senior high', and 'tertiary'. The analysis showed that majority (53.3%) of respondents had reached higher education, that is the 'tertiary' level, while out of the total number of respondents, 18.9% had 'no schooling'.

Table 6: Partisanship status of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No, I am independent	112	62.2	62.2	62.2
	Yes, I am strongly attached	68	37.8	37.8	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The status of partisanship of the respondents was critical to the study because it was the independent variable. Specifically, the respondents were asked to say if they had strong attachment or affiliated to a political party in Ghana. One hundred and twelve

respondents representing 62.2% of the respondents were independent and not affiliated or attached to any political party in Ghana. The other 37.8% of the respondents identified as partisans, and as such were attached to a political party.

4.3 Cross Tabulation Analysis

The dependent variables of interest in the analysis were crossed with the independent variable, 'status of partisanship'—'partisan' or 'independent'. The independent variable was entered in column, with the dependent variables going into the row. The crosstabs cells displayed the expected counts, and percentages in the column. For the statistical analysis, an ordinal regression analysis was done. The covariates for the factor (partisanship) were 'Age' (Q2) and Education level (Q3).

4.3.1 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analyses for Variables in Hypothesis 1: Partisanship Defines Politics and Shapes Decision-Making

Table 7: Definition (meaning) of politics (Q7).

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Politics as government decisions Vs Politics as contest between parties	Agree with Statement 1	Count	69	46	115
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	61.6%	67.6%	63.9%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	43	22	65
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	38.4%	32.4%	36.1%
Total		Count	112	68	180

	% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	90.190			
Final	86.582	3.608	3	.307

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	35.994	35	.422
Deviance	40.495	35	.241

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q7 = 1]	.777	.564	1.896	1	.168	-.329	1.884
Location	Q2	-.112	.124	.814	1	.367	-.355	.131
	Q3	.133	.102	1.686	1	.194	-.068	.334
	[Q5=0]	.212	.333	.407	1	.523	-.440	.864
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Among independents, 61.6% defined politics as government decisions, while 38.4% saw it as contest between parties. Also, among strong partisans, 67.6% defined politics as government decisions, while 32.4% saw it as contest between parties. Overall, 63.9% of respondents leaned toward the government decisions definition, compared to 36.1% who emphasized party contest. This shows that both independents and partisans tend to view politics more in terms of governance than partisan competition, though partisans lean slightly more toward the governance definition.

The Model Fitting Information table shows the final model (-2 Log Likelihood = 86.582) is not significantly better than the intercept-only model (Chi-square = 3.608, df = 3, p = .307). This means partisanship, age, and schooling together did not significantly improve prediction of how respondents define politics. Additionally, the Pearson Chi-square (35.994, p = .422) and Deviance (40.495, p = .241) are non-significant, suggesting the model fits the data reasonably well. The regression model is statistically acceptable, even though predictors are not strongly significant.

None of the predictors (Q2, Q3, Q5—representing age, schooling, and partisanship coding) reached statistical significance (all p > .05). Partisanship ([Q5=0] vs. [Q5=1]) had an estimate of .212, but p = .523, meaning there is no significant difference between independents and partisans in how they define politics. This confirms that partisanship does not strongly shape whether respondents see politics as governance or party contest.

Both independents and partisans mostly define politics as government decisions rather than party competition. Partisanship, age, and schooling do not significantly predict these definitions. In this sample, political identity (partisan vs. independent) does not strongly influence how people conceptualize politics, suggesting that definitions of politics may be shaped more by broader civic culture than by partisan attachment.

Table 8: Consideration of Partisans' views in decision making (Q8A)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
How often partisans' views be considered in decision making?	Never	Count	28	15	43
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	25.0%	22.1%	23.9%
	Rarely	Count	31	9	40

		% within Strongly attached to a political party	27.7%	13.2%	22.2%
	Very often	Count	29	20	49
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	25.9%	29.4%	27.2%
	Always	Count	24	24	48
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	21.4%	35.3%	26.7%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	90.190			
Final	86.582	3.608	3	.307

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	35.994	35	.422
Deviance	40.495	35	.241

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q8A = 0]	.962	.506	3.621	1	.057	-.029	1.954
	[Q8A = 1]	2.183	.525	17.275	1	.000	1.154	3.213
	[Q8A = 2]	3.521	.560	39.549	1	.000	2.424	4.619
Location	Q2	.518	.113	21.093	1	.000	.297	.739
	Q3	.397	.093	18.313	1	.000	.215	.578
	[Q5=0]	-.341	.288	1.404	1	.236	-.906	.223

[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

While independents are more evenly distributed across all categories, strong partisans lean more toward *always* considering partisan views (35.3%) compared to independents (21.4%). This suggests that partisan attachment increases the likelihood of supporting partisan influence in decision-making.

The Model Fitting Information shows the final model (-2 Log Likelihood = 86.582) compared to intercept-only (90.190). The Chi-square = 3.608, df = 3, p = .307 means that adding predictors (partisanship, age, schooling) did not significantly improve the model overall, hence it is not statistically significant. The significant values for Q8A thresholds ($p < .001$ for "rarely" and "very often"), confirms that the ordinal structure is valid.

The estimate for partisanship = -0.341, p = .236 means it is not statistically significant. And that means that once age and schooling are controlled, partisanship itself does not significantly predict support for considering partisan views.

Strong partisans are more likely than independents to say partisan views should *always* be considered in decision-making. However, when age and schooling are included, partisanship loses statistical significance. Instead, older and more educated respondents are the strongest predictors of support for considering partisan views. While partisan identity shapes raw attitudes, demographic factors (age and schooling) are more powerful in explaining variation in support for partisan influence in decision-making.

Table 9: Consideration of Independents' views in decision making (Q8B)

Crosstab

	Strongly attached to a political party	Total

			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	
How often independents views be considered in decision making?	Never	Count	9	10	19
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	8.0%	14.7%	10.6%
	Rarely	Count	26	30	56
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	23.2%	44.1%	31.1%
	Very often	Count	32	14	46
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	28.6%	20.6%	25.6%
	Always	Count	45	14	59
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	40.2%	20.6%	32.8%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	258.719			
Final	221.318	37.402	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Pearson	149.886	111	.008
Deviance	144.749	111	.017

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval

							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q8B = 0]	-.187	.509	.135	1	.714	-1.185	.811
	[Q8B = 1]	1.892	.514	13.518	1	.000	.883	2.900
	[Q8B = 2]	3.163	.549	33.165	1	.000	2.086	4.239
Location	Q2	.103	.108	.919	1	.338	-.108	.314
	Q3	.453	.093	23.789	1	.000	.271	.636
	[Q5=0]	1.179	.300	15.491	1	.000	.592	1.767
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The results on consideration of independents' views in decision making reveal a clear divergence between independents and strong partisans. While 40.2 percent of independents favoured *always* considering independents' views, only 20.6 percent of strong partisans held this position. Conversely, 44.1 percent of partisans said independents' views should be considered *rarely*, compared to 23.2 percent of independents. This descriptive pattern suggests that independents are more supportive of their perspectives being consistently included, whereas partisans are more sceptical and lean toward limiting such influence.

The regression analysis strengthens this observation. The model fit was significant (Chi-square = 37.402, $p < .001$), indicating that the predictors meaningfully explain variation in attitudes toward considering independents' views. The parameter estimates show that schooling (Estimate = .453, $p < .001$) is a strong positive predictor, with more educated respondents more likely to support inclusion of independents' views. Most importantly, partisanship itself was significant (Estimate = 1.179, $p < .001$), meaning

independents were substantially more likely than strong partisans to favour higher levels of consideration of independents' views in decision making.

Although age did not emerge as a significant factor, the combined evidence points to a consistent pattern: independents are more inclined to demand recognition of their perspectives, and education reinforces this tendency. Strong partisans, by contrast, are less supportive of giving independents' voices weight in political decision making, reflecting the partisan bias that privileges party-aligned views over non-aligned ones. This finding highlights how partisan attachment can diminish openness to independent perspectives, while education broadens support for inclusivity in governance.

Table 10: Engagement between partisans or inclusion of independents for best solution (Q9)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Engagement between partisans bring best solutions Vs Including non-partisans bring best solutions	Agree with Statement 1	Count	55	49	104
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	49.1%	72.1%	57.8%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	57	19	76
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	50.9%	27.9%	42.2%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	119.305			
Final	77.672	41.633	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	38.742	35	.305
Deviance	41.332	35	.214

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q9 = 1]	1.964	.627	9.822	1	.002	.736	3.192
Location	Q2	-.260	.138	3.576	1	.059	-.530	.009
	Q3	.571	.123	21.614	1	.000	.331	.812
	[Q5=0]	1.055	.362	8.476	1	.004	.345	1.764
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The results on engagement between partisans versus inclusion of independents for finding the best solutions show a clear partisan divide. Among independents, opinion was evenly split, with 49.1 percent agreeing that engagement between partisans produces the best outcomes and 50.9 percent favouring inclusion of non-partisans. Strong partisans, however, leaned heavily toward partisan engagement, with 72.1 percent supporting that view compared to only 27.9 percent who endorsed inclusion of independents. This descriptive evidence highlights how partisan attachment shapes perceptions of where effective solutions come from, privileging intra-party dialogue over broader participation.

The regression analysis confirms the strength of these differences. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 41.633, $p < .001$), indicating that the predictors explain variation in attitudes toward engagement and inclusion. Schooling emerged as a strong

positive predictor (Estimate = .571, p < .001), with more educated respondents favouring inclusion of independents. Partisanship itself was also significant (Estimate = 1.055, p = .004), showing that independents were more likely than strong partisans to support inclusion of non-partisans in decision making. Age showed a marginal effect (Estimate = -.260, p = .059), suggesting younger respondents may be slightly more inclined toward inclusion, though not at conventional significance levels.

Taken together, the findings reveal that partisan attachment narrows openness to independent voices, while education broadens support for inclusivity. Independents are more likely to see value in non-partisan perspectives, whereas strong partisans emphasize partisan engagement as the route to effective solutions. The regression results underscore that both demographic factors and partisan identity shape these orientations, with education consistently pushing respondents toward more inclusive conceptions of political problem-solving.

