Managing Election-Related Violence for Democratic Stability in Ghana

Edited by: Kwesi Aning
and Kwaku Danso

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MANAGING ELECTION - RELATED VIOLENCE FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY IN GHANA

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Preface

Ghana is a 'beacon of hope' in Africa for its democratic laurels since it entered into multi party democratic elections in 1992. However, this enterprise have come along with its own effects (positive and negative) including Election related Violence.

Election related violence has socio-cultural, political and economic consequences on nations if not managed well. These include for example lose of cultural identity; break in family ties; possible economic recession and hunger among others.

Even though elections are not desired to end in conflicts and violence, it sometimes does and the ability to deal with it is very crucial to the stability of democracy in a nation.

This book deals with how to manage election related violence. It examines the concept of electoral violence and its consequences on society. It also analyses inter and intra party conflicts and further looks at the linkage between politics and violence in Ghana. It looks at the use of abusive language in politics, election observation, gender related violence and the role of the youth in Ghanaian politics.

On behalf of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, I would like to congratulate Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso (Editors) and all

other contributors to this wonderful piece of work as well as my colleagues at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. It is our hope that this publication would be widely used by researchers, political parties, policy makers and the general public.

Daniela Kuzu
Resident Director

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ARPS	Aborigines' Rights Protection Society
(ARPS)	
AU	African Union
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CENI	Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CDR	Committee for the Defence of the Revolution
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJA	Committee for Joint Action
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers

COG	Commonwealth Observer Group
CPMRD	Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department of
KAIPTC	
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CVC	Citizens' Vetting Committee
DA	District Assembly
DCEs	District Chief Executives
EC	Electoral Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Foundation)
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GIBA	Ghana Independent Broadcasters' Association
GIMPA	Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration

GJA	Ghana Journalists' Association
GNA	Ghana News Agency
HSG	Heads of State and Government
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
INEC	Interim National Electoral Commission
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NCA	National Communications Authority
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NCP	National Convention Party

NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NMC	National Media Commission
NEDEO	Network of Domestic Election Observers
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NIC	National Investigation Committee
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPC	National Peace Council
NRC	National Redemption Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NUGS	National Union of Ghana Students
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
NYP	National Youth Policy
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDCs	People's Defence Committees
PNC	Peoples' National Convention
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council

PNP	Peoples' National Party
PP	Progress Party
Pts	Public Tribunals
PVT	Parallel Vote-Tabulation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SMC	Supreme Military Council
TEIN	Tertiary Education Institution Network
TESCON	Tertiary Students Confederacy
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIGOV	Union Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

W/PDCs	Workers' and Peoples' Defence Committees
YPM	Young Pioneer Movement

Chapter 1

Introduction

Violence in Democracy: Dynamics for Democratic Consolidation and Deconsolidation in Ghana

Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso

Background and Rationale

After decades of experimentation with varying political forms, Ghana reverted to competitive politics in 1992. Since then, the country's political landscape has been marked by two salient developments. First, unlike prior existing constitutions which were hastily truncated by military interventionists, the Fourth Republican constitution has witnessed a relatively stable period of democratic continuity and a discernible drift towards the transformation of Ghana into a functional liberal democracy. This trend is clearly visible in terms of the processes through which formal rules and decision making procedures governing political exchange are now established, implemented and altered. These political processes are in turn based primarily, though not exclusively, on the principle of the separation of powers, which is complemented by fairly vibrant oversight structures for checking political and administrative excesses.

Even more evident is the democratic mode by which accession to political power has been made since the Provisional National

Defence Council (PNDC) regime gave way to constitutional rule in the early 1990s. Central to this development has been the regular conduct of national elections, which have resulted in peaceful alternations of power between the two dominant political parties - the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). These electoral successes and the peaceful turnovers arising from them have taken place alongside, and within, a bourgeoning institutional context and a broader political terrain that is highly accommodative of a vibrant media and a critical civil society (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Whitfield, 2009)

Second, despite the critical role it plays in the consolidation of democracy, elections in Ghana are invariably plagued by localized violence that threatens the peace, security and stability of the country. Confined though, these acts of violence have accompanied every election at least under the Fourth Republic. They usually occur before, during and after elections, and are characterized by threats, intimidation, physical assault, vandalization of electoral materials, as well as the use of hate speeches and incendiary language. Election-related violence is routinely employed by the political class as an operational strategy or counter strategy to obtain electoral advantage.

Often, individuals or groups of party supporters pursuing diverging agenda resort to violence to promote a multiplicity of interests which may include material reward or appointments to political office. There have been many cases in recent times where particular clients, mainly the youth, have threatened and actually used violence against their patron(s) for failing to perform their side of the bargain after the former had sacrificed time, resources, life and limb to ensure access by the patron to political

power and control/distribution of state resources. Elections also provide the opportunity for groups to express other grievances, which may relate to such issues as land ownership, boundary demarcation or determination, and chieftaincy succession (CDD, 2008).

To be sure, the degree of violence that accompanies elections in Ghana come nowhere close to the tragedies experienced in the aftermath of elections in some African countries. Cases of violence during elections in Ghana have been largely localized and confined. Yet the underlying factors that inspire electoral violence in Ghana and other African countries are not markedly different. They have often include challenges such as zero-sum patterns of political interaction, pervasive neo-patrimonial arrangements, and more importantly the failure of institutional mechanisms to cope with fraught political dynamics. Violence in Ghanaian politics, as elsewhere on the African continent, appear to be the surface expressions of more profound structural difficulties pertaining to such issues as ethnocentrism, political polarization, exclusionary politics, multiple and competing centres of authority (traditional / modern), youth unemployment, and inadequate state capacity. While formal and informal institutions, which are indispensable for managing these difficulties, continue to develop at a fairly steady pace, they still find it difficult to respond effectively to the challenges being encountered.

In Ghana, the violent manner in which the various political (and economic) undercurrent are given expression, particularly by the political class and their supporters during election periods, for example through direct clashes between opposing local party

supporters, burning and looting of property; seizure of ballot boxes by 'macho men' and unemployed youth constitute a formidable threat to the growth and consolidation of the country's fledgling democracy (CODEO, 2009). Often, these acts of violence combine to produce tense, volatile and unpredictable electoral atmosphere that create an urgent sense of insecurity in the minds of many Ghanaians during elections periods. More importantly, these challenges expose critical frailties and inadequacies inherent in the Ghanaian body politic and call into question the viability of Ghana's democracy. Electoral violence, as it has been visible in the last 20 years of Ghana's history, unquestionably represents a potent force for deconsolidation within an otherwise dynamic context of democratic continuity and stability.

Critical questions arise from these dual processes of democratic continuity and the potential for discontinuity, of tension between consolidation and deconsolidation: What explains Ghana's susceptibility to electoral violence and the likely occurrence of armed conflict, in spite of the country's enviable democratic credentials? What has been the implication of violence on Ghanaian politics and how has the country managed to cope with it? What explains the resistance of violent electoral politics to change, despite the ubiquitous presence of formal and informal democratic institutions in Ghana? How does violence impact on various groups and individual, particularly women, when they seek to gain access to the political centre in Ghana? What can be done to ensure that democracy thrives and endures in Ghana?

The purpose of this volume is to attempt to respond to these and other similar questions. Managing Election-Related Violence for Democratic Stability in Ghana seeks to investigate the anomaly of violence in democracy and the tension thereof between democratic consolidation and deconsolidation, as it has been evident in Ghana since 1992. In the view of the Editors, the provision realistic, adequate and dispassionate answers to these questions can help generate new insights and approaches need to forestall violence in the upcoming national elections in 2012 and beyond, and for the promotion of peace, security and democratic stability in Ghana.

The complexity of violence in democracy and the dual currents of democratic consolidation and deconsolidation mean that answers to the fundamental questions raised above cannot be found in a single all-embracing variable or perspective. Rather, the contributors to the volume seek answers that they will afford fuller insights from the complex relationship between state and society, between formal and informal institutional frameworks, within the capacity of institutional arrangements to enable and constrain actors' behavior, and within a multiplicity of psycho-cultural and historical factors.

Structure and Focus of the Book

This volume contains 10 chapters in all. In Chapter 1, Aning and Danso depict in broad strokes the dynamic trends evident in Ghana's prevailing political and democratic processes. They highlight the anomaly of violence in Ghana's democracy and raise certain fundamental questions that set the stage for more detailed and analytical treatment of the issue.

In Chapter 2, Danso and Lartey examine the phenomenon of electoral violence and its multiple implications for the processes of democratic consolidation in Ghana. They discuss the centrality of elections in a democracy and seek to understand the fundamental motivation behind the resort to electoral violence. Drawing on insights from institutionalism they contend that democratic consolidation in Ghana will be difficult to achieve without effective institutional frameworks capable of influencing actors' behaviour. They perceive a correlation between institutional strength and democratic stability.

In Chapter 3, Aning and Birikorang conceptualize and analyze the instrumentality of populism and populist politics in the acquisition and retention of power by the political class, and the ways in which this approach impact on political trends and processes in Ghana. They contend that populism and populist rhetoric is employed by both military and constitutional regimes, just as it is employed by incumbent governments and the opposition. While, in their view, populism and populist politics have been an integral part of Ghanaian political experience, it has in recent times assumed a disturbing dimension which carries the potential to undermine the consolidation of democracy in Ghana.

In Chapter 4, Danso and Edu-Afful discuss the surging use of verbal abuse and unguarded statements in Ghanaian politics, particularly as the 2012 national elections draw closer. Using a range of primarily and secondary data, and with insights from securitization theory, the authors assess the likely security implications of such language for the conduct of elections in Ghana. They identify four main types of political actors - elected party officers, leading members, media (radio/television)

panellists/discussants, and serial callers - who make frequent use of intemperate language and the manner in which their actions give rise to needless friction, controversies, (mis)interpretations and disputes that also undermine the conduct of peaceful elections and the consolidation of democracy in Ghana.

In Chapter 5, Pokoo examines the issue of inter- and intra-party conflict within the broader context of democratic development and consolidation in Ghana. He focuses on party politics in Ghana as part of a wider process of political development. He contends that the central pillars of successful political development are the nature, interest and values of political elites; the relationship between the elites and the general public; and the legal-historical context of the society in question. And that advances in any of these pillars must necessarily be accompanied by corresponding advances in the other pillars in order to forestall political disharmony and violence.

In Chaper 6, Lamptey and Naila Salihu interrogate the relationship between the politics of patronage and electoral violence in Ghana. They note that the adoption of democratic political systems in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa did not necessarily remove the influence of patronage on the conduct of politics in these countries. They argue that the conflict between resource monopolization, skewed distribution and outright deprivation which mark patronage politics constitute a major source of violence during elections in Ghana as actors mobilize to go the full hog in order to secure power and to gain access to and control over state resources.

In Chapter 7, Tietaah examines the use of abusive Language in Ghanaian politics. The author focuses on the hypothesised link between media malaise and political efficacy and suggests that the use of indecorous language in the media could threaten Ghana's standing as an oasis of electoral peace and democratic stability in West Africa. He uses concrete examples from recent African cases to establish his point.

In Chapter 8, Aubyn, discusses the nexus between election observation and the prevention of election-related violence.While the author projects election observation as a critical tool for the prevention of electoral violence in Ghana, he also acknowledges that election observation comes with its own challenges. He proposes policy orientated actions for dealing with the challenges.

In Chapter 9, Darkwa discusses the issues of gender, elections and violence with particular focus on the barriers women encounter when they seek access to the political centre. The author uses case studies as well as primary data to analyze some incidents of election-related violence against women in Ghana. She concludes that women face peculiar challenges, most of which are steeped in gender rather than physiology. On this basis, she recommends that women's experiences of election-related violence be analysed through gendered lenses so as to be able to locate violence in the different contexts in which they occur.

In Chapter 10, Abdallah and Osei-Afful explore the involvement of the youth in contemporary Ghanaian politics. They perceive the youth as an active player not only in the political and electoral

processes in Ghana but also as perpetrators of political violence. The authors argue that the youth play critical roles in the electioneering activities of political parties. This inspires them to make certain demands which are not always realist. The manner in which such expectations are managed will have corresponding implications for peace and security.

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Chapter 2

Democracy on a Knife Edge: Ghana's Democratization Processes, Institutional Malaise and the Challenge of Electoral Violence

Kwaku Danso and Ernest Lartey

Abstract

The increasing optimism generated by Ghana's series of successful elections has led to the depiction of Ghana as the 'bastion of democracy' in Africa. This image is, however, misleading given the multiple dysfunctional complexities that accompany Ghana's electoral and political processes. Drawing on insights from institutionalism – the assumption that institutions matter in the management of the political arena – this chapter argues that democratic consolidation in Ghana will be difficult to achieve without effective institutional frameworks capable of influencing actors' behaviour, especially within the context of elections. The chapter highlights the nexus between elections and democratic consolidation and makes the case for strengthening formal institutional mechanisms in order to address the increasing incidence of electoral violence, which could push Ghana to the brink of armed violence in this election year.

Keywords:

Elections, actors, violence, democratic consolidation, institutions, neopatrimonialism

Introduction

Since 1992, following the reintroduction of competitive politics under its fourth republican Constitution, Ghana has taken significant strides towards the consolidation of democracy. Notable among these efforts has been the successful conduct of five successive national elections, which have resulted in two uninterrupted transfers of power from the incumbent party to the opposition. These electoral advances over the last two decades (1992-2012) have taken place alongside considerable improvements in the performance of key institutions of state such as the Electoral Commission (EC), the judiciary and the security agencies (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Whitfield, 2009). During the same period, Ghana has also witnessed the emergence of a vibrant media and a multiplicity of civil society groupings,[1] which are all integral to the process of democratization.

In spite of these developments, the future of Ghana's democracy remains uncertain, as it continues to grapple with persistent and multiple challenges that threaten to subvert the peace and security being enjoyed by Ghanaians. Perhaps the most insidious of these challenges is that posed by the phenomenon of election-related violence, which invariably accompanies all national elections in Ghana. These acts of violence, which usually involve threats and intimidation, physical and verbal assault, burning and looting of property, seizure of ballot boxes, and disruption of party rallies and polling stations, can cripple electoral processes and give rise to armed violence (CODEO, 2009; Aning, 2001; Gyampo, 2008).

[1]For instance, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), one of the major local election watchdogs, has since 2000 contributed to the validation of electoral processes in Ghana through the deployment of observers during elections.

True, each election year', as Boafo-Arthur (2006) observes, 'generates its own defining issues and political undercurrents'. But electoral violence has been a recurring issue that continues to push Ghana towards the brink of all-out violence each election year. Such is the seriousness of the problem that it is difficult to predict with certainty if Ghana will survive the upcoming general elections in 2012 without major political upheaval. While some observers, particularly in the diplomatic community, portray Ghana as the 'bastion of democracy'[2] in the West African sub-region, the level of violence and tension that is beginning to characterize its elections is a measure of the frailty or fragility of this incipient democracy and its institutions (Van Rompuy, 2010; Ayelazuno, 2010).

This chapter examines the phenomenon of electoral violence and its multiple implications for the processes of democratic consolidation[3] in Ghana. Following this introduction, part two of the paper discusses the centrality of elections in a democracy. Part three examines the imperative of strong institutional arrangements[4] as a key determinant of successful elections and sustainable democratization. Using random examples from the 2008 Ghanaian elections, the fourth section discusses how the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the two dominant political parties in Ghana, persistently resorted to violence as an effective operational strategy for

[2]Jokers et al. (2009) attribute this obvious international or diplomatic bias to the need for a 'positive example to hold up, a model to follow for Ghana's African peers'.

[3]A consolidated democracy, according to Linz and Stepan (1996), is a 'political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, "the only game in town"'.

[4]Institutions are those mechanisms or frameworks that structure political interactions for the purpose of ensuring social order among actors in a political setting.

obtaining electoral advantage. The fifth and final section of the paper discusses the consequences of electoral violence on democratic stability in Ghana, and concludes with recommendations for addressing or coping with them. As a preliminary conclusion, the paper contends that Ghana's democracy will remain in a limbo of permanent transition for as long as election-based violence remains a 'cost-effective' strategy for gaining and maintaining political power. Ensuring democratic stability requires effective institutional frameworks that can contain competing and conflicting demands and interests in society, by neutralizing the potential advantages of violence when employed by the political class as an operational strategy. In other words, institutions matter.

The Centrality of Elections in a Democracy

Perhaps the most salient feature distinguishing a democratic order from other political forms is that in a democracy, political leaders are thought of as representatives of the sovereign people as they are elected by, and derive their authority from, the people (Manin et al. 1999). Thus, the basic norm or ultimate principle underlying a liberal democracy is that political leaders ought to be elected by the majority of the people through free, fair and transparent elections. This is critical because elections represent the most feasible institutionalized approach for ensuring the rule of the people by the people and for the people (Lindberg, 2006). As such, elections are closely linked with the principle of political equality, which is widely considered as 'the core principle of democracy' (Heywood, 2002: 69). At its most basic, at least in principle, political equality ensures an equal distribution of

political power and influence among the individuals within a polity. When political rights – the rights embodied in the idea of political equality – are exercised through the electoral choices that citizens make, they confer authority on governments and legitimize the institutions of democracy while ensuring, at the same time, their resilience, credibility and stability (Ninsin, 2006:187). As such, elections serve as a critical instrument for conflict prevention and peacebuilding through the facilitation of peaceful transfers of power from one political party to another. This helps to minimize the violence and general state of instability that often characterize undemocratic means of acquiring political power, such as military coups d'état.[5] For elections to produce peace, security and stability, however, the electoral choices of citizen need to be made in a free, fair, credible and violence-free atmosphere.

If they are not manipulated, the electoral choices of citizens can also influence the character of public policy to reflect popular will as a preferred-policy bearing candidate or party gets elected into office. In this way, elections can serve as a platform for broadening participation (albeit indirectly) in the governance process while enabling the citizen to shape the forces that govern collective life. In short, elections serve as a critical mechanism through which citizens can advance their interests.

Also, the decisions that citizens make in their choice of leadership are inextricably connected with the demand for accountability (Anebo, 2001). This is most visible when the electorate freely exercises its franchise to renew or terminate the mandate of an incumbent government at the polls

[5]Over the years, therefore, Africa's regional organizations such as the AU and ECOWAS have adopted governance doctrines that sanction constitutional and orderly succession to power through the regular conduct of elections by member states. According to the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), for example, '[e]very accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections'. Also see Article 1 (b) & (c) respectively.

according to its judgement of the government's record vis-à-vis its promises. Thus, politicians can be disciplined to further the collective interest if the people can easily replace corrupt and inefficient leadership through voting (Besley, 2006; Ferejohn, 1999). In this way, elections can promote accountability in governance by compelling politicians to respond to the needs of the people.By the same token, elections can help to keep authoritarian tendencies of rulers in check while safeguarding the rights and liberties of citizens. This makes the phenomenon of electoral violence and the multiple accusations of fraud and malpractices that accompany elections in Ghana very troubling indeed (Aning, 2001). In 1992 for example, the opposition NPP, believing that the 1992 presidential election 'was (and not must have been) rigged', proceeded to boycott the subsequent parliamentary elections and the first parliament of the Fourth Republic (Boahen, 1995). The obvious denial of political representation to a section of Ghanaians, which was the logical outcome of the boycott, unquestionably runs counter to the fundamental tenets of democracy.

While they are central to the process of democratic stability and longevity, elections can also serve as catalysts for armed conflicts and democratic reversals (African Union, 2010). This can happen especially when election candidates fail to play by the rules of the game and rather resort to illegitimate tactics, such as ballot fraud and violence, to obtain electoral advantage. All things considered, elections are about power; more precisely, the acquisition and maintenance of political power. They are, therefore, highly competitive processes that are often characterized by disharmony of interest among key competitors. Electoral competitions are particularly fraught in contexts where the process is abused – as is

often the case in a number of African countries – and turned into an instrument for promoting personal and partisan interests or ethnic hegemony, rather than promoting the collective good of society. In such contexts, elections merely provide a convenient facade, behind which the political class competes for space not so much to demonstrate the superiority of idea or policy, but rather to gain access to and control of state resources in its own interest. This changes the electoral dynamics from a formal mechanism for leadership and policy alternation into a zero-sum pattern of political interaction in which one actor's gain necessarily results in a loss for another or other actors. Since the stakes are, in such circumstances, correspondingly high, electoral competitors are often inspired to go the full hog and to employ every means necessary to secure electoral victories.

Indeed, the demand by citizens for democratic means of acquiring political power has, since the end of the Cold War, placed a much greater premium on elections in Ghana and other countries in Africa. As a consequence, even in cases where electoral processes have been compromised by manifestly criminal acts such as vote rigging, violence and intimidation, it is still commonplace for the 'winners' of such elections to proclaim that they obtained their right to rule from the people. This is necessary for obtaining the accolade of legitimacy, lest they be branded as undemocratic for usurping the power of the sovereign people.

But the question then arises as to why similar processes elsewhere in the established democracies are virtually devoid of election-related violence and tension. What accounts for the persistence of election-based violence in Ghana despite

the successful conduct of a series of elections since 1992? These are some of the questions to which the paper now turns its attention.

Democratization and the Institutional Imperative

While elections are central to the consolidation of democracy, their potential contribution to stabilization is in turn contingent upon a number of complementary factors that provide the framework for orderly interaction among competing interests within the political process. Key among these is the degree of institutionalization of the political system, and more specifically – at least within the arena of elections – the capacity of state institutions to elicit compliance with relevant rules and procedures for securing and maintaining political power. [6]

Because elections usually involve actors with divergent interests and, more importantly, because they ultimately provide access to and control over political power (which in some cases is abused for parochial gains), electoral processes invariably tend to be highly conflictual. The role of formal institutions therefore becomes one of shaping actors' behaviour in a manner that transforms their political actions into or aligns them with socially desirable outcomes. This can or does happen when commonly agreed rules, norms and procedures providing the context for political interaction, 'create incentive and constraint for actors' behaviour by rewarding those that follow the rules and sanctioning those that do not' (Norgaard, 2001). The behaviour-changing or influencing imperative of institutions means that they are effective to the extent that they prove capable of eliciting actors' compliance. Since rational actors will normally break

[6] Closely related to this is the amount and quality of relevant information that the electorate has, as well as its willingness to make electoral decisions on the basis of such information, rather that predetermined considerations such as ethnic or religious allegiance. See Manin et al. (1999) for further discussion.

agreed rules to maximize their (short-term) interest, the assurance that victims can seek redress or obtain justice in cases of rule violation or cheating become very crucial for the sustainability of democracy. In the absence of this, a 'tit-for-tat' situation arises where rule violations are responded to with other rule violations (Axelrod and Keohane, 1986). This situation, a clear outcome of institutional degeneration, can destabilize prevailing arrangements and lead to all-out violence and subsequent de-consolidation of the democracy.

Therefore, while the revival of pre-existing democratic institutions – and the creation of new ones – which has been a marked feature of Ghana's transition to constitutional rule is refreshing, the level of violence that characterizes elections in Ghana suggests that the mediatory role of institutions is currently not being discharged adequately. This inadequacy appears to be chipping away actor confidence in the police and judiciary, for example, and correspondingly inspiring politicians and their supporters to take the law into their own hands. The corrosive effect of such a terrifying development on the rule of law, democracy and its stability cannot be overemphasized.

The fundamental question that arises then is: why are formal institutions failing to function as intended? Answering this leads to a further question that relates to the nature of interactions between formal institutions and political actors: which of the two categories influences the other? As noted earlier, a fundamental determinant of the effectiveness ofinstitutional frameworks is the extent to which they succeed in the implementation of commonly agreed norms, rules and procedure of political exchange.

Thus, if they are to function effectively, formal institutions ought to act as the independent variable that enables or constrains actors' behaviour and not the other way round.

Often, the effective functioning of formal institutions is constrained by interlocking, informal, political frameworks that have been sustained over time through the process of 'path dependence.[7] Thus, while formal institutional arrangements are designed to function along the logic of Weberian rational bureaucracy, the manner in which they actually operate in the African context tend to reflect informal and competing political frameworks that are sustained alongside formal institutional arrangements. These informal frameworks, which do have an impact on the nature of contemporary African politics, are centred on personalized rule and often organized through a complex web of patronage networks, usually involving social and ethnic affinities (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Gyimah-Boadi, 2007; Ninsin, 2006b; Lindberg, 2003). Unlike formal institutional arrangements, which are based on impersonal forces such as the rule of law, neo-patrimonial systems are based on – and usually sustained through – the extraction and distribution of resources by those who hold political power, the patron(s), to their network of clients and followers in return for support and loyalty (Gyimah-Boadi, 2007; Lindberg, 2003). Such a network of supporters often includes family members, friends and members of the same ethnic group.

Thus, while one does agree with Whitfield (2009) that the two dominant political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP, have sympathizers across the length and breadth of the country - and even though the NDC won in eight regions in the 2008 elections,

[7]The idea of path dependence holds that current institutions – and the manner in which they function – are influenced by prior existing arrangements. In other words, 'history matters'. See Norgaard (2001) for further discussion of path dependence.

ethnic bloc voting particularly in the Volta and Ashanti regions remains a major challenge (Jockers et al., 2009). The tendency on the part of politicians to manipulate and to feed on ethnic sentiments during elections has not only been in evidence during election periods, it is indeed assuming disturbing dimensions in recent times. The recent statement made by Mr. Kennedy Agyapong, the Member of Parliament for Assin North, inciting NPP supporters against Ga and Ewe people is a case in point (The Enquirer, 2012). Earlier in 2008, while on the campaign trail, NDC presidential candidate Atta Mills had told his fellow Fante people that it was more advantageous to vote for him, a son of the soil, than to vote for a 'stranger'. The infamous 'adze wo fie a oye' statement by Mr. Atta Mills himself – literally, 'there is something good at home' – along with several other statements by members of both leading parties only go to confirm the pervasiveness of ethnicity in the Ghanaian body politic. As Aning aptly observes, 'the ethnic card is a key issue in generating political violence but politicians have been exploiting the card by using ethnicity and religion to manipulate the electorate and inciting the youth to engage in violent acts' (Aning, quoted in The Accra Daily Mail, 20 November, 2008). There are numerous recent African cases, such as the post-elections crises in Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire, where ethnic politics, often pursued through clientelistic networks, have threatened the very survival of the state.

The dualism created by the persistence of neo-patrimonial frameworks and modern institutions means that formal institutional arrangements, though conspicuously present, are often apt to prove frail structures, particularly when it comes to the enforcement of the rules governing electoral competition.