Table 11: Democracy is best without parties and partisanship (Q27)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Democracy best without parties and partisanship?	Agree	Count	104	50	154
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	92.9%	73.5%	85.6%
	Disagree	Count	8	18	26
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	7.1%	26.5%	14.4%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	80.819			
Final	63.263	17.557	3	.001

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	46.214	35	.097
Deviance	41.038	35	.223

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q27 = 1]	2.667	.888	9.018	1	.003	.926	4.407
Location	Q2	.382	.173	4.856	1	.028	.042	.722
	Q3	.151	.163	.852	1	.356	-.169	.471
	[Q5=0]	-1.386	.469	8.736	1	.003	-2.306	-.467
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The results on whether democracy is best without parties and partisanship show a striking contrast between independents and strong partisans. An overwhelming 92.9 percent of independents agreed that democracy functions best without parties, compared to 73.5 percent of strong partisans. Conversely, 26.5 percent of partisans disagreed with this statement, more than three times the proportion of independents who did so (7.1 percent). This descriptive evidence suggests that independents are far more sceptical of partisan structures, while strong partisans remain more committed to the role of parties in democratic life.

The regression analysis confirms the significance of these differences. The model fit was strong (Chi-square = 17.557, p = .001), indicating that the predictors explain variation in attitudes toward democracy and partisanship. Age emerged as a significant positive predictor (Estimate = .382, p = .028), with older respondents more likely to agree that democracy is best without parties. Schooling, however, was not significant. Most importantly, partisanship itself was highly significant (Estimate = -1.386, p = .003), showing that independents were much more likely than strong partisans to endorse democracy without parties.

Taken together, the findings highlight how partisan attachment shapes fundamental conceptions of democracy. Independents are strongly inclined to view parties as obstacles to democratic practice, while strong partisans defend their necessity. Age reinforces the independent position, suggesting that older respondents may be more critical of partisan divisions. The evidence underscores that partisan identity is a powerful determinant of how citizens imagine democracy's ideal form, with independents favouring a system free of party structures and partisans resisting such a vision.

4.3.2 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analyses for Variable in Hypothesis 2: Partisanship Increases Electoral Participation and Influences Voter Behaviour.

Table 12: Voted in 2016 (Q4C)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Voted in 2016	No	Count	51	21	72
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	45.5%	30.9%	40.0%
	Yes	Count	61	47	108

	% within Strongly attached to a political party	54.5%	69.1%	60.0%
Total	Count	112	68	180
	% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	133.460			
Final	69.498	63.962	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	32.948	35	.567
Deviance	34.950	35	.471

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q4C = 0]	3.757	.799	22.080	1	.000	2.190	5.323
Location	Q2	1.117	.194	33.141	1	.000	.737	1.497
	Q3	.525	.134	15.440	1	.000	.263	.786
	[Q5=0]	-.206	.384	.288	1	.592	-.958	.546
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The voting patterns in the 2016 election reveal a notable distinction between independents and strong partisans. Among independents, 54.5 percent reported voting, while 45.5 percent did not. In contrast, 69.1 percent of strong partisans said they voted, compared to only 30.9 percent who abstained. This descriptive evidence points to higher electoral participation among those strongly attached to a political party, suggesting that partisan identity may motivate turnout more effectively than independence.

The regression analysis reinforces this conclusion. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 63.962, $p < .001$), confirming that the predictors explain variation in voting behaviour. Age was a strong positive predictor (Estimate = 1.117, $p < .001$), indicating that older respondents were more likely to have voted. Schooling also mattered (Estimate = .525, $p < .001$), with higher education associated with greater participation. Partisanship, however, was not statistically significant once age and schooling were controlled (Estimate = -.206, $p = .592$), suggesting that demographic factors outweighed partisan identity in explaining turnout.

The findings highlight that while descriptive data show partisans voting at higher rates than independents, regression results reveal that age and education are the real drivers of participation. Older and more educated respondents were consistently more likely to vote, regardless of partisan attachment. This underscores the importance of demographic characteristics in shaping electoral engagement, with partisan identity playing a secondary role once these factors are taken into account.

Table 13: Voted in 2020 (Q4D)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Voted in 2020	No	Count	16	9	25
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	14.3%	13.2%	13.9%
	Yes	Count	96	59	155
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	85.7%	86.8%	86.1%
Total		Count	112	68	180

	% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	75.313			
Final	70.771	4.543	3	.209

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	41.246	35	.216
Deviance	47.167	35	.082

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q4D = 0]	-.901	.732	1.515	1	.218	-2.335	.534
Location	Q2	.090	.169	.285	1	.593	-.240	.421
	Q3	.273	.128	4.525	1	.033	.021	.524
	[Q5=0]	.000	.471	.000	1	1.000	-.923	.922
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The 2020 voting data show remarkably high participation across both independents and strong partisans. Among independents, 85.7 percent reported voting, while 14.3 percent did not. Strong partisans displayed nearly identical behaviour, with 86.8 percent voting and 13.2 percent abstaining. This descriptive evidence suggests that, unlike in 2016, partisan attachment did not produce a noticeable difference in turnout, as both groups were highly engaged in the electoral process.

The regression analysis provides further clarity. The model fit was not statistically significant (Chi-square = 4.543, p = .209), indicating that the predictors did not meaningfully improve the explanation of voting behaviour in 2020. Age was not significant, but schooling showed a modest positive effect (Estimate = .273, p = .033), suggesting that higher education slightly increased the likelihood of voting. Partisanship itself was entirely non-significant (Estimate = .000, p = 1.000), confirming that partisan identity did not differentiate turnout once demographic factors were considered.

What emerges is a picture of widespread electoral participation in 2020, cutting across partisan lines. Education played a small role in reinforcing turnout, but neither age nor partisan attachment mattered in this election cycle. The findings highlight that in 2020, voting was nearly universal among both independents and partisans, reflecting a context in which broader civic engagement overshadowed the influence of partisan identity.

Table 14: Reasons for political participation (Q12)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Political participation because support party Vs Political participation because its civic duty	Agree with Statement 1	Count	36	35	71
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	32.1%	51.5%	39.4%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	76	33	109
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	67.9%	48.5%	60.6%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	130.995			
Final	82.238	48.757	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	32.594	35	.585
Deviance	36.355	35	.405

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

							95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q12 = 1]	1.980	.628	9.935	1	.002	.749	3.212
Location	Q2	-.015	.135	.013	1	.910	-.279	.249
	Q3	.685	.118	33.935	1	.000	.455	.916
	[Q5=0]	1.059	.372	8.101	1	.004	.330	1.789
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The evidence on reasons for political participation reveals contrasting motivations between independents and strong partisans. A majority of independents, 67.9 percent, reported participating because they see it as a civic duty, while only 32.1 percent said they do so primarily to support a party. Among strong partisans, the pattern was reversed: 51.5 percent participated to support their party, compared to 48.5 percent who emphasized civic duty. This descriptive picture highlights how partisan attachment shifts the rationale for engagement from broader civic responsibility toward loyalty to party structures.

Regression results provide sharper insight into these differences. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 48.757, $p < .001$), confirming that the predictors

explain variation in participation motives. Education emerged as a strong positive factor (Estimate = .685, p < .001), with more educated respondents more likely to frame participation as civic duty. Partisanship was also significant (Estimate = 1.059, p = .004), showing that independents were more inclined than strong partisans to emphasize civic duty over party loyalty. Age, however, was not significant, suggesting that generational differences did not shape motivations in this case.

The findings illustrate two distinct logics of participation: independents are guided by civic responsibility, while strong partisans are more likely to act out of party allegiance. Education reinforces the civic duty orientation, broadening the sense of democratic responsibility beyond partisan lines. In contrast, partisan attachment narrows the motivation for engagement, anchoring it in loyalty to political organizations rather than in broader civic ideals. This divergence underscores how identity and education interact to shape the meaning of political participation.

Table 15: Switching of vote (Q14)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Never change party I voted for Vs Switch vote for another party on conditions	Agree with Statement 1	Count	50	49	99
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	44.6%	72.1%	55.0%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	62	19	81
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	55.4%	27.9%	45.0%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	129.807			
Final	76.190	53.617	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	46.751	35	.088
Deviance	39.506	35	.276

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q14 = 1]	3.705	.730	25.754	1	.000	2.274	5.136
Location	Q2	.169	.140	1.456	1	.228	-.106	.445
	Q3	.730	.134	29.489	1	.000	.467	.994
	[Q5=0]	1.465	.372	15.493	1	.000	.736	2.195
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The data on switching votes reveals a sharp contrast between independents and strong partisans. A majority of independents, 55.4 percent, indicated they would consider switching their vote under certain conditions, while 44.6 percent said they would never change the party they voted for. Strong partisans displayed the opposite tendency: 72.1 percent reported they would never switch, compared to only 27.9 percent who said they might. This descriptive evidence underscores the rigidity of partisan loyalty compared to the greater flexibility of independents.

The regression analysis confirms the strength of these differences. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 53.617, $p < .001$), showing that the predictors explain variation in attitudes toward vote switching. Education emerged as a strong positive

factor (Estimate = .730, p < .001), with more educated respondents more likely to support conditional switching. Partisanship was also highly significant (Estimate = 1.465, p < .001), demonstrating that independents were far more likely than strong partisans to endorse the possibility of changing their vote. Age did not reach significance, suggesting that generational differences did not play a major role in this behaviour.

The findings highlight two distinct orientations toward electoral choice. Strong partisans are anchored in loyalty, resisting the idea of switching allegiance, while independents are more pragmatic, willing to reconsider their vote depending on circumstances. Education reinforces this pragmatic stance, broadening openness to conditional change. The evidence points to partisan identity as a powerful determinant of electoral flexibility, with independents and the more educated showing greater willingness to adapt their choices than those strongly tied to party structures.

Table 16: Support outcome of elections or support election petition (Q15)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Support outcome of elections regardless Vs Support petition when party I vote for loses	Agree with Statement 1	Count	86	50	136
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	76.8%	73.5%	75.6%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	26	18	44
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	23.2%	26.5%	24.4%
Total		Count	112	68	180

	% within Strongly attached to a political Party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	91.603			
Final	83.966	7.637	3	.054

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	41.842	35	.198
Deviance	47.827	35	.073

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q15 = 1]	2.542	.685	13.764	1	.000	1.199	3.885
Location	Q2	.356	.137	6.750	1	.009	.088	.625
	Q3	.137	.121	1.270	1	.260	-.101	.374
	[Q5=0]	.018	.370	.002	1	.961	-.706	.743
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The results on support for election outcomes versus petitions reveal broad agreement across both independents and strong partisans. A large majority of respondents in both groups supported accepting the outcome of elections regardless of whether their preferred party won—76.8 percent of independents and 73.5 percent of strong partisans. Only about a quarter of each group favoured supporting a petition when their party lost,

showing that while partisan loyalty exists, most respondents leaned toward respecting electoral outcomes.