The enormous power and influence of 'Big Men' and significant traditional figures who often operate 'outside' the formal state means that formal institutions are sometimes unable to reach the nooks and crannies of the informal systems (Nugent, 1995). As a consequence, it becomes fairly easy for individuals to act in contravention of formal laws and take refuge in the informal system.

Since clientelism is usually sustained through the distribution of material resources, the system often deprives the state of the needed wherewithal, first, to adequately provide basic public goods such as law and order and, secondly, to institutionalize and regularize the entire political system by bringing all aspects of the system under formal state control. Political competitors, on the other hand, would normally resort to the use of violence as available resources for inducement through bribes and vote buying dwindle. The reduction in state viability often means ensuing conflicts become even more difficult to contain. To a large extent, clientelism and the use of electoral violence have become particularly difficult to deal with because all significant political competitors in Ghana find them attractive as cost-effective political strategies.

Therefore, even though Ghana has managed to conduct a number of elections, it does not necessarily follow that the level of democratic consolidation is improving. The nature and scope of violence that accompanied the 2008 elections, like other elections before it, clearly point to the fact that prevailing conditions are not yet right or are not likely to favour long-term stabilization. Given that oil politics is also beginning to feature in an already fraught situation, the political and economic incentives for resorting to

violence are becoming even more evident. The infamous statement by Nana Akufo-addo, the flag bearer of the NPP, calling on supporters of the party to use every available means to secure victory for NPP in the upcoming elections in 2012 attests to this fact (Monney, February 2011). At the same time, however, there are great prospects for democracy stability, peace and security if urgent short-term and long-term measures could be put in place to channel conflicting demands and interests within the framework of viable democratic institutions. This point will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Selected Cases of Violence in the 2008 Elections

It appears Ghanaians are not prepared to face the fact that they are as violent as their counterparts in other African countries that have experienced massive violence in recent times. Indeed, Ghanaians generally perceive themselves as peaceful, kind, hospitable, and God-fearing. Yet, it takes just a casual observation of the way in which instant street justice is meted out to suspected criminals (for example, the lynching of alleged mobile phone thieves) to realize that Ghanaians are no less violent than their counterparts in Kenya, Nigeria or Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, the impression one gets is that Ghanaians sometimes prefer to solve their problems by simply failing to recognize them. Thus, although no political party officially sanctions the use of violence of any form, violence is in evidence in all three phases of the electoral process (before, during and after voting), often giving rise to heightened tension across the country.

These acts of violence are usually typified by threats and intimidation; physical assault of voters, electoral officials and

supporters of rival parties; burning and looting of property; seizure of ballot boxes by 'macho men' and unemployed youth; and direct clashes between opposing local party supporters (Jockers et al., 2009; IRIN, 2008). Although these and other forms of violence have to some extent characterized all elections held in Ghana, at least under the Fourth Republic, this discussion focuses mainly on acts of violence that took place just before, during and immediately after the 2008 elections (Ablordeppey, 2008; The Statesman, 2008).

Violence during the 2008 elections began during the registration of voters, the first major exercise ahead of the elections. A simple and practical exercise that should normally pose no problem was characterized by acts of vandalism and attacks on party agents, journalists and ordinary civilians along with clashes between supporters of the NDC and NPP mostly in the Northern, Volta and Ashanti regions (Alhassan, 2008; Asmah, 2008). As Gyampo (2008) observes '[There] were reported cases of minors being sent by political party officials in buses to register, acts of intimidation, gunshots, people taking the laws into their own hands and preventing people suspected to be political opponents from registering, and so on'. In the Northern Region, in particular, there were instances of sporadic gunshots as supporters of the NPP and NDC vandalised registration centres in protest over the integrity of the registration exercise (Alhassan, 2008).

As voting day drew closer, so did violence escalate with attacks and reprisal attacks mostly by NPP and NDC supporters, often involving unemployed youth and 'macho men' (ibid.). In some cases, particularly in northern Ghana,

the elections provide the opportunity for groups to express other grievances, mostly relating to land and chieftaincy. A study conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, 2008) observed that:

> 'the most serious threat of violence occurred in the Tolon constituency. A chieftaincy conflict, with political undertones, is brewing in the area' [and that] 'a known sympathiser of an opposition party, was suspected to be trying to install two sub-chiefs in two villages noted to be strongholds of the ruling party (Kpalsogu and Golinga) in the Tolon-Kumbungu District.'

There were also spontaneous clashes between the two leading political parties. In August, for example, a political rally organized by the NPP was brought to an abrupt end following a shooting incident believed to have been orchestrated by members of a rival party (Daily Graphic, 2008). As noted already, both the NPP and the NDC were guilty of criminal electoral behaviour. The following narrative by the daughter of a murdered NDC party chairman clearly depicts the gruesomeness of some of the incidents:

> The attackers asked my father to choose between his life and his properties. There were about a hundred people all armed. They were arguing whether to burn the houses first or my father's commercial vehicles. They set fire to all of his eight cars.... Everything was burnt, all our possessions, possessions dating back to one hundred years. We have nothing left (IRIN, 2008).

The police at a point had to impose a 12-hour curfew in the

Northern region together with the deployment of joint military-police patrols in order to bring the escalating violence under control. There were also violent clashes in the Volta, Ashanti, and Greater Accra regions, though not to the scale witnessed in the three northern regions of Ghana.
Perhaps the most disturbing threat was that issued by ex-President J.J. Rawlings, founder of the NDC, who complained that the previous election was rigged by the NPP and proceeded to warn that he and his party would not sit down for the NPP to rig the 2008 elections. He declared his party's preparedness to fight to the finish to secure victory for the NDC (The Accra Daily Mail, 21 August 2008).

A major threat to peace on election day was posed by the attempts of some disgruntled individuals in some parts of the country to snatch ballot boxes during or just after voting (Daily Guide, December 2008; Ghana News Agency, December 2008). There were also allegations of vote rigging, especially in the Volta and Ashanti regions. Given the questionable nature of results that were recorded in these two regions, such allegations were not completely unfounded (Jockers et al., 2009). Indeed allegations, of vote rigging nearly plunged the country into turmoil after the announcement of official results by the Electoral Commission (EC) was postponed several times. These postponements prompted scores of party supporters of both leading parties to gather near the EC Headquarters threatening to attack the facility on successive days (The Guardian, 2008).

Although Ghana's 2008 elections managed to deliver a winner in the person of Professor John Atta-Mills, and even though the election was widely hailed by the Electoral Commission

and major international stakeholders as free, fair and transparent, the level of violence that marked the process clearly showed that Ghana is not out of the woods yet (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2008). If the acts of violence that characterized the 2012 biometric registration exercise in certain parts of Ghana are portents of what is likely to happen during voting in December, then the entire electoral security architecture and the issue of voter education need to be revisited.

Effects of Election-based Violence on the Process of Democratization

The resort to election-based violence and other illicit electoral behaviour, such as vote rigging, registration of minors, ballot snatching, defacing of posters, bribery and multiple registration invariably spell trouble for the survival of any democracy. This is particularly the case in contexts that are characterized by weak and unresponsive institutions. While the threats it poses to life and limb are menacing enough, electoral violence also corrodes the very foundation of democracy, the idea that government ought to operate by the consent of the governed. In other words, force and fraud, rather than freedom of choice, become the ultimate decider of who rules when institutions degenerate.

Such developments can breed voter apathy or, in the worst-case scenario, result in all-out armed violence if electoral outcomes persistently fail to reflect popular will. There are numerous recent African cases where election-based violence, often conducted along ethnic lines, has thrown countries into a virtual state of civil

war. Famous examples are the 2007/2008 election crisis in Kenya, and the 2011 electoral challenges in Côte d'Ivoire.

Even if the system manages to survive, chances are that it will remain fragile and even more susceptible to the internal complexities of the political process. As force become the ultimate determinant of who rules, it gets to a point where a competitor's chances of 'wining elections' are predetermined by the ferocity and the viciousness with which he can take on his opponent. Correspondingly, the imperative of aligning scarce resources with the process of economic transformation diminishes as limited available resources are channeled either into sustaining the loyalty of clients or to procure some instruments of coercion.

Also, the surge in political risk, a logical outcome of electoral violence, can have an adverse impact on investment, as the investment climate become less attractive for both local and foreign capital. This can in turn cap economic growth and development and further undermine the prospects for effective institution building and long-term democratic stabilization.

Furthermore, as violence becomes a major feature of political interaction, a point is reached where the basic elements of democracy such as political equality, civil and political rights simply disappear into thin air. Zimbabwe, Eritrea and, to some extent, Uganda, fall within the category of African countries that are currently sitting on the extreme end of the continuum of countries that are currently balanced on a knife edge. While Ghana also sits on a knife edge, its position is to the opposite end of the continuum, closer to the handle, which affords it some precious space for maneuver, allowing it to put its house

in order.

Recommendations

A necessary condition that ought to exist in order to ensure free, fair and transparent elections – and, for that matter, democratic stability – is that political parties and their candidates should calculate the negative cost-benefit ratio as they deliberate on whether or not to employ violence as an operational strategy. Competitors are likely to cheat unless the judge is visible and ready to penalize them for so doing. Thus, cheating is likely to stop if the cost of doing so is prohibitive and, hence, unprofitable. For this to happen, there is a need for effective institutional arrangements that are not only independent of political influence, but which also possess the capacity for exacting compliance with commonly agreed rules, principles and procedures of political exchange.

Although Ghana has witnessed considerable improvements in the performance of key institutions of state, many of these institutions remain weak, sluggish and corrupt. Even frontline institutions such as the police and the judiciary that are supposed to strengthen the criminal justice system and to promote the rule of law are perceived as being among 'the most corrupt state institutions, [while] the executive and legislative branches have failed to check the excesses of these key state institutions' (Fobih, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires effective reform of these institutions. It is also recommended that the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police should no longer be a political decision by an incoming government but should rather be based

on a specific number of years of tenure. This can make the senior leadership of the police service less amenable to political influence. Thus, it would not matter which political party is in power.

Democratization also requires the realignment of state resources, including existing institutions, more closely to politico-economic processes in a way that helps to improve the production environment and to boost the livelihoods of citizens. This will help reduce the dependence on patrons and alter prevailing informal patterns of exchange a great deal.
Another critical condition for the process of consolidation is the 'analogous democratization' of the constituent parts or components of the system such as political parties, civil society groups, the courts and public administration (Norgaard, 2001). Thus, an undemocratic political party, for example, cannot foster democracy.

Massive voter education by such organizations as the National Commission on Civic Education and non-governmental organizations will continue to be useful, as the watchdog role of the media will become even more imperative. Also, the question of the traditional political arena, for example whether or not chiefs are (by nature) political or must remain apolitical, needs to be revisited.

Equally important is the need for an effective early-warning system that enables relevant security agencies to pre-empt or respond promptly to election-related conflict situations that carry the potential for all-out armed violence. Effective early-warning systems can help forestall political crisis through dialogue

and negotiation.

Conclusion

Although Ghana has successfully conducted a series of elections since the country returned to constitutional rule in 1992, these elections have been accompanied by acts of violence that call into question the future of Ghana's democracy. In order to address this challenge, there is need for institutional frameworks that are capable of containing competing and conflicting demands and interests in society. Such frameworks should be able to influence actors' behavior by generating a negative cost-benefit ratio for politicians who seek to use or actually resort to violence as an operational strategy. This should be backed up by effective civic education and improvements in the living conditions of Ghanaians.

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Chapter 3

Negotiating Populism and Populist Politics in Ghana, 1949-2012

Emma Birikorang and Kwesi Aning

Abstract

Ghanaian politics has seen the use of populist rhetoric to attract support and votes from sections of the population. This phenomenon existed in the pre-independence period where political elites used populism to attain independence and to channel the energies and support of Ghanaians in the nation-building process. This chapter conceptualizes populism and popular politics in Ghana from the immediate post-independence period, exploring how populism and popular politics have been used by different politicians representing different political ideologies to gain access to, and in some cases retain, power. It also discusses how different military regimes employed populist political rhetoric to garner support from the masses for their unconstitutional interventions in national politics but subsequently failed to maintain this support among Ghanaians, and even among their own rank-and-file. The argument this chapter makes is that populists can be found both in government and in opposition. But more critically, the defining issue with populism and populist rhetoric in Ghana has been its initial usage to: (a) gain political power; and (b) secure continued popular support once power has

been attained. The result is that populism and the use and abuse of populist rhetoric have become a particular and accepted political genre in Ghana, in spite of the negative twist that the phenomenon has taken during the 4th Republic, and the implications for peace and security in Ghana.

Key words:

populism, revolution, coup d'état, elections, regime, rhetoric.

Introduction

Ghana, which attained independence from Great Britain in 1957, prides itself as being a 'frontrunner' in African politics as it was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to attain independence (after Liberia). This consciousness of being a frontrunner imbues all aspects of political discourse in Ghana. An abiding aspect of this understanding of Ghanaian politics has been the use of 'populist' rhetoric to attract support and votes from sections of the population. In the history of contemporary populist political rhetoric in Ghana, one can begin to date such activities to the independence movements, particularly the Convention People's Party (CPP), and its charismatic leader Kwame Nkrumah, who became Leader of Government Business when Ghana won self-rule in 1951. Throughout the struggle for independence, there was a deliberate attempt at using and exploiting populist language and rhetoric to appeal to large sections of the populace,

particularly the youth. The CPP's usage of the phrase 'self-government now' as opposed to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), the other independence movement's slogan of 'independence in the shortest possible time' resonated more with ordinary Ghanaians, derogatively characterized by the UGCC as 'verandah boys'.