The regression analysis adds nuance to this picture. The overall model was marginally significant (Chi-square = 7.637, p = .054), suggesting that predictors offered limited explanatory power. Age emerged as a significant factor (Estimate = .356, p = .009), with older respondents more likely to support election outcomes rather than petitions. Education did not reach significance, and partisanship itself was not a meaningful predictor (Estimate = .018, p = .961). This indicates that demographic characteristics, particularly age, mattered more than partisan identity in shaping attitudes toward election legitimacy.

What stands out is the convergence between independents and partisans in their willingness to accept electoral results. While partisanship strongly influenced other behaviours in earlier tables, here it played little role once age and schooling were considered. The evidence suggests that respect for electoral outcomes is a broadly shared norm, reinforced by age but not significantly differentiated by partisan attachment. This finding points to a measure of consensus across political identities on the importance of upholding democratic results.

Table 17: Perception on election petition (Q17)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Election petition seeks justice and tests democracy Vs Election petition is unnecessary and time wasting	Agree with Statement 1	Count	91	52	143
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	81.3%	76.5%	79.4%

	Agree with Statement 2	Count	21	16	37
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	18.8%	23.5%	20.6%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	80.503			
Final	72.299	8.205	3	.042

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	43.907	35	.144
Deviance	42.729	35	.173

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q17 = 1]	2.868	.789	13.205	1	.000	1.321	4.415
Location	Q2	.207	.149	1.945	1	.163	-.084	.499
	Q3	.358	.151	5.655	1	.017	.063	.653
	[Q5=0]	-.217	.387	.314	1	.575	-.977	.542
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Perceptions of election petitions reveal broad support for their role in democratic practice. Among independents, 81.3 percent agreed that petitions seek justice and test democracy, while 18.8 percent saw them as unnecessary. Strong partisans showed a similar pattern, with 76.5 percent endorsing petitions as legitimate and 23.5 percent

dismissing them as time wasting. This descriptive evidence suggests that across partisan lines, most respondents view petitions as a meaningful mechanism for accountability, even if a minority in each group remains sceptical.

The regression analysis provides further insight. The model fit was statistically significant (Chi-square = 8.205, p = .042), indicating that predictors explain variation in perceptions of petitions. Education was a notable factor (Estimate = .358, p = .017), with more educated respondents more likely to see petitions as instruments of justice and democratic testing. Age did not reach significance, and partisanship itself was not a significant predictor (Estimate = -.217, p = .575), showing that partisan identity did not strongly differentiate attitudes once demographic factors were considered.

What emerges is a picture of consensus: both independents and partisans largely accept petitions as legitimate democratic tools. Education strengthens this orientation, reinforcing the idea that petitions contribute to justice and democratic resilience. The findings highlight that while partisan identity often shapes political behaviour, in this case it does not divide respondents—suggesting that election petitions are broadly recognized as part of democratic accountability rather than a partisan issue.

4.3.3 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analyses for Variables in Hypothesis 3: Partisanship Increases Civic Participation and Demand for Accountability

Table 18: Join others to raise an issue (Q11B)

Crosstab

		Strongly attached to a political party		
		No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Never	Count	33	12	45

How often join others raise issue?		% within Strongly attached to a political party	29.5%	17.6%	25.0%
	Occasionally	Count	67	37	104
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	59.8%	54.4%	57.8%
	Frequently	Count	12	19	31
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	10.7%	27.9%	17.2%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	153.373			
Final	143.880	9.493	3	.023

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	82.906	73	.200
Deviance	81.387	73	.235

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q11B = 0]	-1.300	.535	5.908	1	.015	-2.349	-.252
	[Q11B = 1]	1.491	.536	7.731	1	.005	.440	2.542
Location	Q2	.079	.114	.485	1	.486	-.144	.303
	Q3	.065	.093	.489	1	.484	-.118	.248
	[Q5=0]	-.865	.319	7.325	1	.007	-1.491	-.239
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Patterns of collective action show clear differences between independents and strong partisans. Most respondents in both groups reported joining others to raise an issue only occasionally—59.8 percent of independents and 54.4 percent of partisans. Yet the extremes reveal sharper contrasts: nearly a third of independents said they never engage in such activity, compared to just 17.6 percent of partisans, while frequent participation was more common among partisans (27.9 percent) than independents (10.7 percent). This suggests that partisan attachment is associated with greater willingness to mobilize collectively, whereas independents are more likely to remain disengaged.

The regression analysis strengthens this interpretation. The model fit was statistically significant (Chi-square = 9.493, p = .023), confirming that predictors explain variation in participation frequency. Partisanship was a key factor: independents were significantly less likely than strong partisans to join others in raising issues (Estimate = -.865, p = .007). Age and education, however, did not emerge as significant predictors, indicating that demographic characteristics did not drive this behaviour. The thresholds also showed meaningful differentiation across categories, reinforcing the ordinal structure of participation levels.

What these results highlight is the mobilizing effect of partisan identity. Strong partisans are more inclined to act collectively, whether occasionally or frequently, while independents are more likely to abstain altogether. The absence of significant demographic effects suggests that partisan attachment itself is the primary determinant of collective engagement in this context. In short, party loyalty appears to provide the

social and motivational framework that encourages individuals to join others in raising issues, whereas independence is linked to lower levels of collective action.

Table 19: Contact elected officials (Q11C)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
How often contact elected officials?	Never	Count	43	20	63
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	38.4%	29.4%	35.0%
	Occasionally	Count	55	28	83
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	49.1%	41.2%	46.1%
	Frequently	Count	14	20	34
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	12.5%	29.4%	18.9%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	162.212			
Final	148.069	14.143	3	.003

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	63.730	73	.772
Deviance	72.887	73	.482

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q11C = 0]	-.694	.508	1.866	1	.172	-1.691	.302
	[Q11C = 1]	1.520	.521	8.507	1	.004	.499	2.541
Location	Q2	.257	.111	5.321	1	.021	.039	.475
	Q3	-.143	.091	2.500	1	.114	-.321	.034
	[Q5=0]	-.520	.300	3.007	1	.083	-1.108	.068
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Engagement with elected officials shows a clear difference in intensity between independents and strong partisans. While the majority of both groups reported occasional contact—49.1 percent of independents and 41.2 percent of partisans—the distribution at the extremes is telling. Nearly four in ten independents said they never reach out to officials, compared to less than a third of partisans. On the other hand, frequent contact was far more common among strong partisans (29.4 percent) than independents (12.5 percent). This pattern suggests that partisan attachment is linked to more active and sustained interaction with political representatives.

The regression analysis reinforces this interpretation. The model fit was significant (Chi-square = 14.143, p = .003), confirming that predictors explain variation in contacting officials. Age emerged as a meaningful factor (Estimate = .257, p = .021), with older respondents more likely to engage in contact. Education did not reach significance, and partisanship showed a marginal effect (Estimate = -.520, p = .083), indicating that independents were somewhat less likely than strong partisans to reach out, though the difference was not strongly conclusive once demographics were considered.

The overall picture is one of partisan-driven engagement, with strong partisans more inclined to maintain frequent communication with elected officials. Age adds another layer, as older respondents appear more disposed to contact representatives regardless of partisan identity. Independents, by contrast, are more likely to remain disengaged, underscoring how partisan loyalty and demographic maturity combine to shape the likelihood of direct political interaction.

Table 20: Discuss politics (Q11A)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
How often discuss politics?	Never	Count	39	9	48
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	34.8%	13.2%	26.7%
	Occasionally	Count	60	35	95
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	53.6%	51.5%	52.8%
	Frequently	Count	13	24	37
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	11.6%	35.3%	20.6%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	192.598			
Final	138.565	54.032	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	70.351	73	.566
Deviance	76.479	73	.368

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q11A = 0]	.275	.553	.248	1	.618	-.808	1.358
	[Q11A = 1]	3.250	.599	29.429	1	.000	2.076	4.424
Location	Q2	.295	.119	6.118	1	.013	.061	.529
	Q3	.564	.106	28.300	1	.000	.356	.771
	[Q5=0]	-1.309	.329	15.792	1	.000	-1.955	-.664
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Discussion of politics shows one of the clearest divides between independents and strong partisans. Over a third of independents (34.8 percent) said they never discuss politics, compared to just 13.2 percent of strong partisans. At the other end of the spectrum, frequent discussion was far more common among partisans (35.3 percent) than independents (11.6 percent). The majority of both groups fell into the “occasional” category, but the distribution reveals that partisan attachment is strongly associated with greater intensity of political conversation.

The regression analysis confirms this pattern with striking clarity. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 54.032, p < .001), showing that predictors explain variation in political discussion. Education was a powerful factor (Estimate = .564, p < .001), with more educated respondents much more likely to discuss politics. Age also mattered (Estimate = .295, p = .013), suggesting that older respondents are more inclined to engage in political talk. Most importantly, partisanship was highly significant (Estimate = -1.309, p < .001), indicating that independents were substantially less likely than strong partisans to discuss politics once demographics were controlled.

The evidence paints a picture of political discussion as both socially and identity-driven. Strong partisans are far more likely to engage frequently, reflecting the role of party attachment in sustaining political dialogue. Education amplifies this tendency, broadening the likelihood of discussion across the population, while age adds a modest but meaningful effect. Independents, by contrast, are more likely to remain silent, underscoring how partisan identity and demographic characteristics combine to shape the vibrancy of everyday political conversation.

Table 21: Attend demonstrations or protests (Q11E)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
How often attend demonstrations or protest?	Never	Count	62	33	95
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	55.4%	48.5%	52.8%
	Occasionally	Count	39	22	61

		% within Strongly attached to a political party	34.8%	32.4%	33.9%
	Frequently	Count	11	13	24
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	9.8%	19.1%	13.3%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	179.432			
Final	161.266	18.166	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	84.686	73	.165
Deviance	96.062	73	.037

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q11E = 0]	-1.109	.524	4.477	1	.034	-2.137	-.082
	[Q11E = 1]	.800	.524	2.332	1	.127	-.227	1.827
Location	Q2	.026	.113	.053	1	.818	-.195	.247
	Q3	-.369	.094	15.476	1	.000	-.553	-.185
	[Q5=0]	-.423	.309	1.875	1	.171	-1.027	.182
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Participation in demonstrations or protests shows a mixed but telling pattern. Just over half of respondents in both groups reported never attending—55.4 percent of independents and 48.5 percent of strong partisans. Occasional attendance was fairly similar, with 34.8 percent of independents and 32.4 percent of partisans. The sharpest difference appears among those who attend frequently: nearly one in five strong partisans (19.1 percent) reported doing so, compared to only 9.8 percent of independents. This suggests that partisan attachment is linked to greater intensity of protest activity, even though abstention remains the dominant response overall.

The regression analysis confirms that predictors explain variation in protest participation (Chi-square = 18.166, $p < .001$). Education was the strongest factor (Estimate = -.369, $p < .001$), but in a negative direction: respondents with higher schooling were less likely to attend demonstrations. Age did not matter, and partisanship itself was not statistically significant once demographics were considered (Estimate = -.423, $p = .171$). The thresholds nonetheless showed meaningful differentiation across categories, reinforcing the ordinal structure of participation levels.

The findings point to an important dynamic: while descriptive data suggest strong partisans are more likely to protest frequently, regression results reveal that education plays a stronger role than partisan identity in shaping participation. Those with less schooling are more inclined to attend demonstrations, while higher education appears to dampen protest activity. In this case, partisan loyalty may encourage some engagement, but educational background is the more decisive factor in determining who takes to the streets.

Table 22: Criticise government actions (Q11G)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
How often criticize government actions?	Never	Count	22	4	26
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	19.6%	5.9%	14.4%
	Occasionally	Count	55	35	90
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	49.1%	51.5%	50.0%
	Frequently	Count	35	29	64
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	31.3%	42.6%	35.6%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	160.914			
Final	150.170	10.744	3	.013

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	75.386	73	.401
Deviance	80.217	73	.263

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q11G = 0]	-2.740	.559	24.006	1	.000	-3.836	-1.644
	[Q11G = 1]	-.256	.513	.248	1	.619	-1.262	.751
Location	Q2	-.224	.113	3.961	1	.047	-.445	-.003
	Q3	.084	.092	.837	1	.360	-.096	.263
	[Q5=0]	-.818	.309	7.018	1	.008	-1.424	-.213
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Criticism of government actions is a common activity, but the intensity varies by partisan attachment. Among independents, about one in five (19.6 percent) said they never criticize government actions, compared to only 5.9 percent of strong partisans. At the other end, frequent criticism was more common among partisans (42.6 percent) than independents (31.3 percent). The largest share of both groups fell into the "occasional" category, but the distribution shows that strong partisans are more consistently engaged in government critique, while independents are more likely to abstain altogether.

The regression analysis adds depth to this picture. The model fit was statistically significant (Chi-square = 10.744, p = .013), confirming that predictors explain variation in criticism frequency. Age had a modest but significant negative effect (Estimate = -.224, p = .047), suggesting younger respondents were more likely to criticize government actions. Education did not reach significance, but partisanship was important (Estimate = -.818, p = .008), showing that independents were significantly

less likely than strong partisans to engage in criticism once demographics were controlled.

The results highlight how partisan identity amplifies political voice. Strong partisans are more inclined to criticize government actions frequently, while independents are more likely to remain silent. Age also shapes this behaviour, with younger respondents more disposed to critique than older ones. Together, these findings suggest that criticism of government is both identity-driven and generational, reflecting the combined influence of partisan loyalty and age on how citizens hold leaders accountable.

Table 23: Being an active citizen (Q21)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
An active citizen must be partisan Vs Can be an active citizen without being partisan	Agree with Statement 1	Count	49	36	85
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	43.8%	52.9%	47.2%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	63	32	95
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	56.3%	47.1%	52.8%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	148.504			
Final	88.142	60.362	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	51.630	35	.035
Deviance	50.511	35	.043

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q21 = 1]	3.496	.768	20.728	1	.000	1.991	5.002
Location	Q2	.255	.146	3.054	1	.081	-.031	.541
	Q3	.892	.145	38.132	1	.000	.609	1.176
	[Q5=0]	.607	.368	2.718	1	.099	-.115	1.328
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The question of whether one can be an active citizen without being partisan produced a nearly even split in the responses. Just over half of the sample (52.8 percent) agreed that active citizenship does not require partisan attachment, while 47.2 percent believed that partisanship is essential. Independents leaned more strongly toward the non-partisan view, with 56.3 percent endorsing it, compared to 47.1 percent of strong partisans. Conversely, a majority of partisans (52.9 percent) saw active citizenship as inseparable from party loyalty, compared to 43.8 percent of independents. This descriptive evidence highlights a tension between activity and principle: independents are more likely to frame citizenship in civic rather than partisan terms, while partisans emphasize loyalty as a defining feature of engagement.

The regression analysis reinforces the importance of education in shaping these views. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 60.362, $p < .001$), and education emerged as the strongest predictor (Estimate = .892, $p < .001$). Respondents with higher levels of schooling were much more likely to endorse non-partisan definitions of citizenship. Age showed only a marginal effect, while partisanship itself was not statistically significant once demographics were controlled. This suggests that while partisan identity influences descriptive patterns, education is the decisive factor in broadening conceptions of citizenship beyond party boundaries.

Placed alongside the earlier activity tables, the results reveal a consistent contrast. Strong partisans were more likely to frequently discuss politics (Table 14), criticize government actions (Table 16), attend protests (Table 15), and contact officials (Table 13). Independents, by contrast, were more likely to abstain from these activities or engage only occasionally. Yet when asked about the meaning of citizenship itself, independents leaned toward a non-partisan definition. This shows that partisanship drives activity, while independence shapes principle. Education bridges the two, encouraging discussion and criticism while also reinforcing the idea that citizenship can be civic rather than partisan.

The broader picture is therefore one of dual models of citizenship. On one side, strong partisans embody active citizenship through behaviour: they are more likely to protest, criticize, contact officials, and discuss politics. On the other side, independents embody active citizenship through belief: they are less active but more likely to define citizenship in non-partisan terms. Education strengthens the latter model, broadening the vision of citizenship beyond party loyalty. Together, these findings suggest that democratic life is sustained both by partisan energy and by civic ideals, with each group contributing differently to the meaning and practice of citizenship.

4.3.4 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analyses for Variables in Hypothesis 4: Partisans Undermine Institutional Trust When Institutions do not Favour them

Table 24: Trust the court in handling election petition (Q16)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Trust court in election petition regardless Vs Distrust the court when party I vote for loses	Agree with Statement 1	Count	97	45	142
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	86.6%	66.2%	78.9%
	Agree with Statement 2	Count	15	23	38
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	13.4%	33.8%	21.1%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	91.046			
Final	73.842	17.204	3	.001

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	40.620	35	.237
Deviance	41.722	35	.202

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q16 = 1]	2.282	.744	9.396	1	.002	.823	3.741
Location	Q2	.376	.149	6.385	1	.012	.084	.667
	Q3	.152	.137	1.226	1	.268	-.117	.420
	[Q5=0]	-1.040	.389	7.148	1	.008	-1.802	-.277
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Trust in the courts emerges as a crucial test of whether partisanship undermines institutional legitimacy. When asked about confidence in the judiciary's handling of election petitions, nearly four out of five respondents (78.9 percent) said they would trust the court regardless of whether their preferred party won or lost. Yet a significant minority (21.1 percent) admitted they would distrust the court if their party lost. The partisan divide is sharp: 86.6 percent of independents expressed unconditional trust, compared to only 66.2 percent of strong partisans. Conversely, one-third of partisans (33.8 percent) acknowledged that their trust in the court depends on partisan outcomes, more than double the proportion of independents (13.4 percent). This shows that partisan loyalty can erode confidence in institutions meant to embody neutrality.

The regression analysis confirms that these differences are meaningful. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 17.204, p = .001), and partisan identity was decisive. Independents were significantly more likely than strong partisans to trust the court regardless of electoral outcomes (Estimate = -1.040, p = .008). Age also mattered (Estimate = .376, p = .012), with older respondents more likely to express unconditional trust. Education, however, did not emerge as a strong predictor. These results highlight

that partisan attachment, more than demographic characteristics, drives conditional trust in the judiciary.

The findings illustrate how partisanship can undermine institutional trust when institutions do not favour one's side. For independents, the court retains legitimacy across outcomes, reflecting a more principled view of institutional neutrality. For strong partisans, however, trust is contingent: when the court rules against their party, confidence collapses. This conditional trust undermines the very foundation of democratic adjudication, where courts are supposed to serve as impartial arbiters of electoral disputes.

The broader implication is that partisan identity not only shapes behaviour but also conditions perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Courts, which are central to resolving electoral conflict, risk being seen not as neutral guardians of democracy but as partisan battlegrounds. For agonistic theory, this presents a profound challenge: conflict is meant to energize democracy, but if institutions are perceived as biased, contestation risks delegitimizing the very structures that sustain democratic order. This table therefore provides powerful evidence for your hypothesis that partisanship erodes trust in institutions when outcomes do not align with partisan expectations.

Table 25: Trust the Electoral Commission in the conduct of election (Q18)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Trust EC in conduct of elections Vs Distrust EC when party I vote for loses	Agree with Statement 1	Count	94	41	135
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	83.9%	60.3%	75.0%
		Count	18	27	45

	Agree with Statement 2	% within Strongly attached to a political party	16.1%	39.7%	25.0%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	92.723			
Final	72.119	20.604	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	29.414	35	.734
Deviance	33.305	35	.550

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q18 = 1]	2.110	.706	8.934	1	.003	.726	3.493
Location	Q2	.390	.142	7.481	1	.006	.110	.669
	Q3	.170	.131	1.698	1	.193	-.086	.426
	[Q5=0]	-1.085	.369	8.661	1	.003	-1.808	-.362
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

When asked about confidence in the Commission's conduct of elections, three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) said they would trust the institution regardless of whether their party won or lost. Yet one in four (25 percent) admitted they would distrust the Commission if their party lost. The partisan divide is again pronounced: 83.9 percent of independents expressed unconditional trust, compared to only 60.3 percent of strong

partisans. Conversely, nearly 40 percent of partisans acknowledged conditional trust, more than double the proportion of independents (16.1 percent). This shows that partisan loyalty can erode confidence in electoral management bodies, institutions that are supposed to guarantee fairness and neutrality.

The regression analysis confirms the strength of these differences. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 20.604, $p < .001$), and partisan identity was decisive. Independents were significantly more likely than strong partisans to trust the Electoral Commission across outcomes (Estimate = -1.085, $p = .003$). Age also mattered (Estimate = .390, $p = .006$), with older respondents more likely to express unconditional trust. Education did not emerge as a strong predictor. These results mirror the findings on the courts: partisan attachment, more than demographic characteristics, drives conditional trust in institutions central to electoral integrity.