This appeal to and usage of populist rhetoric then continued in the multiple military coups d'état starting in 1966 with the National Liberation Council (NLC) and in 1972 with the National Redemption Council (NRC) slogan of 'yentua' (we will not repay our loans) and its accusations against the overthrown democratic regime of the Progress Party (PP) led by Kofi Abrefa Busia, of having taken away the modest fringe benefits ('the few amenities') of the armed forces similarly resonated with the population. Such appeals to popular sentiment were exhibited again both during the rule of the Peoples' National Party (PNP) under Hilla Limann (1979-1981) and more radically during the four months' 'house-cleaning exercise' by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) beginning in June 1979. Finally, with the declaration of a revolutionary regime in 1981 (the Provisional National Defence Council) to supposedly cleanse the society and military of corruption, populist politics became an established genre in contemporary Ghanaian politics.

The paper begins with a conceptualization of populism and populist politics in Ghana from the immediate post-independence period. It starts with the arrival of Kwame Nkrumah on the national political scene and the development, growth and myth around the 'Nkrumah Showboy' sloganeering. Subsequently, the paper discusses how two different military

regimes employed populist political rhetoric to garner support from the masses for their unconstitutional interventions in national politics but subsequently failed to maintain this support even among their own rank-and-file. This, in the first instance, reflected the changing circumstances of the Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong era and the eventual change in nomenclature from the National Redemption Council (NRC) to the Supreme Military Council (SMC I) in an effort to save an increasingly unpopular and bankrupt regime. Acheampong's cosmetic endeavours to rebrand his regime failed when his deputy, General Frederick Akuffo led a palace coup and overthrew him, which ushered in the SMC II. The bankruptcy of SMC II eventually led to the failed putsch on 15 May 1979 and the successful first and second appearances of Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings in June 1979 and December 1981 respectively. Ghana's accession to constitutional rule in 1992 was marked by a period of intense political campaigning in which populist rhetoric was again used to garner votes and mass support. This 'tradition' that was started by Nkrumah, has been used in the political sphere of Ghana ever since. This paper thus traces the history of populism in Ghana with a view to gauging whether it has resulted in a particular type of politics in Ghana, and its implications for peace and security before, during and after elections.

Populism and Populist Political Discourse in Ghana

Populism is a label that has been applied to the style of crowd-pleasing politicians who are hard to distinguish from demagogues, and who make promises – political, economic, social – no matter how unattainable, as long as this practice advances their cause, and who will tweak legal procedures

and institutional arrangements shamelessly to correspond to their needs (Arditi, 2003). This definition does not presume that populists only manifest themselves once they have access to political power, with the means to sideline institutional procedures. Rather, the argument here is that, populists can be found both in government and in opposition. More critically, the defining issue with populism and populist rhetoric in Ghana has been its initial usage to: (a) gain political power; and (b) secure continued popular support once power has been attained. Thus, whether they are in government or opposition, there is a sense in which populist politicians eventually exhibit impatience with formal decision-making processes. Through such displays of impatience, political leaders tend to invoke their trademark, populist distrust of elites as a sweeping device to override institutional constraints on their action (Arditi, 2003:19).

The worldview of populist politicians can be divided into us and them. Them usually relates to those who oppose 'our' views and actions, and therefore become the enemy of us and perpetrate injustices against us. This presupposes that the privileged few in society or those political, social and economic beliefs and status are at variance with those representing us would usually be classified as them while the underdogs and underprivileged would be us. The populist, therefore, exploits and takes advantage of particular political discourses which are often based on the twin pillars of resentment: anger and injustice– perceived or real (Meny and Surel, 2002:12) to perpetrate, propel and sustain themselves into power. Thus, an emphasis on the notion of 'the people' is always central to populist discourse that tends to be permeated with the celebration of 'the good, wise and simple people and the rejection of the corrupt, incompetent

elites whom, it is said, have betrayed the people' (Vincent, 2009:214). Populism can arise from the failure of the intermediate institutions to consider ordinary opinion, when a political class, one party or president or prime minister appears to treat the bureaucracy and local government as their own property, rather than as a public trust (Crick, 2005: 631).

Characteristic of most African countries, Ghana's political history and experience shows leaders who have had various leadership styles and been classified in many different ways. Since attaining independence 55 years ago, Ghana has had 10 heads of state and government (HSG) ranging from noted academics and intellectuals such as Kwame Nkrumah and Kofi Busia, to military dictators such as Generals Kutu Acheampong, Emmanuel Kotoka, Akwasi Afrifa, Frederick Akuffo, Flt.-Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, as well as the diplomat Dr. Hilla Limann, and finally public servants-turned democratically-elected presidents such as Professor John Evans Atta-Mills and Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor. Given the plethora of leaders who have 'served' the country, and who have employed various leadership styles to garner support from 'people', Ghana makes an interesting empirical case study of how populism and popular politics have been used by different politicians representing different ideologies to gain access to, and in some cases retain, power. The end result is that populism and the use and abuse of populist rhetoric have become an accepted political genre in Ghana. Of all the leaders mentioned above, the three who have elicited the most heated debate and discussion within Ghana and abroad, and whose populist policies had the most significant effect on Ghana's political environment were Kwame Nkrumah (1957-1966), Kutu Acheampong (1972-1978), and Jerry Rawlings (4 June-31 October 1979;

and 31 December 1981-8 January 2001). Because of the particular roles and contributions of these three politicians, one of whom won independence for Ghana and was also democratically elected, but progressively turning dictatorial, and two military leaders who came to power through coups d'état, this paper discusses populism within the framework of Ghana's experience, particularly under these three political leaders. Against this background, the paper also explores the impact of such populist approaches to politics on the Fourth Republic through to 2012.

While Kwame Nkrumah was voted the African of the Century in a British Broadcasting Corporation poll in 2000 and his birthday has been declared and celebrated as a continent-wide event by the African Union (AU), Nkrumah's political legacy has only recently been resuscitated and rehabilitated in Ghana and he enjoys virtually unassailable national status in the country. While Nkrumah is perceived as the model of African leadership (at least in the period immediately preceding Ghana's independence), the place and position of Kutu Acheampong, on the other hand, in Ghanaian history is for the time being uncertain. Some historians and political observers, however, have concluded in the interim that his period at the helm of Ghana's affairs nevertheless embodied all that was not so admirable about African leadership. More interestingly, even though both Kutu Acheampong and Jerry Rawlings were military coup leaders, Rawlings eventually executed Acheampong and seven others for their corrupt and violent rule. Rawlings, on the other hand, is not so easy to pigeonhole and defies easy classification as he straddles both the good and the bad notions of populism discussed in the paper. Though the nature of his political legacy has not yet been decided, it is nevertheless a useful exercise to analyze the populist

strategies that kept him in power for the considerable period of time from June 4 to September 1979 and from 31 December 1981 to 8 January 2001.

Developing the 'Show Boy' Myth: Populism in the Quest for Independence and Nation-building and Integration

The first modern public pronouncements of populism and populist politics in Ghana occurred during the struggles for Ghana's independence, particularly from 1947 when Kwame Nkrumah was invited home from the United Kingdom to become the General Secretary of the then leading independence movement, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC).[8] This movement, led by some of Ghana's most conservative political leaders, made up of lawyers, chiefs and businessmen, had invited Nkrumah to help restructure the movement and give it a more popular, accessible and welcoming façade than its otherwise staid image. As illustrated by the UGCC slogan, 'independence in the shortest possible time', Nkrumah realized upon assumption of office that the conservatism and narrow focus and support base of this movement would not release the energies of the masses and respond to the expectations of the Ghanaian populace. Over time, Nkrumah's organizational skills and mass appeal to different groups of people and his ability to attract the sympathies and support of the poor, unemployed and lowly in society, derogatively characterized as the 'verandah boys' by leading UGCC figures, saw the first schism developing between Nkrumah and his mentors. Articulating the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the masses and being better able to give voice to their sentiments, Nkrumah and like-minded supporters broke away from the UGCC and formed the Convention People's Party (CPP)

[8] This paper focuses on the period from 1947 to 2012. We are conscious of the fact that there were other populist movements in Ghana during the colonial period such as the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and other organizations that employed populist rhetoric and arguments for political ends. However, for the purposes of this paper, we will focus on the period identified above.

in 1949 with a more catchy and popular slogan: 'Self-Government Now'.

As a result of Nkrumah's charismatic leadership and Pan-Africanist outlook, any mention of Ghana between 1957 and 1966, evokes the image of this one individual. A critical issue is to understand the processes and mechanisms through which Nkrumah managed to become the symbol of a resurgent Ghana and the embodiment of the dreams of the African continent from 1951, when Nkrumah became the Leader of Government Business, until 1966 when he was removed in a military coup d'état. During his tenure, Nkrumah was generally perceived as a charismatic leader whose style of rule featured what can be characterized as fantasy slogans, such as 'Nkrumah never dies', 'Nkrumah is our messiah', 'Nkrumah Show Boy,' and eventually as the 'Osagyefo' (saviour, messiah). Modern political propaganda techniques were employed, using the newspapers and radio in particular to project a specific image that tapped into a deliberate exploitation of traditional and cultural images of fearlessness, boldness, strength and invincibility. These slogans were commonly sung and recited by school children, party activists and society at large. While these adulatory slogans implied significant support from the masses for Nkrumah, they also created a dependency of the population on him as the first Prime Minister and first President. He was perceived (or deliberately portrayed) as being the one warrior who delivered them from the clutches of the evil British imperialist (Osagyefo – messiah) as the one who could single-handedly lead the country into an endless (ɔseadiɛyɔ - unfailing) future of prosperity and affluence (Show Boy). While these slogans may seem innocent at face value, LeVine, however, argues that they create an effect between such leaders and their

followers to an extent that such adulation tends to induce submission, acquiescence or support as well as satisfying their own role-recognition (LeVine, 1975). Such adulation and its deliberate exploitation for political ends can have both intended and unintended consequences. Whatever the results, they have a political and practical utility for such leaders who seek uncritical support for their policies as well as for themselves.

Because of the multiple reasons for fostering national integration among diverse ethnic groups and for his own political interest, Kwame Nkrumah to a large extent fuelled and encouraged this adulation. In most of his public utterances, especially in the immediate post-independence period, he sought to create the impression of someone who had single-handedly won the anti-colonial battle and rescued his people from the clutches of colonialism. Giving a speech in February 1957, he argued that,

> "these days, violence and armed revolutions can hardly succeed. Now it is organization backed by moral force and mass action that can succeed. When a people are determined to be free and are united under a dynamic party under strong and unflinching leadership, vain will be efforts of the imperialists and the reactionaries to frustrate our aspirations" (Nkrumah, 1957: 6) [our emphasis].

Bestowing on himself the image of the invincible leader without whom independence would not have been achieved, and placing himself on a high pedestal, Nkrumah's emerging dictatorial tendencies were justified as being for the benefit of his people. Furthermore, these appellations sought to justify to the populace that they needed him on that pedestal as a reminder of the

independence that had recently been attained, and particularly not to lose sight of the nation-building and integration tasks ahead. Speaking during his first visit to the United Kingdom as Prime Minister to attend a Commonwealth meeting, Nkrumah responded to allegations of growing dictatorship and self-aggrandizement by declaring that,

> "…my cabinet and I have decided, with my agreement, to put my head on the coinage, because many of the people cannot read or write. They have got to be shown that they are now really independent. And they can only be shown by signs. When they buy stamps they will see my picture – an African like themselves – and they will say 'look, here is our leader on the stamps. We are truly a free people'… We are not doing this because I am a vain man. We are doing this for my people. Because they wish it." (Danquah, 1957:1) [our emphasis]

The coinage in question duly bore Nkrumah's portrait, as well as the inscription, 'Kwame Nkrumah, Founder of the State of Ghana'. Apart from placing his portrait on stamps and the currency, the language used by Nkrumah in justifying this action among others is telling. First, is the possessive word 'my'. To Nkrumah, the people belonged to him, he was their saviour and he knew and could interpret their needs and their wishes.[9] Secondly, it was important for the people also to identify with him as an individual and to appreciate the heights he had attained from his humble beginnings in Nkroful, his home village in the Western Region, as well as the sacrifices he had made and struggles he had endured in the quest for independence. To that

[9]Interestingly enough, the political descendant of the major opposition party in the pre- and post-independence Parliament that had been critical of this shift to the personalization of politics in Ghana, 50 years later placed Nkrumah's portrait together with those of the other five key actors in the broad independence movement ('the Big Six') on all Ghana's currency notes.

end, Nkrumah's life story, 'Kwame Nkrumah: My Life Story' was serialized in the national weekly newspaper Sunday Mirror for several months following independence in 1957.