For independents, the Electoral Commission retains legitimacy across outcomes, reflecting a more principled view of neutrality. For strong partisans, however, trust is contingent: when the Commission's decisions disadvantage their party, confidence collapses. This conditional trust undermines the very foundation of democratic elections, where impartial administration is essential to legitimacy.

The broader implication is that partisan identity not only shapes behaviour and perceptions of conflict but also conditions trust in the institutions that manage democracy itself. Both the courts and the Electoral Commission are vulnerable to partisan scepticism, with strong partisans more likely to withdraw trust when outcomes do not align with their preferences. For agonistic theory, this underscores a central challenge: conflict is meant to energize democracy, but if institutions are perceived as biased or partisan, contestation risks delegitimizing the structures that sustain democratic order. Together, Tables 18 and 19 provide compelling evidence for your

hypothesis that partisanship erodes institutional trust when outcomes are unfavourable, highlighting the fragility of democratic legitimacy in polarized contexts.

4.3.5 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analysis for Variables in Hypothesis 5: Partisanship Results in Violent Conflict

Table 26: Partisanship conflict in general elections often results in violence (Q22)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Partisanship conflict in general elections results in violence	Agree	Count	99	48	147
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	88.4%	70.6%	81.7%
	Disagree	Count	13	20	33
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	11.6%	29.4%	18.3%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	88.576			
Final	74.621	13.955	3	.003

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	49.015	35	.058
Deviance	51.261	35	.037

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q22 = 1]	2.494	.819	9.281	1	.002	.889	4.098
Location	Q2	.256	.157	2.666	1	.103	-.051	.564
	Q3	.287	.156	3.367	1	.067	-.020	.593
	[Q5=0]	-1.075	.408	6.932	1	.008	-1.875	-.275
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The perception of partisanship conflict in general elections reveals a strong sense among respondents that such contestation often spills into violence. Overall, 81.7 percent agreed with the statement, while only 18.3 percent disagreed. The divide between independents and strong partisans is notable: 88.4 percent of independents saw election conflict as violent, compared to 70.6 percent of strong partisans. Conversely, nearly a third of partisans (29.4 percent) rejected the idea, more than double the proportion of independents who did so (11.6 percent). This descriptive evidence suggests that independents are more likely to interpret partisan conflict as destabilizing, while partisans are somewhat more inclined to defend its legitimacy or downplay its violent potential.

The regression analysis confirms that these differences are meaningful. The model fit was significant (Chi-square = 13.955, p = .003), showing that predictors explain variation in perceptions of electoral conflict. Education and age did not reach conventional significance, though both showed weak positive tendencies. Partisanship, however, was decisive: independents were significantly more likely than strong partisans to view election conflict as violent (Estimate = -1.075, p = .008). This reinforces the descriptive finding that partisan identity shapes how citizens interpret the consequences of contestation.

Placed within the framework of agonistic democracy, these results are revealing. The theory emphasizes conflict as a vital resource for democratic life, but respondents—especially independents—tend to associate partisan conflict with violence rather than constructive contestation. Strong partisans are more divided: while most agree that conflict can lead to violence, a substantial minority resist this view, perhaps reflecting their investment in defending partisan competition as legitimate. This tension illustrates the challenge of translating agonistic ideals into practice: citizens may recognize the necessity of conflict, but they remain wary of its destructive potential.

The broader implication is that partisan identity mediates how conflict is understood in democratic settings. Independents, less anchored in party loyalty, are more likely to see conflict as destabilizing, while partisans balance recognition of violence with a defence of contestation. For the agonistic perspective, this suggests that while conflict is central to democracy, its legitimacy depends on whether citizens see it as contestation or as violence. The evidence here shows that many respondents lean toward the latter, raising questions about how democratic systems can cultivate conflict as a productive force rather than a destructive one.

Table 27: Partisanship conflict in communities often result in violence (Q23)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Partisanship conflict in communities results in violence	Agree	Count	87	43	130
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	77.7%	63.2%	72.2%
	Disagree	Count	25	25	50

	% within Strongly attached to a political party	22.3%	36.8%	27.8%
Total	Count	112	68	180
	% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Intercept Only	96.088			
Final	79.910	16.178	3	.001

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	40.567	35	.238
Deviance	47.600	35	.076

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q23 = 1]	2.518	.728	11.965	1	.001	1.091	3.945
Location	Q2	.263	.139	3.601	1	.058	-.009	.535
	Q3	.406	.139	8.459	1	.004	.132	.679
	[Q5=0]	-.641	.355	3.270	1	.071	-1.336	.054
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Perceptions of partisan conflict at the community level reveal a strong sense of risk, though with more division than was seen in the case of general elections. Overall, 72.2 percent of respondents agreed that partisan conflict in communities often results in violence, while 27.8 percent disagreed. Independents were more likely to see conflict as violent (77.7 percent) compared to strong partisans (63.2 percent). Conversely, more

than a third of partisans (36.8 percent) rejected the idea, compared to just 22.3 percent of independents. This descriptive evidence suggests that while most respondents see community-level partisan conflict as destabilizing, partisans are more inclined to resist that interpretation, perhaps reflecting their investment in defending partisan contestation as legitimate.

The regression analysis confirms that these differences are significant. The model fit was strong (Chi-square = 16.178, p = .001), showing that predictors explain variation in perceptions of community conflict. Education emerged as a meaningful factor (Estimate = .406, p = .004), with more educated respondents more likely to view partisan conflict as violent. Age showed a weaker, marginal effect, while partisanship itself approached significance (Estimate = -.641, p = .071), indicating that independents were somewhat more likely than strong partisans to see community conflict as violent, though the effect was less pronounced than in the case of general elections.

Placed within the framework of agonistic democracy, these results highlight a tension between the ideal of conflict as a productive force and the lived experience of citizens. At the community level, conflict is more personal and immediate, and respondents are more divided about whether it leads to violence. The fact that education increases the likelihood of perceiving conflict as violent suggests that awareness and exposure may heighten sensitivity to its risks. Partisans, meanwhile, remain more likely to defend conflict as legitimate, even in local settings where its consequences are felt most directly.

The broader implication is that while citizens generally recognize conflict as a feature of democratic life, they are wary of its potential to destabilize communities. For agonistic theory, this presents a challenge: how to cultivate conflict as a form of contestation that strengthens democracy, rather than as a source of violence that

undermines it. The evidence here shows that respondents are more cautious at the community level than at the national level, reflecting the proximity of conflict to everyday life and the difficulty of reconciling agonistic ideals with local realities.

Table 28: Partisanship conflict in households often result in violence (Q24)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Partisanship conflict in households results in violence	Agree	Count	101	48	149
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	90.2%	70.6%	82.8%
	Disagree	Count	11	20	31
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	9.8%	29.4%	17.2%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	75.456			
Final	56.207	19.249	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	28.492	35	.774
Deviance	30.268	35	.696

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q24 = 1]	3.065	.889	11.880	1	.001	1.322	4.808
Location	Q2	.401	.166	5.858	1	.016	.076	.726
	Q3	.323	.168	3.697	1	.055	-.006	.652
	[Q5=0]	-1.231	.429	8.233	1	.004	-2.071	-.390
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Perceptions of partisan conflict within households reveal the strongest sense of violence among all the contexts examined so far. Overall, 82.8 percent of respondents agreed that household partisan conflict often results in violence, while only 17.2 percent disagreed. The divide between independents and strong partisans is again clear: 90.2 percent of independents endorsed the view, compared to 70.6 percent of partisans. Conversely, nearly a third of partisans (29.4 percent) rejected the idea, compared to just 9.8 percent of independents. This pattern suggests that independents are far more likely to see partisan conflict as destabilizing even in intimate, domestic spaces, while partisans are more inclined to resist framing household disagreements as violent.

The regression analysis confirms the strength of these differences. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 19.249, $p < .001$), showing that predictors explain variation in perceptions of household conflict. Age emerged as a significant factor (Estimate = .401, $p = .016$), with older respondents more likely to view household partisan conflict as violent. Education showed a marginal effect (Estimate = .323, $p = .055$), while partisanship was decisive: independents were significantly more likely than strong partisans to perceive household conflict as violent (Estimate = -1.231, p =

.004). This reinforces the descriptive evidence that partisan identity shapes how citizens interpret conflict even in private, family settings.

Placed within the framework of agonistic democracy, these findings are particularly revealing. Agonistic theory emphasizes conflict as a vital resource for democratic life, but respondents overwhelmingly associate partisan conflict in households with violence rather than constructive contestation. The household is the most intimate arena of social life, and the perception that partisan disagreements there often turn violent suggests that citizens struggle to reconcile agonistic ideals with everyday realities. For independents, partisan conflict appears especially threatening, while partisans are more likely to defend its legitimacy, even in domestic contexts.

The broader implication is that while conflict may be central to democracy, its legitimacy depends on the arena in which it occurs. At the household level, respondents are least willing to see conflict as constructive, reflecting the difficulty of separating contestation from personal relationships and emotional bonds. For agonistic theory, this underscores the challenge of cultivating conflict as a democratic resource: citizens may accept contestation in public arenas, but in private spaces they are more likely to view it as destructive. The evidence here shows that partisan identity and age both shape these perceptions, highlighting the need to consider how conflict is experienced differently across social domains.

4.3.6 Crosstab and Ordinal Regression Analyses for Variables in Hypothesis 6: Partisanship Inhibits Inclusion and Equality

Table 29: Partisanship conflict deters political partisanship (Q25)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Partisanship conflict deters political participation	Agree	Count	97	47	144
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	86.6%	69.1%	80.0%
	Disagree	Count	15	21	36
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	13.4%	30.9%	20.0%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	85.517			
Final	72.424	13.093	3	.004

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Pearson	47.947	35	.071
Deviance	45.520	35	.110

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q25 = 1]	2.350	.768	9.362	1	.002	.845	3.855
Location	Q2	.286	.151	3.621	1	.057	-.009	.582
	Q3	.229	.144	2.523	1	.112	-.054	.511
	[Q5=0]	-.951	.392	5.880	1	.015	-1.720	-.182
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logi

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

When respondents were asked whether partisan conflict deters political participation, the overwhelming majority said yes. Four out of five (80 percent) agreed that conflict discourages engagement, while only one in five disagreed. The divide between independents and strong partisans is telling: 86.6 percent of independents endorsed the deterrent effect, compared to 69.1 percent of partisans. In other words, independents are more likely to see conflict as a barrier, while partisans are more willing to resist that interpretation.