In spite of the sharp criticism of the opposition at the time, Nkrumah continued to receive open and adulatory support from large sections of the society whom he had deliberately courted. Nkrumah's belief in Marxism and Marxist ideals contributed to the way in which he perceived himself and the sacrifices that he had made for his people. He had constantly impressed upon the leadership of the party to forge strong bonds with the rank-and-file of the party, and build a living solidarity for the protection of the people's welfare, while actively courting the peasants and rural proletariat (Nkrumah, 1973). The coup d'état of 1966, which overthrew Nkrumah and the massive support it garnered, came as a surprise to many given the 'popularity' of Nkrumah. However, it was Nkrumah himself who had created the populist tradition that emphasized socialism, or state capitalism for the interests of the common man (Opoku, 2010: 230). This populist tradition was employed by his detractors, especially the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the local conservative political class to overthrow him and to garner significant public support for the coup d'état.

Even though plaudits have been accorded Nkrumah for marshalling the political support that facilitated Ghana's independence, it is significant to note that Nkrumah's arrival on Ghana's political scene also came at an opportune time because 'there was a fertile ground on which to work for mass participation in the anti-colonial struggle. A high degree of political awareness already existed among the people in towns

and countryside. This was being expressed in a growing resentment of colonial rule' (Milne, 2000: 36). Nkrumah, therefore, became the individual symbol for the articulation of mass dissatisfaction against colonial rule in order to gain political power. According to Anyidoho, Nkrumah, over the years, seemed to have lost sight of the 'spirit of freedom that resides in the collective will of a people, not in the lofty ideals of one leader, however gifted, however self-sacrificing. Any disconnect between the vision of a leader and the will and spirit of the people can only lead to one thing: collapse of the independence dream itself and tragedy for the leaders and people alike' (Anyidoho, 2010:6). Such was the disconnect between Nkrumah and 'his people' that in spite of the vituperation that followed his overthrow, he still had expectations that the people of Ghana would restore him to power.

While Nkrumah was reviled in the immediate aftermath of his overthrow, his populist policies for promoting himself were studied, copied and adapted by subsequent heads of state in Ghana who would align themselves to what has become known in the Ghanaian political discourse as the Nkrumahist tradition and in so doing attempt not only to follow in his populist footsteps but to align themselves to his successes.[10]

The Shift from 'One Party' Populism to Military Rule

Luckham's assertion that authoritarian regimes neither have to be popular nor legitimate to survive, that they require compliance rather than consent (Luckham, 1998:137), has been contradicted in the Ghana experience. All military regimes that have taken over power after independence, have sought to justify to the public the

[10]This was more glaring during the celebration of Ghana's 50th Independence Anniversary in 2007. The incumbent government, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), a political arch opponent of Nkrumah's philosophy tapped into the emotional groundswell of support and remembrance of Nkrumah by placing huge billboards in Accra and other parts of Ghana showing pictures of Nkrumah and then President Kufuor side-by-side, depicting an almost seamless handover of political legacy and legitimacy from Nkrumah to Kufuor.

reasons for the takeover, especially during the initial stages of the coups d'état. More often than not, these leaders have sought to win public support and sympathy through the introduction of specific populist policies and programme interventions, while ratcheting up the political rhetoric to justify their actions. The military and police leaders who overthrew Nkrumah were in particular need of strong justifications for their actions against a populist leader who continued to wield significant influence over sections of the population even from exile in Guinea.

If Nkrumah's populist tendencies were for his self-aggrandizement and as a tool for mass mobilization towards independence and his nation-building and integration project, the type of populism that followed his overthrow on 24 February 1966 and the subsequent military dictatorship under the National Liberation Council (NLC) was ideologically different. For those who toppled Nkrumah, one major challenge was convincing the people that the once popular Nkrumah had changed from the 'ordinary' accessible person who led them to independence, into a cult figure, dictatorial and inaccessible, and that the new regime could also deliver on the promises which Nkrumah made but had been unable to fulfill. Typical of military coups, the usual triggers or reasons given were the corruption of public officials and the new post-independence elites, mismanagement of the economy and the wanton dissipation of the impressive financial balances left by the colonialists[11], and increasing authoritarianism on the part of the ruling elites.

While the above political rationales may have contributed to Nkrumah's loss of popularity, there may have been other reasons for the economic discontent at the time. For example, the price of

[11] This point was particularly poignant since in making such allegations against his detractors did not acknowledge the massive infrastructural developments that occurred in the first eight years of his rule, nor the deliberate distortions on the international commodity markets that undermined his Seven-Year Development Plan launched in 1964.

cocoa on the international market dropped from £476 per ton in 1954 to £87 in 1965. However, it does not sufficiently explain the spontaneity with which the masses supported the coup against Nkrumah. Against the great populist Nkrumah, it took another large-scale, strategic populist drive of character assassination and public vilification to garner the mass support necessary for the consolidation of the putsch. In the broadcast message to announce the overthrow, one of the coup leaders, Emmanuel Kotoka, argued that,

> 'the question is not what we have now, but what we could have got had the reserves been used wisely. By this standard of assessment, the old government had nothing to its credit. Economic mismanagement, coupled with incessant lip service to planning, were the only things they gave to the country by way of leadership". (Daily Graphic, 25 February 1966: 1) [our emphasis].

Fellow coup leader, Colonel Akwasi Afrifa, in another populist address justifying the coup, pointed out that 'maladministration, economic chaos, expenditure on prestige projects, and the neglect of revenue producing schemes under the old regime was enough reasons for any person of conscience to wish for a change of government.' (Daily Graphic, June 20, 1966:6)

Writing in 1967, in self defence, Nkrumah labeled these accusations as the 'Big Lie', in which he alluded to the fact that 'in the case of Ghana, the big lie told to the world was that Ghana needed to be rescued from economic chaos. The country was said to be hopelessly in debt and the people on the verge of

starvation. Among the lies against me personally was the one that I had accumulated a large private fortune; this was to form the basis for an all-out character assassination attempt" (Nkrumah, 1973:394). However, it was impossible for the coup makers not to castigate Nkrumah's legacy, by pointing them in the direction of Nkrumah's negatives, as this was possibly the only way of gaining mass support and legitimacy.

Although the takeover had been successful, there were residual difficulties with getting and maintaining popular support. According to Hansen and Collins, once the military takes over power, it is confronted with two crucial issues: one being the question of legitimacy, while the other is disengagement (1980:302). Legitimacy comes in two forms: (a) internal legitimacy, which is the ability to garner sustained local support for the takeover; and (b) external legitimacy, which is gaining international support through political and economic performance. For most military takeovers, garnering local support in the period immediately after the takeover is not as difficult as the latter stages. The 'Big Lie' populist strategy of the NLC was successful and led to stinging verbal attacks against the former President. In one such attack, a March 1966 headline in the Daily Graphic was titled: 'The Fall of Satan'. In a congratulatory message to the regime, the chiefs and people of Gbese Traditional Area in Accra wrote that the 'fall of Kwame Nkrumah is more spectacular than that of Satan, a most vivid warning and an appreciable lesson to all who pursue the political kingdom and its volatile treasures'. Other newspaper headlines included, 'All is Quiet'; 'Kwame's myth is broken', where for the first time,

Nkrumah was referred to by his first name only; 'They are Full of Joy'; 'Chiefs greet new regime' and 'TUC [Trades Union Congress] praises new regime'. Thus, to solidify the legitimacy of its coup, the NLC had to demonstrate that even though Nkrumah had been the supposed Osagyefo, he was incapable of taking the country forward into the bright future that had been promised.

However, for the NLC, once the initial momentum of Nkrumah's overthrow slowed down, its local legitimacy diminished sharply following widespread calls for a return to democracy and elections. This fact was acknowledged by Afrifa in 1967 when he declared that 'our revolution has lost its momentum. This I believe as a soldier is an indication that our military regime has come to an end. I do not suppose that we can bluff our way through' (Amoah, 1967: 1).

The NLC successfully disengaged and handed back power to a civilian administration through an election in 1969, which was won by the Progress Party of Kofi Abrefa Busia. This party was in power for a period of three and half years before being overthrown in another coup d'état. The NLC's decision to organize elections and hand over power stands in sharp contradistinction to the coup d'état initiated by Acheampong in 1972, who was determined to remain in power until he was himself overthrown in a 'palace coup' by his peers in the military.

The Acheampong era: from nationalist rhetoric to a kleptocratic regime

Before discussing the Acheampong regime and its populist tendencies, brief mention must be made of the civilian

democratic administration of Professor Busia (1969-1972). The Busia government's actions and/or inactions provided the launching pad and enabling environment for Acheampong's coup. Busia's regime was fixated with righting the wrongs of past regimes, in terms of getting the Ghanaian economy back on track. Goldsworthy notes that Nkrumah's huge legacy of foreign debt and a continuing high rate of borrowing after the 1966 coup had brought Ghana to a position where up to a quarter of the annual budget had to be allocated to servicing a debt of over US$800 million dollars, which the government had been trying to reschedule without success (1973:10).

Professor Busia tried a number of unpopular measures to restructure the economy. This included a National Development Levy of up to 5 percent on all incomes greater than 34 cedis per month, which succeeded in alienating the trade unions in the process. To counter this, Busia tried and failed at a populist move through the Aliens Compliance Order of 1970, by which the government expelled mostly Nigerians and Asians who had businesses in the country in an attempt to hand over these businesses to Ghanaians. This plan had an unintended disastrous impact on the Ghanaian economy as a lot of these businesses employed local staff, while also evading the Order by 'using their Ghanaian partners as front men and nominal proprietors' (Goldsworthy, 1973:16). The coup de grâce for Busia and his government was the hugely unpopular devaluation by 44 percent of the country's currency. In addition to this, Busia had a fractious relationship with the media and university students. All these contributed to creating fertile ground, first for the coup, and secondly for the support that greeted the military takeover in January 1972.

The objectives of the 1972 coup d'état by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong and the establishment of a National Redemption Council (NRC) were to end the corruption and malpractices of the Busia government. Addressing the nation on 13 January 1972, Col. Acheampong declared:

> 'I bring you good tidings. Busia's hypocrisy has been detected. We, in the Ghana Armed Forces have today taken over the government from Busia and his ruling Progress Party… we want to tell the people of Ghana and the outside world that we are not motivated by love for political power… every honest Ghanaian will agree with me that malpractices, corruption, arbitrary dismissal, economic mismanagement, and a host of other malpractices that characterized Nkrumah's regime, have come back to stay with us' (Ghana News Agency, 1972:1).

For the second time, leaders of military coups referred to and sought to justify their unconstitutional acts by mentioning Nkrumah's leadership and governance style. As indicated, the coup received widespread popular support, which contributed in consolidating Acheampong's stay in power.

Upon attaining power, Acheampong instituted a number of populist measures aimed at rectifying the mistakes of Busia. These were the revaluation of the cedi by 42 percent, the suspension of the development levy and the Aliens Compliance Order. Whereas Busia had been trying unsuccessfully to negotiate with creditors the repayment terms of the country's debts,

Acheampong simply declared, 'yentua' (we won't pay). In its first two years, the regime won the support of critical social groups such as 'urban workers, students, peasants, the chiefly class, and the petty bourgeoisie located in commerce and in the bureaucracy. He restored the Trade Union rights that Busia had withdrawn; he restored student grants and also instituted the students' loan scheme, payable upon graduation. To farmers, he increased the producer price of cocoa, while academics benefited from expanded state services' (Hansen and Collins, 1980: 8). All these policies were implemented with a view to getting public support, which was crucial to the acceptability and survival of the regime.

This generated mass interest in the regime, and drew responses in the form of university students (previously alienated by Busia) mobilising to help harvest cash crops such as sugar- cane and cocoa in the context of the 'Operation Feed Your Industries' policy, while many people joined in the self-help 'Operation Feed Yourself' programme (Sekyi, 1973). More critically also, Acheampong made a mistake characteristic of the populist politician who, according to Crick (2005), believes that his policies are inspired by the popular will, and rushes into action without careful thought about the consequences and impact of those actions.

By the mid-1970s, the NRC regime was becoming increasingly unpopular, as the instituted measures did not achieve the intended effects, leading to calls for a return to democratic rule. The NRC was no more able to solve the pressing economic problems than any other post-independence government had been (Hitchens, 1979:171). This led to strikes and demonstrations

by students, doctors, lawyers, teachers and other professional bodies. Thus, in order to serve his populist aspirations while staying in power, Acheampong proposed the Union Government (UNIGOV) option. Owusu posits that the idea of a Union Government was to address the need for a constitutional 'third way', a representative democracy based neither on the Westminster style two-party system nor on military rule, but on tradition, values, and indigenous political beliefs, ideals and practices of Ghanaians (Owusu, 1979:89). Acheampong envisaged UNIGOV as a compromise between his military rule and the democracy option for which broad sections of the population were fighting. However, this proposal, although 'ratified' by a controversial referendum on 30 March 1978, met with sustained opposition through strikes and demonstrations, prompting the palace coup of 5 July 1978 in which Acheampong was deposed by his military colleagues led by General Frederick Akuffo and the inauguration of the Supreme Military Council II (SMC-II). This internal political restructuring notwithstanding, the pressure continued to mount on the military regime to return the country to civilian rule.

As indicated earlier, political and popular legitimacy is achieved through the strong performance of a regime to right the wrongs of a previous administration. Failure to do this and inadequate use of populist rhetoric and propaganda to 'ride the storm' inevitably leads to failure, as Akuffo tragically discovered a year later when he was executed. Attempts were made by the SMC II to stabilize the economy by reducing inflation. One such attempt was the demonetization of the cedi, in which the new cedi's value was set at more than 30 percent of the old cedi. The money-changing exercise led to a feeling of disillusionment on the part of workers,

peasants and petty bourgeoisie – the ordinary people. Thus, at the level of economic performance, while the regime had catered to the interests of the higher classes, for the mass of people, their living circumstances had worsened (Hansen and Collins, 1980:13). The combination of failed economic policies and a lack of innovative ideas on the part of a military hierarchy perceived as corrupt and alienated from its ranks, along with the general societal fatigue and impatience with military rule presented all the ingredients for a charismatic populist leader to emerge.