The statistical model reinforces this picture. It was significant overall (Chi-square = 13.093, p = .004), and the key driver was partisan identity. Independents were much more likely than strong partisans to perceive conflict as deterring participation (Estimate = -.951, p = .015). Age and education showed weaker, marginal effects, suggesting that the real fault line lies not in demographics but in political attachment itself.

What emerges here is a paradox central to agonistic democracy. Conflict is supposed to energize participation, yet most respondents—especially independents—see it as discouraging. Strong partisans are more divided: while many acknowledge the deterrent effect, a sizeable minority reject it, perhaps because their loyalty sustains engagement even in contentious environments. This tension highlights the difficulty of reconciling

the theory's ideal of conflict as productive with citizens lived experience of conflict as exhausting or alienating.

In short, the data show that partisan conflict is widely perceived as a barrier to participation, particularly among independents. For agonistic theory, this is a crucial challenge: how to cultivate contestation as a democratic resource when so many citizens experience it as a deterrent.

Table 30: Partisans disregard outgroup members (Q26)

Crosstab

			Strongly attached to a political party		
			No, I am independent	Yes, I am strongly attached	Total
Partisans disregard out group members	Agree	Count	89	37	126
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	79.5%	54.4%	70.0%
	Disagree	Count	23	31	54
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	20.5%	45.6%	30.0%
Total		Count	112	68	180
		% within Strongly attached to a political party	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	106.847			
Final	84.090	22.757	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	43.508	35	.153
Deviance	53.059	35	.026

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

							95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Q26 = 1]	2.064	.681	9.189	1	.002	.730	3.399
Location	Q2	.383	.137	7.802	1	.005	.114	.652
	Q3	.252	.127	3.939	1	.047	.003	.501
	[Q5=0]	-1.048	.351	8.943	1	.003	-1.735	-.361
	[Q5=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

On the question of whether partisans disregard outgroup members, the responses reveal a sharp divide that cuts to the heart of agonistic democracy. Seventy percent of the sample agreed that partisans do indeed disregard those outside their camp, while 30 percent disagreed. The contrast between independents and strong partisans is striking: nearly four out of five independents (79.5 percent) endorsed the claim, compared to just over half of strong partisans (54.4 percent). Conversely, almost half of partisans (45.6 percent) rejected the idea, more than double the proportion of independents who did so (20.5 percent). This suggests that independents are far more likely to interpret partisan identity as exclusionary, while partisans themselves are more inclined to resist that characterization.

The regression analysis reinforces this divide. The model fit was highly significant (Chi-square = 22.757, $p < .001$), showing that predictors explain variation in perceptions of outgroup disregard. Education was a strong factor (Estimate = .383, $p = .005$), with more educated respondents more likely to see partisanship as exclusionary. Age also mattered (Estimate = .252, $p = .047$), suggesting that older respondents were

more likely to perceive disregard of outgroups. Partisanship itself was decisive: independents were significantly more likely than strong partisans to endorse the claim (Estimate = -1.048, p = .003). This combination of effects highlights how both identity and demographics shape perceptions of partisan boundaries.

Read through the lens of agonistic theory, these findings are revealing. Agonistic democracy celebrates conflict as a means of energizing politics, but it also insists that adversaries must be recognized as legitimate opponents rather than enemies to be disregarded. The evidence here shows that many citizens—especially independents and the more educated—believe that partisans fail to meet this standard, treating outgroup members as outsiders rather than adversaries. Strong partisans, by contrast, are more likely to defend their identity as inclusive or at least not dismissive, though the descriptive data show that even within their ranks, a majority acknowledge some disregard.

The broader implication is that while conflict is widely recognized as central to democratic life, its quality matters. If partisan conflict is experienced as exclusionary, it undermines the agonistic ideal of contestation among legitimate opponents. The fact that independents are more likely to perceive disregard suggests that those outside party structures feel alienated from partisan competition. Education amplifies this perception, perhaps by heightening awareness of democratic norms. Together, the results point to a tension between the energizing potential of conflict and the corrosive effects of exclusion, underscoring the challenge of cultivating agonistic democracy in practice.

4.4 Discussions

4.4.1 Partisanship Influence on Understanding of Politics and Decision Making

The objective for this theme was to assess the influence of partisanship in understanding the nature of politics and contribution to decision making. The formulated hypothesis

around this objective was that "Partisanship defines politics and shapes decision making." The research aimed to find; whether people's view of politics differs from the formal definitions, whose views should be considered in decision making and why, and whether ideal democracy can be conceived without partisanship.

The results suggested that in general people view politics as the decisions that government make, as in who gets what, when, and how. Although the association was negative in the Pearson Chi-Square test, it leaves much to understand about how people see politics not necessarily as a contest between political parties. In addition, the findings revealed that both independent and partisans' views should be considered in decision and to a higher degree, the groups prefer the consideration of each other's views, most prominently featured in considering the views of independents in decision making. Nevertheless, partisans see their engagement to bring out the best solutions to address issues, of which a significant number of independents (49%) agree to this. This, according to the findings, suggests the acknowledgement of party politics by both partisans and independents. However, respondents believed democracy was best without parties and partisanship.

4.4.2 Partisanship and Election and Voter Behaviour

The research sought to find out how partisanship influences voting in elections with a special focus on frequency in the 2016 and 2020 general elections. Moreover, the research sought to find out the reason for participation, loyalty or vote patterns, and to test attitudes towards election related matters, especially election petitions. The formulated hypothesis (H2) was that "Partisanship increases electoral partisanship and influences voter behaviour."

The results demonstrated no positive associations between partisanship and voting in an election. This means that people do not simply vote in elections because they are

partisan or independent. A further probe revealed that electoral participation is motivated by a sense of civic responsibility. In fact, the association was positive about this. The results further demonstrated greater sense of vote pattern loyalty among partisans. Nevertheless, about a third of partisans will or have on conditions switch vote for other parties or candidates. Vote switching is common among independents as the results demonstrated.

The research also ascertained a couple of voter behaviours in the manner of acceptance of election results and support for election petition. The results revealed strong support for election outcomes regardless, and very little support for election petitions when the parties or candidates that respondents voted for lose an election. This notwithstanding, there is however a positive attitude towards election petition as it was generally seen to seek justice and test commitment to democratic values.

4.4.3 Partisanship and Political Participation

In line with the second objective—to examine the relationship between partisanship and civic participation—of this research, the formulated hypothesis (H3) stated that "Partisanship increases civic participation and demand for accountability. The research aimed to find if partisanship had any bearing on a number of identified participation indicators such as joining others to raise issues in the society, contacting elected officials, discussing politics, attending demonstrations, criticising the actions of government, and finally whether participating in these activities which demonstrate active citizenship is dependent on strong attachment to a political party.

The data suggested that majority of respondents join others to raise issues in society, contact elected officials and discuss politics irrespective of partisanship. Occasionally, more independents engage in these activities than partisans whereas more partisans engage in these activities frequently than independents.

On the matters of accountability, the research sought to find out through various forms of civic activities including attending demonstrations and criticising government actions. The findings suggested that there is a general apathy towards attending demonstrations although this is much greater amongst independents than partisans. Nevertheless, the finding suggested negative association as the result could only be by chance. Furthermore, respondents wouldn't hesitate to criticise government actions although partisans would engage more in this activity than independents whether occasionally or frequently. It must be noted that it was not within the scope of this research to determine which partisans (opposition partisans or partisans who support the ruling party) will criticise government actions. Hence, the findings is irrespective of party affiliations although a disaggregation could have differentiated who criticises and when they criticise. But the underlying fact is that, partisans are more likely to criticise the actions of government than independents would.

Indeed, a further query on active citizenship being dependent on partisanship revealed a not true response as the finding suggested that more respondents thought one can be an active citizen without being partisan. Notwithstanding, there is sharp divide as more independents agree with active citizenship without partisanship whereas more partisans agree with the statement that an active citizen must be partisan. This, however, connotes no significant association per the Chi-Square tests as the results could only be by chance.

4.4.4 Partisanship and Trust in Public Institutions

This research in effort to understand declining trust in key public institutions analysed the influence of partisanship on institutional trust. Two key institutions, the Courts and the Electoral Commission were identified. The research hypothesised (H4) that "Partisans undermine institutional trust when they do not favour them." With regards

to the Court, it was tested against election petition hearing and that of the EC was against the conduct of elections.

The findings suggested that the majority of the people trusted the Court in the outcome of election petitions regardless, although the level of trust in the Court was higher among independents than partisans. In a similar manner trust in the Electoral Commission regardless of the outcome of elections was higher. In fact, the Pearson Chi-Square test for significance associations for both variables demonstrated positive associations. Whereas declining trust in these institutions have raised alarms of democratic jeopardy, the measures have been quite biased since there is multiplicity of activities undertaken by these institutions. For instance, whereas case adjudication may be the primary function of the Court, the original jurisdiction of election petitions lies in the hands of the High Court and the Supreme Court in the cases of Parliamentary and Presidential election petitions respectively. Therefore, measuring general trust in court and suggesting that there is declining trust raises validity issues especially when the kind of court or case file is not specified. Additionally, the role of the Electoral Commission is not limited to the conduct of public elections. It engages in broader consultation with election stakeholders before the conduct of elections which when a party is dissatisfied can lead to spin-stories and controversies that mar the image of the Commission and heightens perceived distrust before voting day.

As the findings have suggested, trust in courts in election petition cases and trust in the Electoral Commission in the conduct of elections remain higher, among both independents and partisans. These findings confirm the null hypothesis.

4.4.5 Partisanship conflict and violence

This research sought to, in addition assess group behaviour and conflict. It was against this background that the Agonistic theory of democracy underpinned this research.

According to Paxton (2019), agonistic theory of democracy views conflict as both inevitable and potentially beneficial against deliberative democracy. Agonism sees democracy as reviving engagements among citizens with opposing views. This tense engagement is what agonists describe as 'conflict'.

Therefore, partisanship conflict is defined as the engagements between partisans and other partisans, or between partisans and independents with different views. This is what the research measured against resulting violence.

The findings suggested the majority of the people, both partisans and independents agreed that partisanship conflict in general elections, communities and in households often resulted in violence; with the findings suggesting positive associations between partisanship conflict and violence. The results reject the null hypothesis.

4.4.6 Partisanship and Inclusion

Lastly, the research sought to find out whether partisanship promotes inclusion. This was measured by two indicators, asking respondents to agree or disagree with the statements, "partisanship conflict deter participation," and "partisans disregard outgroup members." Respondents agreed with both statements although many more independents were in agreements than partisans. All the Chi-Square tests for statistical significance suggested very positive associations and provided evidence to support the hypothesis that, Partisanship inhibits political inclusion.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings from the data analysis. First, it presented on the demographics and the cross-tabulation analyses with Chi-Square test results that showed the asymptotic significance. It also presented the regression analysis that showed the degree and magnitude of the relationship between the independent variable

and dependent variables. Lastly, it opened up discussions on the meanings the tables confer in relation to research objectives and hypothesis.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The summary of results table displays the variables that test each hypothesis with their respective asymptotic significance (level of significance) per the Pearson Chi-Square Test result. In all, six hypotheses and 24 variables were tested. The variables with negative associations ($p > 0.05$) demonstrate lack of evidence to support an association with the hypothesis. The negative associations suggest that these variables decrease the likelihood of the hypothesis to be true. On the contrary, variables with positive associations ($p < 0.05$) suggest evidence to support the hypothesis and increase the likelihood of the hypothesis to be true.

Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 have variables of both positive and negative significant associations which demonstrate a complex relationship between the variables and the hypotheses, with both supporting and opposing factors. Variables with negative associations may be due to chance, and do not reflect any underlying relationship with partisanship.

For hypothesis 4, the observed association for each variable is positive, specifically, that majority of partisans and independents maintain trust in the court regardless of the outcome of election petitions. Likewise, majority of both partisans and independents trust the Electoral Commission in in the conduct of elections regardless. These positive associations reject hypothesis 4, that partisans undermine institutional trust when institutions do not favour them and accept the null hypothesis.

Finally, the positive associations of variables with hypotheses 5 and 6 suggest that the variables make the hypotheses true and reject all the null hypotheses. Here, it is

observed that the asymptotic significance of all variables used to test the hypotheses have $p < 0.05$.

5.1.1 Key Findings

The study made the following key findings:

1. Citizens overwhelmingly define "politics" as government decision-making (who gets what, when, and how) rather than as partisan contestation.
2. Both partisans and independents agree that each group's views deserve a place at the decision-making table—with an especially strong preference for deliberately including independent voices.
3. A large majority of respondents nevertheless believe that an ideal democracy would function best without parties or partisanship.
4. Partisanship does not predict whether people vote; turnout is driven primarily by a sense of civic duty.
5. Partisans show strong loyalty to their party's candidates, yet about one-third will swing their vote to another party or candidate under certain conditions.
6. Over 75 percent of respondents will accept election results regardless of the outcome; fewer endorse contesting results through petitions—though most still view petitions as legitimate tests of democratic justice.
7. High proportions of both partisans and independents join collective campaigns to raise issues, contact elected officials, and discuss politics—demonstrating robust civic engagement across the board.
8. Attendance at demonstrations is generally low, especially among independents, indicating widespread protest apathy.
9. Partisans are significantly more likely than independents to frequently criticize government actions and policies.

10. Being an active citizen is not contingent on party attachment; many independents engage just as vigorously in civic affairs.
11. A strong majority trust both the courts (in election-petition adjudication) and the Electoral Commission (in conducting polls), with independents exhibiting even higher baseline confidence than partisans.
12. Large majorities agree that partisan conflict fuels violence—in elections, within local communities, and even at the household level.
13. Partisan clashes deter would-be participants and foster disregard for out-group members, undercutting political inclusion.

5.2 Conclusions

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted relationship between partisanship, political behaviour, civic engagement, and institutional trust. The findings reveal that partisanship significantly shapes political decision-making and engagement, highlighting the importance of considering both partisan and independent views to foster democratic solutions. Despite the complex interplay between partisanship and electoral participation, the study underscores that civic duty remains a primary motivator for voter behaviour, with partisans demonstrating greater loyalty to their voting patterns.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes that civic participation is not solely dependent on partisanship, as both partisans and independents actively engage in raising issues, contacting elected officials, and discussing politics. However, partisans are more likely to participate in demonstrations and criticize government actions. Trust in public institutions, such as the courts and the Electoral Commission, remains high among both partisans and independents, regardless of election outcomes, challenging the notion that partisanship undermines institutional trust.

The study also highlights the detrimental effects of partisanship conflict, which often results in violence within elections, communities, and households. Additionally, partisanship inhibits political inclusion, as conflicts deter participation and partisans disregard outgroup members. These findings underscore the need for strategies to mitigate partisanship conflict and promote inclusive political participation.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics of partisanship and its impact on democratic processes, civic engagement, and institutional trust. It calls for a balanced approach that acknowledges the positive aspects of partisanship while addressing its potential to hinder political inclusion and exacerbate conflicts.

5.2.1 Contribution of the Study to Theory

The findings underscore that partisanship conflict often results in violence, which aligns with the agonistic theory's assertion that conflict is an inherent and necessary aspect of democracy. This theory, as articulated by scholars like Chantal Mouffe, posits that democracy is not about achieving consensus but about managing and embracing conflict. Agonistic theorists argue that democracy thrives on the engagement of opposing views, and this tension is what drives democratic processes forward. The observed partisanship conflict highlights the dynamic and contentious nature of democratic engagement. Agonistic theorists argue that conflict can have a positive role in democracy by fostering adversarial engagement and promoting political pluralism. The findings that partisanship conflict leads to violence emphasize the need for democratic institutions to channel this conflict in constructive ways. This aligns with the idea that conflict, when managed properly, can invigorate democratic processes and prevent the stagnation of political discourse.

The resultant violence from partisanship conflict as suggested by findings of this research challenges the deliberative model of democracy, which emphasizes consensus and rational deliberation. Agonistic theory, by contrast, highlights the deep-seated conflicts and power dynamics in democratic societies. The findings support the view that deliberative democracy may not fully address these conflicts, thus highlighting the importance of agonistic engagement. The positive associations between partisanship conflict and violence indicate a need for creating agonistic spaces where conflicting political identities can engage constructively. Agonistic theory advocates for the creation of such spaces to transform antagonistic conflicts into productive democratic engagement. These findings highlight the importance of providing platforms where adversaries can confront each other respectfully, ensuring that conflict does not escalate into violence but rather contributes to democratic vitality.

5.2.2 Contribution of the Study to Research

Firstly, the study offers a nuanced view of partisanship by showing that it can both positively and negatively influence various political and civic behaviours. This challenges the one-dimensional perception of partisanship and encourages a more complex analysis of its effects. Again, the research provides insights into the relationship between partisanship and electoral participation, highlighting the role of civic duty and loyalty. This helps in understanding voter behaviour and the factors that motivate people to participate in elections.

Moreover, by examining the influence of partisanship on civic participation and the demand for accountability, the study underscores the importance of both partisans and independents in promoting active citizenship and holding governments accountable. Additionally, the findings on institutional trust reveal that partisanship does not necessarily undermine trust in public institutions. This contributes to the ongoing

debate about the role of partisanship in shaping citizens' trust in democratic institutions. Furthermore, the research highlights the association between partisanship conflict and violence, providing empirical evidence for the agonistic theory of democracy. This has implications for understanding political conflict and developing strategies to mitigate violence.

The study's examination of partisanship and political inclusion sheds light on the barriers to political equality and the ways in which partisanship can deter participation and lead to the exclusion of outgroup members. More so, the use of multiple variables and hypotheses, along with statistical analysis, demonstrates a robust methodological approach. This sets a precedent for future research in political science to adopt similar comprehensive methodologies.

Lastly, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex and multifaceted effects of partisanship on political behaviour, civic engagement, institutional trust, conflict, and inclusion. The findings encourage researchers to adopt a more holistic and nuanced approach when studying partisanship and its implications for democracy.

5.2.3 Contribution of the Study to Practice

The findings from this study offer several practical contributions that can be applied in various areas of politics and public administration. By recognizing the importance of considering both partisan and independent views in decision-making, policymakers can foster more inclusive and balanced decisions. This can lead to solutions that are more widely accepted and effective. In addition, political parties can use the insights on voter behaviour and motivations to refine their electoral strategies. Understanding that electoral participation is driven by a sense of civic duty rather than mere partisanship

can help parties engage voters more effectively and foster a stronger sense of civic responsibility.

The study highlights the role of both partisans and independents in civic participation and accountability. Public administrators and civil society organizations can leverage this knowledge to design initiatives that encourage active citizenship and increase civic participation across the political spectrum.

Now, the finding that partisanship does not necessarily undermine institutional trust provides valuable insights for public institutions. By maintaining transparency and fairness, institutions like the courts and the Electoral Commission can build and sustain trust among the public, regardless of partisanship.

Understanding the positive association between partisanship conflict and violence can help policymakers and community leaders develop strategies to mitigate conflict. By promoting dialogue and engagement among citizens with opposing views, they can reduce the likelihood of violence and foster a more constructive political environment.

The study's findings on the inhibitory effects of partisanship on political inclusion can inform efforts to promote political equality and inclusion. Policymakers can use these insights to design policies and programs that encourage the participation of marginalized groups and ensure that all voices are heard in the political process.

By recognizing the complex and multifaceted nature of partisanship, public administrators can adopt a more holistic approach to governance. This involves considering the diverse perspectives of both partisans and independents, promoting accountability, and fostering a culture of trust and inclusiveness.

5.2.4 Study Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

First and foremost, the limited scope of the variables may have limited the depth and comprehensiveness of the analysis. The study tested 24 variables against partisanship.

However, the research acknowledges that there are other relevant factors influencing partisanship that the study did not include due to resource constraints. Additionally, this study has temporal limitation because political behaviour and attitudes are time responsive. The dynamics of politics are fluid and subjected to rapid changes therefore the findings may not fully represent long term trends and development.

Lastly, data collection from only the Efutu Municipality of Winneba may not capture the full spectrum of political behaviours and attitudes across different regions. The findings may be influenced by the unique political, social, and economic context of the Efutu Municipality, which may not be representative of other areas.

The avenues for future research could explore the factors that influence trust in public institutions and how this trust impacts democratic values and behaviours. Additionally, future studies could explore factors that influence people's disinterest in attending demonstrations. Similarly, further research can examine the nexus between floating and independent voters. Moreover, future research can delve deeper into the idealisms and realisms of democracy without parties and partisanship. Lastly, instead of opinions about partisanship conflict and violence, future research can explore experiences with leading and detailed indicators to fully comprehend the interplay between partisanship and violence.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations.