Revolutionary populism and the advent of 'Junior Jesus'

A stagnant economy, political agitation and a military that had lost societal respect and support for its political and economic adventurism combined to pave the way for the 'first coming of Junior Jesus' in the form of a junior Air Force officer, Flight-Lieutenant Jeremiah John Rawlings. On 15 May 1979, Rawlings had moved an Air Force unit to force a meeting with the SMC II to discuss grievances that the junior officers had against the senior officers (Hansen and Collins, 1980:15). Rawlings was then arrested at the meeting and was subjected to a public military tribunal. The arrest and trial of this putschist, the SMC II believed, would salvage some of its image and reputation. However, upon bringing Rawlings to the tribunal, the tables were dramatically turned against the SMC II when the eloquent statement of defence by Rawlings (read out by the prosecution) and justification for his actions made it evident that the SMC II, in its haste to vilify Rawlings and vindicate its actions, had instead turned him into a hero.

Rawlings' populist tendency was revealed when he took full

responsibility for the mutiny and asked the court martial to release his men. He also maintained that his men were innocent and were unaware of their actions as he had placed them under a hypnotic spell (Opoku-Agyemang, 1979). This act of 'selfless courage' and charisma was greeted with cheers from the court room as the people finally felt they now had someone who shared the same sentiments of injustice as they did. More importantly, the people recognized the bravery, determination and boldness of Rawlings – a junior officer – in the face of adversity and persecution by senior military officers.

Rawlings' verbalization of the public frustration and fear of reprisals corroborates the idea posited by Crook (1999) who argues that 'sometimes for longer periods, large numbers of people possess an intense and shared feeling that their common interests are being ignored by rulers and politicians or addressed too slowly out of respect for traditional or complex legal procedures.' Such was the case of the ordinary people of Ghana as portrayed by Rawlings, for which reason, even though they had protested against the two previous military governments, they were now prepared to once again subject themselves to another military government. While this court martial was in progress, Rawlings was released from jail by fellow soldiers, and successfully staged the coup d'état of 4 June 1979, ushering in the three-month rule of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

The Limann Interregnum

After being freed from prison on 4 June 1979, Rawlings echoed the words of Nkrumah by declaring that Ghana 'needs a moral

revolution to solve her problems… Ghana needs a strong man who is a benevolent dictator' (Ghana News Agency, 1979). However, he allowed the scheduled national elections to go ahead by reason of the fact that he wanted the 'people to choose freely, honestly and wisely for themselves, the people they want to rule them'. This led to the handing over of power to and the inauguration of the Third Republican government of Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party (PNP) on 24 September 1979. On the eve of Dr. Limann's inauguration and in a radio and television broadcast to the nation, Rawlings sounded a cautionary note to Limann that the 'June 4 revolution continues', indicating that the seed of the revolution which the AFRC had sown, would grow, take root and bear fruit in a land free of injustice (Ansah, 1979). This implied that he and his AFRC would be closely monitoring the PNP government.

Limann's government was confronted with significant socio-economic problems, which it tried to fix. However things did not improve, as 'the rate of inflation had risen from 67.5 percent in July 1980 to 122.4 percent -the highest since September 1979. By the end of June 1981, it had abated only slightly to 118.2 percent' (Ninsin, 1983: 96). The PNP government, having earlier rejected the quasi-revolutionary policies of Rawlings' AFRC, and having abandoned Nkrumah's populism for the so-called politics of pragmatism, had denied itself a political solution to the crisis (Ninsin, 1983: 107). The benefits of such populism, according to Ninsin, would have been the remobilization of people to combat the 'enemies of society' so as to shift the blame entirely from the government. After barely 27 months in office, the civilian government was toppled in another coup led by Rawlings on 31 December 1981, who cited as reasons the corruption and maladministration of the previous regime that had prevailed in

Limann's term. In his dawn broadcast to the nation after the coup, Rawlings called for 'a holy war to transform the socio-economic structure of the Ghanaian society' (Ghana News Agency, 1982: 1).

The Rawlings Era in Ghanaian Politics

Immediately after securing power, Rawlings and his fellow coup makers formed the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which laid down the regime's major goal: transferring power to the people within the context of transforming Ghana's economic and political context. According to Rawlings, the revolution 'was not a military coup in the sense of another opportunity for some soldiers and their allies in trade and the bureaucracy to come to power for their own ends. It is rather to create by this action, an opening for real democracy, government of the people, by the people and for the people' (Daily Graphic, 2 January 1982). To exemplify the popular basis of this 'revolution', the three arms of the military were renamed the People's Army, the People's Navy and the People's Air Force. It is of significance that the 'real democracy' Rawlings spoke about or democracy of any sort, only happened in Ghana 10 years after this declaration, when the 1992 Constitution came into force.

This populist assertion sets the tone for the populism of Rawlings and the PNDC. The period witnessed the dissolution of parliament, suspension of the Constitution, and the introduction of 'revolutionary justice' which resulted in gross abuses of human rights, and the rule of workers' and people's defence committees and the encapsulation of civil society (Ocquaye, 2000: 53). Having

overthrown an elected government, it was necessary for the PNDC immediately to start the construction of a new basis for legitimate governance. Rawlings' preferred alternative to multiparty elections was to craft a homegrown type of radical populism that sought to eliminate manifestations of elitism and class privilege. He thereby made use of the rhetoric of Afro-Marxism, whereby the society was to be transformed, wealth redistributed, and the exploitative features of the old regimes eliminated (Rothchild, 1995:55). This plan succeeded as he gained massive support from the masses through a number of deliberate activities and actions.

During the initial phase of the PNDC's rule, it was common to find Rawlings in the market places, mingling among common people. One of the most enduring images of his rule, especially in the late 1980s, which was often shown in the picture clip before the national television news was one of Rawlings digging and cleaning big, dirty gutters with his supporters. For most Ghanaians who had been used to educated elites or senior military officers as heads of state, this was an endearing image. Immediately upon assumption of office, Rawlings also instituted a populist measure of market control prices for goods that had been in short supply or were selling at high prices due to inflationary pressures. Subsequent to the establishment of these control prices, some market women and traders had been arrested for hoarding goods or for non-compliance with the new control price regime.

Populist Policies

A significant aspect of this regime was the creation of

quasi-judicial institutions such as the National Investigations Committee (NIC); the Citizens' Vetting Committees (CVC), which was eventually changed to Office of Revenue Collection; and the Public Tribunals (PT). The establishment of these court systems, which were not operated by the official judiciary and were termed 'people's courts', was welcomed by the people. These new-style courts relied on lay people to make judgments on their peers (Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild, 1982). These special courts were especially used as instruments of repression and elimination of political opponents for much of the early years of the 31st December Revolution. This revolutionary populism divided Ghana into 'people' and 'citizens', who were either friends or enemies. Most of these 'new' enemies were business people and elites who were thought to have benefited from previous governments' favoritism to amass significant wealth for themselves. These so-called corrupt (kalabule) people included PNP functionaries, senior civil servants, military officers and businessmen who were tried by the CVC, and had their assets confiscated or were made to pay substantial fines to the state.[12]

In furtherance of the revolutionary aims, a number of structures were established that were expected to give power to the people through representation in both the Workers' and Peoples' Defence Committees (W/PDCs) at the local/district level. Rawlings said the PDCs should be set up at all levels of Ghanaian society, in towns, villages, offices, factories, and in the barracks. He then mandated them to defend the democratic rights of the people and expose corruption and any tendencies that undermined the revolution.

Unlike previous regimes – civilian and military – Rawlings

[12]Some of these cases were the Managing Director of the state-owned Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation, confessing before the CVC to have 'opened the floodgate for kalabule' (Daily Graphic, 24 March 1982); and the sacking of the Managing Director of the State Insurance Corporation for malpractices (Daily Graphic, 12 February 1988).

survived 19 years as Head of State of Ghana, the last eight years as the elected President after two democratic elections in 1992 and 1996. This was in spite of the highly unpopular Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) instigated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government succeeded in laying the blame at the door of the Bretton Woods institutions, and even though the middle class and civil servants were against such policies, Rawlings continued to receive significant support.

Having won the elections of 1992 and 1996 under a new party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and having served two four-year terms, Rawlings was ineligible to stand again in the 2000 election and openly anointed his Vice-President at the time, John Evans Atta Mills as his successor in the famous Swedru Declaration of 1998. The Swedru declaration split the NDC, as there were other people who had been interested in the flagbearer position. Thus the Declaration was perceived as an imposition on the party by Rawlings, and had dire consequences for the party as it lost the 2000 elections to the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the largest opposition party in Ghana.

That election was won by the NPP presidential candidate, John Agyekum Kufuor, against John Evans Atta-Mills of the NDC. Using the populist slogan of 'Positive Change' (in the 2000 election) and Positive Change No. 2 (in the 2004 election), the NPP stayed in power for eight years. After a second term in office, Kufuor's party lost the 2008 election to John Evans Atta-Mills, who became President in January 2009. The NDC in this election won with the populist campaign slogan of 'yere sesamu' (change), against the incumbent government's 'We are moving

forward'.

The Shift from Elite Populism to Footsoldierism

The rise of footsoldiers in Ghana could be linked directly to the populist grassroots/decentralization structures that were instituted in the 1980s and 1990s. Footsoldierism developed as a result of the successful electioneering mechanism of the NDC, which consisted of door-to-door campaigns in the rural areas, and smaller cities of Ghana. This was achieved by drawing successfully on the NDC's history of mass mobilization of youth for the cause of the party.

The footsoldiers within the party, therefore, are those supporters who perceive themselves to have contributed significantly towards the campaign and election of the NDC into power, and thus have high expectations of the government for jobs and other rewards. When these expectations were not met by the government, agitation within the party began to arise.

In August 2010, irate NDC activists were alleged to have chased away the Abuakwa South National Health Insurance Service (NHIS) manager, and hoisted red flags on the premises to register their displeasure over unclear grievances. Moments after the closure of the NHIS office, the leader of the foot-soldiers went on radio to challenge the police to a showdown, saying he did not fear the police because, as he put it, 'no matter how long the moustache of a mouse might be, it could not scare a cat.' He further threatened that if the police dared to arrest him, the NHIS office would go up in flames within 15 minutes of his arrest (Yeboah, 2010:1)). While these recent threats of violence have

mostly come from the NDC foot-soldiers and activists, other political parties in Ghana, notably the NPP, also have grassroots supporters, mostly young men and women, who could very easily be mobilized to cause violence. This demonstrates the negative aspect of populism where politicians promise followers a better life and disappointed activists attempt to make claims on failed promises.

Populism and Electoral Violence in Ghana

Even though populism is not a new phenomenon in Ghana, as has been demonstrated above, it has taken a dangerous form since the Fourth Republic of Ghana, with implications for peace and security in the country. According to Aning and Lartey (2011), even though Ghana has achieved a relatively peaceful political existence, the country's democratic process has always been fraught with localized conflict and electoral violence. These violent activities take place during the pre-election activities, during voting and in the period following the elections. Even though the last two phases are important for ensuring the integrity of the electoral process, it is the first phase that sets the tone for the latter processes.

Pre-election political activities occur when the parties try to convince the people to vote for them. It is the way and manner in which these activities take place that may result in electoral violence. Politicians in the immediate, post-independence period and in the Second, Third and Fourth Republics used populist slogans to attract support for government policies and votes. Even though the political environment was charged due to the history of military dictatorship and brutality, and clampdowns on

opposition parties and supporters, these slogans were not detrimental to electoral peace and security. Some of the slogans even bordered on playful use of words in order to serve as a reminder to voters on election day. Some of the slogans were, 'ehe dzor bɔdɔ' (it's soft), 'agbey naa' (it is finished), 'ɛmɛfa mia mia mia' (it's so easy). Such slogans aimed to convince the electorate that the relevant party was very confident of winning the elections, thus the electorate was being called upon to have confidence in the system and not panic. Others were 'ɛyɛ zu, ɛyɛ za' (it's simple), 'kukurudu, eshie rado rado rado' (a massive earthquake is shaking things up), as well as 'go go high', 'we're moving forward' and 'yɛresesamu' (we're changing things), and 'I care for you', 'Asomdweehene' (king of peace), 'better Ghana agenda', 'forward ever backward never', and 'change in continuity'. There was even one slogan 'asiɛ hɔ' (down there) which indicated the position of a particular candidate on the ballot paper. A number of these slogans were popularized even further when they were included in simple, danceable highlife tunes. These slogans tended to reduce the underlying tensions between the various political parties as supporters could be seen dancing to the songs of their opponents.

However, from the period preceding the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections up to the imminent 2012 elections, populist slogans have given way to particular types of rhetoric, which could potentially lead to electoral violence. The period has witnessed vituperative comments and statements from political parties and supporters, some of which draw on the country's ethnic and religious diversity, while others call on supporters to be

militant. Some of these statements are 'all die be die', 'I declare jihad', 'I declare war', 'Gas in NPP are fools', 'Fantes are concert people and foolish for not voting for their own', and 'Atta mortuary man.'