First, to address how partisanship shapes political decision-making (RQ 1, H1), national and local authorities should institutionalize structured, bipartisan-neutral forums—such as citizens' assemblies or joint party–independent policy panels—where both party-affiliated and independent voices are guaranteed equal speaking time. This will ensure that decision-making processes are more representative and inclusive. The discussion

demonstrated that while partisans believe their engagement produces the best solutions, independents feel routinely sidelined. Strategies should be developed to engage independents in political activities, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued in the democratic processes. Providing platforms for citizens to raise issues, contact elected officials, and engage in discussions, regardless of their partisan affiliations will help create a more engaged and active citizenry. Embedding these consultative spaces into formal planning cycles will ensure that policy debates balance partisan expertise with independent critiques, thereby enriching deliberation and reducing zero-sum contestation over who "owns" an issue.

Second, in order to harness partisanship's motivating effect on turnout and curb swing-voter volatility (RQ 2, H2), the Electoral Commission, together with civil-society partners, should expand nonpartisan civic-education campaigns tailored to first-time and floating voters. The findings showed that civic duty—more than party loyalty—drives most people to the polls, yet many remain susceptible to last-minute shifts. Schools, media, and community centres should therefore provide clear, accessible information on voter rights, party platforms, and the long-term costs of uninformed swing voting. Regular "election readiness" workshops in swing-voter hotspots can help citizens form stable, values-based affiliations rather than opportunistic vote changes.

Third, to translate partisan energy into constructive accountability rather than protest fatigue (RQ 2 & RQ 3, H3 & H5), government ministries and oversight bodies must co-create "citizen scorecards" that allow both partisan supporters and independents to evaluate service delivery in real time. As Chapter 5 revealed, the likelihood of attending demonstrations or protest is low among both partisans and independents, however, partisans are more likely to mobilize protests and critiques when disappointed—but independents also join in when a clear, evidence-based template for assessment exists.

By launching mobile surveys tied to specific sectoral programmes or opening formal channels of communications between the government and the people, officials can channel public grievances into formal follow-up hearings, reducing ad-hoc demonstrations and minimizing the risk that partisan conflict escalates into violence.

Fourth, given the strong link between partisanship and institutional trust (RQ 3, H4), the Judiciary and the Electoral Commission should enhance transparency around election petitions and dispute resolution. Although the research showed that both partisans and independents retain higher baseline trust in these bodies with regards to the conduct of elections and hearing petition cases, some disillusioned partisans may trumpet distrust and withdraw support when unfavourable rulings occur. To counteract this while sustaining trust, the courts and the EC should publish plain-language reasoning for every major decision on dedicated web portals, hold quarterly town-hall briefings on procedural updates, and partner with academia and CSOs to demystify petition processes. Faster, more comprehensible adjudication will discourage perceptions of bias and inoculate both partisans and independents against conspiracy theories.

Finally, to overcome partisanship's barrier to inclusion (H6), political parties must adopt internal "cross-cutting liaison" structures that link their youth, women, and ward chapters with those of rival parties and independent civic groups. Chapter 5 highlighted that partisans too often disregard out-group members, deterring would-be participants. By institutionalizing joint training programs—on leadership ethics, consensus-building, and conflict resolution—parties can foster personal relationships across divides. This will have the potential of eliminating perceived violence as a result of partisan conflict in national elections, communities and even households.

Taken together, these recommendations call for a multi-stakeholder approach—uniting government agencies, parties, civil society, academia, and the media—to channel partisanship's energy into deepening, rather than fraying, Ghana's democratic fabric. Continuous monitoring of turnout metrics, civic-action platforms, petition backlogs, and inter-party liaison outcomes will ensure that reforms adapt over time, preserving both the creative vitality and moral discipline of partisan engagement.

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APPENDICES

Appnedix A

Survey Questionnaire

This Survey Questionnaire is designed for data collection for the MPhil Thesis, "Assessment of Partisanship on Democracy and Democratic Norms in Ghana". The Researcher is an MPhil Political Science Education, student at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW).

Respondent Selection

*Upon approaching a prospective respondent, the **interviewer should introduce** himself by saying:*

Good (time of day). I am an MPhil Political Science student at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). As part of my partial requirement for the award of my MPhil Degree, I am researching how people's political party affiliations affect our democracy and democratic norms. This survey questionnaire is designed to collect data for the research. I am interviewing people like you, those in the voting age category, that is 18 years and older for this research. I wish you'd spare a few minutes of your time for this interview. It will be quick and snappy.

*If a person **agrees** to be interviewed, the interviewer should reply, "Thank you for agreeing to this interview." Find a convenient place to sit (not moving too far away) or stand (if respondent prefers). Assure the respondent of the confidentiality of his or her responses and the inability to trace back the responses to him or her by saying:*

Your answers will be confidential. They will be put together with 179 other people that we are interviewing. It will be impossible to pick you out from what you say, so please feel free to tell us what you think. Ask for clarification where you do not understand. This interview will take about 15 to 20 minutes.

Record Date

Date of Interview (dd/mm/yyyy)	
IntrvDate	__ __/__ __/__ __ __ __

BEGIN THE INTERVIEW

Time of Interview Begins (00:00) 24hr	
IntrvTime	: __ __

Respondent's ID	
RespNo	001 – 180

Demographics

1. Respondent's gender	
Female	0
Male	1

2. Which of this age category did you fall into on your last birthday?				
18 – 25	26 – 35	36 – 45	46 – 55	56 and above
1	2	3	4	5

3. What is your highest level of formal schooling?				
No schooling	Primary	Junior High	Senior High	Tertiary
0	1	2	3	4

Main Questions

4. Did you vote in any of the previous general elections?		
Election	Yes	No
A. 2008	1	0
B. 2012	1	0
C. 2016	1	0
D. 2020	1	0

5. Would you say you have strong attachment or affiliated to a political party in Ghana?	
Yes, I have strong attachment for a political party	1
No, I am not attached to any political party. I see myself as independent/neutral	0

6. Would you say you support the party in government?	
No, I don't support	0
I somewhat support	1
Yes, I support	2

Interviewer to Respondent*: In* ***Question 7*** *below, you will be asked to choose the extent of your agreement between two statements, that is, Statement 1, and Statement 2.*

7.			
Statement 1: I think of politics as the decisions that government make		***Statement 2***: I think of politics as the banter (contest) between political parties over ideas, decisions, and policies	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

8. How often should views of the following categories of people be considered in decision making?				
	Never	Rarely	Very often	Always
A. Partisans	0	1	2	3
B. Independents/Neutrals	0	1	2	3

***Interviewer to Respondent**: In **Questions 9 and 10** below, you will be asked to choose the extent of your agreement between two statements, that is, Statement 1, and Statement 2.*

9.			
Statement 1: Engagement between partisans bring out the best solutions to address issues		***Statement 2***: The inclusion of non-partisans brings out the best solutions to address issues.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

10.			
Statement 1: Partisan views are best because they are contested and well-defended		***Statement 2***: Independent/neutral views are best because they are devoid of attachments	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

11. How often do you undertake the following actions?			
	Never	Occasionally	Frequently
A. Discuss politics with others	0	1	2
B. Join others* to raise an issue of concern	0	1	2
C. Contact elected official over an issue	0	1	2
D. Attend a community meeting	0	1	2
E. Attend a demonstration or protest	0	1	2
F. Call out corruption in government	0	1	2
G. Criticize actions/plans of the government	0	1	2
H. Criticize actions/plans of the opposition	0	1	2
I. Listen/read budget statement	0	1	2
J. Follow PIAC** sittings or read PIAC reports	0	1	2

**could be via social or traditional media — chats, texts, writing, phone calls*
***PIAC is Public Interest and Accountability Committee overseeing petroleum revenues*

***Interviewer to Respondent**: In **Questions 12 to 21** below, you will be asked to choose the extent of your agreement between two statements, that is, Statement 1, and Statement 2.*

12.			
Statement 1: I participate in politics because I support a political party		***Statement 2***: I participate in politics because it's my civic duty and political right to do so	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5
13.			
Statement 1: I go to the polls because the party I vote for contests the election.		***Statement 2***: I go to the polls because it's my civic duty and political right to do so	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5
14.			
Statement 1: Regardless, I have never changed the party I first voted for in presidential elections. [or will never change]		***Statement 2***: I have switched my vote for another party/candidate before in presidential elections. [or will switch on certain conditions]	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5
15.			
Statement 1: Regardless, I [will] support the outcome/results of an election.		***Statement 2***: I [will] support court petition to contest results when the party/candidate I voted for loses an election.	

Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

16.			
Statement 1: Regardless, I [will] trust the court in their conduct and judgement on election petition.		***Statement 2***: I [will] suspect, blame, and do not trust the court when the party/candidate I voted for loses election petition.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

17.			
Statement 1: Election petition is a way of seeking electoral justice and testing democracy.		***Statement 2***: Election petition is unnecessary and time wasting.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

18.			
Statement 1: Regardless, I [will] trust the Electoral Commission in the conduct and management of elections.		***Statement 2***: I [will] suspect, blame, and do not trust the Electoral Commission when the party/candidate I voted for loses an election.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

19.	
Statement 1: Regardless, I trust the government handling of socio-economic development.	***Statement 2***: Protests should be organised when the government is underperforming.

Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

20.			
Statement 1: Protests are a way of demanding accountability and ensures civic participation.		***Statement 2***: Protests are unnecessary tools for obstructing governance.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

21.			
Statement 1: To be an active citizen, one needs to be attached to a political party.		***Statement 2***: One can be an active citizen without being attached to a political party.	
Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4
		Agree with Neither [Do not read]	5

22. Partisanship conflict in general elections often results in violence.			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4
23. Partisanship conflict in my community often results in violence.			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4
24. Partisanship conflict in households often results in violence			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4

25. Partisanship conflict deter others from political participation.			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

1	2	3	4
26. Partisans disregard members of other groups (partisans of other parties and independents).			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4
27. Thinking of our democratic dispensation, it is best without parties and partisanship.			
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4

END INTERVIEW

Interviewer should record the time the interview ended.

Time Interview Ends (00:00) 24hr	
EndTime	__ __ : __ __

Interviewer should express his gratitude to the respondent by saying:

I want to express my gratitude for your time and insightful responses. Your responses will greatly assist the researcher to conduct his assessment of partisanship on democracy and democratic norms in Ghana. Thank you once again and have a good day.

Appendix B: Web Report on IBM SPSS Data Analysis

Analysis_Assessment of Partisanship on Dei