When elections are deemed to be a survival of the fittest contest, and not based on the actual policies of the parties or their candidates, it results in violent contestation such as has been witnessed in the run-up to the 2012 elections. The majority of these acts have been fueled by language and threatening behaviour and psychological threat of the intended use of violence (Aning and Lartey, 2011). Such manipulative campaigning amounts to cheap politics, which attacks personalities who are viewed as political enemies and must be coerced into political oblivion (ibid). While all parties play the blame game, the use of such language serves a number of purposes: (1) intimidation of opponents to prevent them from participating in the electoral process; (2) garnering support and sympathy from the masses by blaming opponents; (3) mobilizing support from the foot-soldiers to prepare for battle. Thus, much like the post-independence populists that have previously been discussed in this paper, political rhetoric is employed to perpetrate the incumbent's continued stay in power, while the opposition employs it to accede to power.

Conclusion

The political sphere of Ghana has undergone significant upheavals since independence, from military rule, to revolutionary politics, to democracy. These have been engineered by leaders who have employed various leadership styles to attain and maintain power.

Populism and various forms of it – from populist autocracy to revolutionary populism, to populist military dictatorship, and democratic populism – have been experienced by Ghanaian society over the 55 years of independence. To a large extent, even though those leaders who employed populist policies to govern or prolong their tenure could be classified as inherent populists, populism was also influenced and fuelled by the Ghanaian population, or the party followers. They adulated these leaders to gain favour and direct benefits from these governments. However, once these benefits cease to flow, such popular support quickly dwindles. Populism, therefore, places a high level of expectation on politicians to act, whether it is within their means or not, legally or illegally, in order to please the people.

Even though the consequences of populism have sometimes been devastating for the country, it has shaped the relatively stable democratic dispensation that the country has enjoyed since 1992. Populism in Ghana has thus undergone various cycles, from grassroots populism in the immediate period after independence, to elite populism, and back to grassroots populism, all contributing to shaping the country's political landscape. However, the recent phenomenon of electoral violence fuelled by negative populism and propaganda could negatively shape the political sphere of Ghana.

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Chapter 4

'Fruitcake', 'Madmen', 'All-die-be-die': Deconstructing Political Discourse and Rhetoric in Ghana

Sarah Okaebea Danso and Fiifi Edu-Afful

Abstract

Ghana's political discourse has become increasingly marked by verbal abuse and unguarded statements, mainly expressed by political actors, particularly during election season. Such intemperate language in political discourse often triggers a range of controversies, (mis)interpretations and disputes that consequently pose a potential threat to the peaceful conduct of elections and to national security. This chapter interrogates how such a discourse, featured on political and media platforms, can harm the security and democratic fabric of the nation. Based on secondary media data of intemperate statements by Ghanaian politicians and party followers, as well as empirical data gathered from field interviews, this paper argues that the impact (and likely security implications) of provocative (and even hate) speech on the Ghanaian political terrain can polarize, fan tension, and ultimately result in violence, especially as elections approach.

Keywords:
Intemperate language, politics of insults, hate speech, media,

securitization theory, political discourse.

Introduction

Ghana has progressed steadily since it decided to chart the path of democracy in 1992 and has often been touted one of the most peaceful and relatively stable democracies in the West Africa sub-region. Nonetheless, the country grapples with a contradictory democracy development process: on the one hand, its nascent democracy features five successive and uninterrupted cycles of presidential/parliamentary elections, political plurality and participation, and relatively strong institutions of governance; on the other hand, there are overt political tensions and polarization, marked by vitriolic language between opposing politicians and party members which sometimes results in political strife or sporadic, election-related violence. Political parties in Ghana adopt a comprehensive range of strategies to marshal votes for capturing political power. The strategies include: the use of prevailing economic conditions; appeals to political traditions, ethnic identity, religion; use of money and other material incentives; and in recent years, an increasing use of insults and derogatory language against opponents (Ninsin, 2006).

Alarmingly, as this study will show, Ghana's political discourse has been increasingly marked by verbal abuse and unguarded political rhetoric as elections draw near. Such vitriolic or intemperate language in the political discourse often triggers a range of controversies, (mis)interpretations and disputes that consequently pose a potential threat to the peaceful conduct of elections

and to the consolidation of democracy. It also contributes to heightened tensions among political parties or actors with an attendant volatile environment in which some persons or groups become predisposed to engaging in acts of political and electoral violence on the slightest pretext or provocation. While political or electoral violence in Ghana has not been as extensive or as devastating as has been witnessed in Côte d'Ivoire (2000, 2010), Nigeria (2003, 2007, 2011), Zimbabwe (2008) and Kenya (2007), tell-tale grassroots violence or isolated incidents of electoral violence due in part to vitriolic speeches or intemperate political rhetoric have become a recurring feature in all of Ghana's presidential and parliamentary elections since the adoption of its 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution.[13]

This chapter interrogates how such rhetoric and discourse from political actors or sections of the general public on political and media platforms can harm the security and democratic fabric of the nation. Based primarily on secondary data from the media on inflammatory statements and intemperate rhetoric by Ghanaian politicians and party followers, as well as empirical data gathered from interviews with key individuals in the political and media landscape, the study addresses the impact of provocative (and even hate) speeches on Ghana's current political terrain. The underlying purpose is to assess the likely security implications of such language for the conduct of elections in Ghana. To put it concisely, how does intemperate language in the political domain create a particular discourse that polarizes, fans tension, and ultimately results in violent acts?

[13] The Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992 makes provision for a smooth alternation of political power every four years through free and fair elections supervised by an independent electoral commission. Under this constitution, Ghana has held five sets of elections: 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008. The next is scheduled for December 2012

The paper is divided into five sections: section one examines securitization processes drawing a parallel between securitizing actors, speech acts (language) and referent objects; section two discusses the nexus between hate speech in political discourse and violence; section three addresses how the weakness of the Ghanaian state and the lapses of some institutional bodies contribute to the emerging trend of inflammatory political speech; section four concentrates on the media's role in the dissemination of intemperate speeches and language, and also addresses the question of the extent to which political speech should be regulated. The final section addresses the likely threats that vitriolic statements and political rhetoric pose to the peaceful conduct of elections in Ghana, and also outlines some recommendations.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach in which three major constituencies were selected: Tamale Central (Northern Region), Asawasi (Ashanti Region) and Cape Coast (Central Region). These were selected based on the classification of constituencies into those that demonstrate high risk and potential vulnerability to violence (Aning and Lartey, 2008). High security zone constituencies, according to Aning and Lartey (2008), are characterised by ethnic and chieftaincy disputes, a culture of gun violence, pervasive poverty, and deprivation, whereas high competitive zones and volatility potential constituencies are characterised by electoral competiveness and previous experiences of electoral violence. The Tamale Central constituency (high security zone) was selected based on the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute, the reported culture of gun violence

pervasive poverty, and deprivation, whereas high competitive zones and volatility potential constituencies are characterised by electoral competiveness and previous experiences of electoral violence. The Tamale Central constituency (high security zone) was selected based on the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute, the reported culture of gun violence within the Tamale metropolis, and the proliferation of militant youth wings of the two major political parties[14] which are used for fomenting trouble during elections. The Cape Coast (high competitive zone) and Asawasi (volatility potential) constituencies were selected based on the high levels of electoral competitiveness and the potential for electoral violence. Additionally, Greater Accra Region was selected because the majority of media houses and high-ranking leaders of political parties are located there.[15] A purposive sample of 25 media houses was made to review and interrogate statements that are insulting in nature and have the propensity to incite people to violence. The review purposively selected statements on political discourse and rhetoric, hate speech, and the metaphorical use of language from media houses comprising print, radio and television stations, and media websites.[16]

Also, an interview schedule was used to elicit information from a selected cross-section of the public who were categorised into three groups. The first group of political activists comprised party functionaries of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and their affiliate militant youth

[14] The New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC)

[15] Since the majority of media houses are stationed in Greater Accra, all the constituencies in Accra were collapsed into one major constituency for the purpose of analysis.

[16] Radio stations selected: Asempa FM, Radio Gold and Oman FM (Accra); ATL FM (Cape Coast); Kapital FM, Kessben FM and Fox FM (Kumasi); Diamond FM and Justice FM (Tamale). Television stations selected: TV3, MetroTV, and Net 2 TV (Accra). Newspapers selected included: New Crusading Guide, Daily Guide, Chronicle, Enquirer, Statesman, Democrat, Palaver, and Public Agenda. Media websites selected: Ghanaweb, Myjoyonline, Peacefmonline, Citifmonline and Vibeghana.

wings such as the 'Aluta' and 'Azorka' Boys of the NDC (Changli) and the 'Kandahar' and 'All-die-be-die' fan club of the NPP (Aboabo)[17]. The second group of non-political activists comprised media personnel including journalists from the radio and print media as well as members of the general public who are not known members of any political parties. As a control mechanism, a third group of politically active media persons was selected to solicit their views and ascertain whether their behaviour differed from other media persons. This allowed for an analysis of their ethical and professional conduct. Empirical data were collected using unstructured interview schedules because the nature of the subject matter demanded that different respondents be asked different questions. The loose framework of the interview guide enabled respondents to have free-flowing conversations with the researchers. The empirical data were collected to reflect the specific objectives; as such, a gender quota was introduced in the sampling process to ensure equal representation of both men and women.

Theoretical Consideration: Securitization Theory

Securitization theory operates under the values and norms that are determined by 'securitizing actors', 'speech acts' and 'referent objects'[18]. The overriding importance of this theory suggests how language is inadvertently used to stimulate action from an individual or a group of people. The process of securitization endorses the use of language as a 'speech act', which draws on the notion of a meaningful utterance, eliciting a certain unassuming force which is backed by some performative action from an audience (Wæver, 2004). Consequently, securitization theory presents an opportunity for any securitizing

[17] Changli and Aboabo are suburbs in the Tamale Metropolis

[18] 'Securitizing actors' include government, political elite, military and civil society; 'Speech Act' consists of a discursive representation of certain issues as an existential threat to security; 'Referent objects' can be individuals, groups or issue areas such as national sovereignty, ideology, collective identities and national economy.

actor (state) to convince an audience (citizens) through a 'speech act' (e.g. 'all-die-be-die') and the use of extraordinary measures (security tag) to deal with existential threats that are (il)legitimately inimical to the very survival of the state (Taureck, 2006). The process of securitization brings into the public debate issues such as politics of insult and inciting language that are pertinent and need to be high on the security agenda. The general public's (audience) growing concern over the state of Ghana's political discourse has pushed the phenomenon of politics of insult into a level of 'existential threat' that requires the use of exceptional political measures to handle it. Figure 1 illustrates how the securitization process works to translate a 'speech act' into a security act that potentially poses an existential threat to the state:

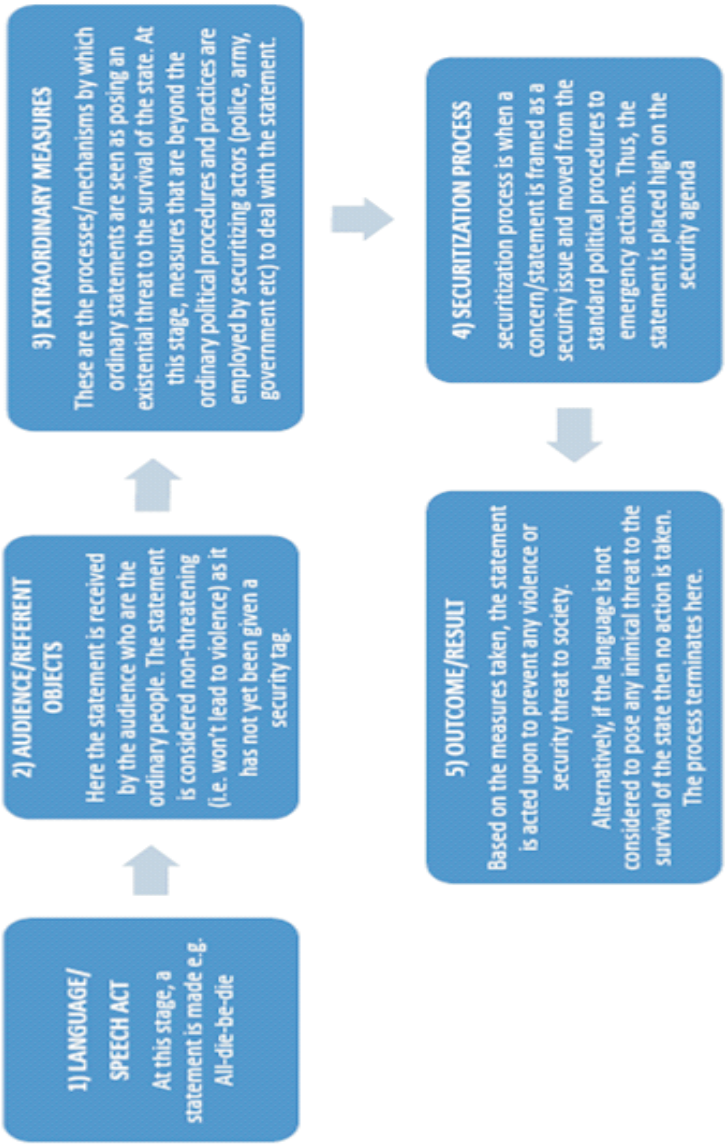

Figure1 : The Process of Securitization

In practice, by positing that the current political discourse threatens the existence of Ghana's democratic dispensation, political elites, being the securitizing actors, have the responsibility to adopt extraordinary measures to protect and consolidate the survival of the present democratic process. The use of Section 207[19] and 208 (1)[20] of Ghana's 2003 Criminal Code (Amendment), Act 646, to prosecute persons found culpable of using insults and language that denigrates others could be one of the major ways in which speech could be securitized to sanitize the political discourse and prevent politicians from inciting their followers to violent acts. Also, since there is no clear-cut legislation for hate speech, vitriolic language and politics of insult, in the long term parliament must focus on enacting laws to deal specifically with the issue. When offenders are prosecuted, the issue of politics of insults, for instance, can be moved from the arena of ordinary politicking into the purview of 'crisis' politics where it can be dealt with quickly with exceptional political measures. Incidentally, political elites and governments have an overwhelming influence on other actors when it comes to the execution of extraordinary measures in dealing with a language that has the propensity to incite violence (Columba and Vaughan-Williams, 2010). The question then is, how does one prevent every issue from becoming a security issue?

Emmers (2007) posits that the Copenhagen School[21] provides a whole spectrum along which issues within society could be outlined. He further states that an issue could be non-politicized,

[19] The section states that "Any person who in any public place or at any public meeting uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to provoke a breach of peace or where-by a breach of the peace is likely to be occasioned, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour".

[20] The section states "that any person who publishes or reproduces any statement, rumour or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or disturb the public peace, knowing or having reason to believe that the statement, rumour or report is false is guilty of a misdemeanour".

[21] The Copenhagen School of is an academic school of thought that highlights the social aspects of security studies and is championed by international relations theorists such as Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde

politicized, or securitized depending on whether, first, the issue is not a matter for a state action; second, the issue could be managed within the standard political domain; or third, the issue demands emergency action beyond the state's standard political procedures (Emmers, 2007). This implies that it would take a securitizing act for an issue to move from one end of the spectrum to the other. The idea is that every act of securitization brings to bear the needed political support in terms of decision-making as well as the allocation of resources (Emmers, 2007). It is instructive to note, however, that the act can only flourish once the relevant audiences are convinced of the existential threat to the referent object. In other words, the process of securitizing language can only be successful when there is a general consensus that political language which is insulting in nature is threatening the advancement of democracy and rule of law in Ghana, hence the need for extra resources to deal with the problem.

The process of securitization presents immense benefits to the state in terms of the efficient management of complex problems as well as the possibility of having overwhelming support for dealing with issues that are detrimental to state security. Conversely, although of great value in current security thinking, the theory of securitization has its limitations. Emmers (2007) and several others argue that in terms of translating the theory into reality, security actors can meddle in civilian activities, curtail certain civil liberties, and also hijack the whole securitization process. For instance, in the case of Ghana, governments, through state institutions, can criminalize free speech and undermine media freedom.[22]

[22]

Additionally, the boundaries created as a result of the distinction between securitization and politicization are not clearly defined and could thus give a wrong impression depending on the political context and the prevailing environment (Anthony, Emmers and Acharya as cited in Emmers, 2007). Furthermore, the Copenhagen School's style of analyzing security has been criticized as being Eurocentric in nature as it does not reflect the concerns and dynamics of questions raised by the issue of security in other parts of the world (Wilkinson, 2007). This notwithstanding, considering that the process of securitization brings together actors, speech acts, and referent objects, one may consider the use of discourse in various speech acts in relation to the process of securitization. Hate speech, as a form of language use, may be present in political discourse, and may possibly provide a threat to the security of the referent objects. The weakness or otherwise of this theory would be highlighted against the backdrop of adapting securitization processes in managing the increasing trend of the use of insults and derogatory language in Ghana's political discourse.

The Nexus between Hate Speech, Political Discourse and Violence

Freedom of speech may indeed be one of the indicators of the entrenchment of human rights in every democracy. However, when this right is misapplied or abused for political gain, for instance, it has the potential of creating a volatile milieu with tensions, mistrusthatred, intolerance, and suspicions that have the potential to lead to acts of violence under the slightest provocation.

Reference is made here to hate speech or negative political rhetoric which breed a climate of hatred and prejudice thereby undermining social peace and stability. A classic case in point epitomizing hate speech in political discourse leading to violence is the 1994 Rwandan genocide. While there had long been conflict between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, the immediate context of the genocide was a campaign of hate speech against the Tutsi carried through the mass media (Thompson, 2007; Gourevitch, 2008).[23] The propaganda spurred the Hutu militias and populace to "kill the inyenzi (cockroaches)", referring to Tutsi people; the result was an estimated 800,000 people (mostly Tutsi but including some moderate Hutu) massacred within a 100-day period (Thompson 2007).[24]

Political rhetoric or utterances that spur violent action or antagonism need not be perceptibly insulting or vitriolic in nature to incite negative emotions or outcomes. They can be presented in other forms, sometimes subtle, and still produce similar effects. This can be seen in the behaviour of losing election candidates whose vehement statements contesting electoral outcomes can incite their followers to rebellion. Here, an example is the opposition candidate in Togo, Jean-Pierre Fabre who, following the March 2010 presidential elections, accused the official electoral agency, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) of falsifying the results:

> I do not recognize the so-called victory of Faure Gnassingbé, I have never wanted to use violence, but if I am stolen from, I will not give up the fight. …We are going to stage protests; we are not going to take this lying down. (Newstime Africa, 2010)[25]

[23]The two main 'Hutu Power' media that stoked the hatred and disseminated the hate speech propaganda were the Kangura magazine and its radio counterpart, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)
[24]This number represented about 20 percent of the country's total population
[25]Emphasis added by authors

While not a direct cause of the escalation of post-electoral violence that Togo experienced, the protests and inciting language in the aftermath of the 2010 polls did, however, contribute to its manifestation. Alarmingly, ahead of Ghana's December 2012 elections, some members of the major political parties are already making comments that presuppose neither party would stand idly by and let the other rig the upcoming elections.[26]

Political discourse, like media or legal discourse, has its own class of genres and is defined as the collection of genres or 'domain type', to which laws, politicians' speeches, party programmes, cabinet meetings, slogans, and propaganda belong (van Dijk, 1998). The statements of local, national, and international politicians, who are mainly elected, appointed or self-designated, are all subsumed under the broad heading of political discourse (Wilson, 1990; Obeng, 1997; van Dijk, 1998). Ghana's political discourse has been characterised by the use of derogatory remarks and unsavoury language by politicians. This is done through statements as well as insinuations and gestures that aim at impugning the integrity of one's political opponent. Several examples demonstrating the use of insults in the Ghanaian body politic are given below.

It stands to reason that the political class within the country, particularly the two dominant parties, the NDC and NPP, in their quest to gain or hold on to power would stop at nothing to manipulate the electorate to their advantage. One such approach is the use of insults and derogatory remarks against each other to gain political capital over their opponents. While this misconduct cuts across all the political formations in the

[26]See Annex 1 for examples

country, a majority of the persons interviewed were of the view that the NDC and NPP were the ones primarily culpable.[27] One respondent thus reported:

> I can cite several people within the NPP and the NDC who are guilty of the use of foul language in the political discourse. Issues that are pertinent to the development of the country are relegated to the background; rather, focus is placed on who can shout the loudest or who can insult better.[28]

Politicians or political actors are, however, not the only contributory parties to hateful or insulting language; laypeople also engage in such discourse. Exploring the nature of political discourse in Ghana, this paper identifies four categories of political actors: elected party officers, leading members, media (radio/television) panellists/discussants, and serial callers.

According to Brenneis and Myers (1984), with metaphorical language or the use of rhetorical devices in political discourse, politicians are able to exercise effective control over delicate sociopolitical issues. The skillful use of metaphors by political actors in their discourse helps them to speak wittily and meaningfully to ridicule political opponents, to impress, to influence, or to incite their supporters positively or negatively for political gain (van Dijk, 1998). Thus, as rhetorical strategies in political discourse, they help to draw, persuade, and capture the attention of addressees (van Dijk, 1998). The Annex 1 table provides a sampled compilation of political actors' intemperate language on campaign platforms, print and electronic media (radio discussions) and in Ghana's everyday political discourse. What it points to is how rife vitriolic speech and 'the politics of

[27] Making mentioning of these two parties is not to say that the others are not guilty of statements or rhetoric that might incite violent acts or trigger electoral violence
[28] Interview with NPP Ashanti Regional Communications Director, June 2011

insult' have become in the country's political discourse. Two apt examples of such harmful political rhetoric or pronouncements uttered by prominent statesmen of the two major political parties are subsequently examined in context.

'All-die-be-die'

The widely commented 'all-die-be-die' phrase was uttered by the NPP flagbearer, Nana Akufo-Addo, in an address to party members in the Eastern Region capital, Koforidua.[29] The statement was explained as meaning that come Election 2012, party members should not allow themselves to be intimidated by the ruling NDC at whose hands the party had suffered harassment and physical attacks in several past by-elections. By this, the flag-bearer "encouraged all NPP men and women to pluck up courage as their forbears did to match their NDC counterparts, boot for boot, concluding twice that "all-die-be-die" (Monney, February 2011). The 'all-die-be-die' phrase has, however, raised controversy and been subjected to varied criticisms and interpretations within the public sphere. One of the criticisms is that it was a warmongering call to party fanatics, sympathizers, and persons of a particular ethnic background to take up the path of violence during the upcoming elections. To some, the statement is one "pregnant with anarchy and inflated with incitement" (Monney, February 2011). Notwithstanding the public outcry, a number of people both within and outside the NPP seem to have latched onto this phrase, enabling it to gain popularity and notoriety. The phrase appears to have been 'embraced overnight by the party's rank-and-file' as several persons can be heard vocalizing it as if it were an indication of their diehard 'commitment' to do whatever one must to ensure their

[29] Culled from Joy Fm 99.7 News at 6 on 7 February 2011

party comes to power. According to Yankah (June 2011), its acceptability and

…popularity was driven by its simplicity, poetic appeal and the informal vehicle of Broken English in which it [was] conveyed. Summarily, it contains all the necessary ingredients required for mass mobilization and political action; for it comes handy to the pedestrian looking for ready-made rhetoric in which to wrap his sense of desperation. Indeed, the sense of helplessness felt by the poor man wallowing in penury and self-deprivation could signal a condition of virtual death depicted in the slogan. The expression then would be appropriate since dying in self-defense could be death all the same, a zero-sum game.

> In his defense, the flagbearer and some members of the party have argued it was a harmless phrase that did not by any means call for violence. In point of fact, in delivering the 2012 Oppenheimer Lecture in London, Akufo-Addo gave the indication that inciting people to violence with the aim of assuming power would contravene his deep-seated principles of upholding democratic values as evinced in his actions during the 2008 presidential election:
>
> I … accepted defeat … without demanding a recount and without spilling a single drop of blood, without seeking power-sharing or forcing a constitutional crisis, in an election which I lost by the narrowest of margins in the history of elections in Africa.[30] … [Simply because] I was not prepared to put my personal ambition before the principles that made me a politician in the first place.[31]

[30]The final figures were 4, 521,032 votes for Atta Mills to 4,480,446 votes for Akufo-Addo, translating into a 0.46% margin

[31]Nana Akufo-Addo (February 2012) Oppenheimer Lecture 2012

The reference of Kenya's 2007 post-electoral crisis to Ghana's 2008 election

Yet another statement that drew public outcry as having the capacity to foment violence was the inference by the then opposition candidate, John Evans Atta Mills, that Ghana could suffer a similar fate to that of Kenya in terms of election outcomes. Speaking at a press conference on the 2007 post-electoral violence in Kenya, Atta Mills cited instances in past elections where the then incumbent NPP had created conditions that had almost plunged the nation down that path. Thus, had the NPP persisted in their attempts to rig the elections, Ghana's 2008 elections would have resulted in a violent outcome:

> The regrettable outcome of the Kenya elections is of great significance and direct relevance to all of us in Ghana. … The similarities in the unfortunate situations in both Ghana and Kenya are too glaring to be ignored, especially as there is a high probability if their repetition in our forthcoming general elections.[32]

This inference was that Ghana could experience the Kenyan situation that had been marked by severe post-electoral violence and many casualties fuelled in part by ethnic undertones (identity politics) and hate speeches. The remark was construed by some people, notably in the NPP as a clarion call to NDC followers to take to violence if they lost the election. Others interpreted the Ghana-Kenya allusion as rather being a cautionary appeal to 'all Ghanaians and the international community to draw useful lessons from the on-going Kenyan conflict situation … with a view to ensuring that they are not replicated in our dear country at the next general elections'.[33]

[32] Culled from www.Ghanaweb.com General News of Wednesday 9 January 2008
[33] Ibid.

It is, however, noteworthy that some leading members of the NDC party and members of parliament including John Mahama and Alban Bagbin were among those who expressed criticism over the NDC flagbearer's statement, arguing among other reasons that Ghana's democracy was too entrenched for its elections to go the way of Kenya (Obeng-Danquah, February 2008).

The' boot-for-boot' verbal duel

Rather than display a high tolerance level that is accommodating of opposing views, some political actors resort to reprisals that lead to a cycle of unguarded rhetoric and offensive statements. The Ghanaian political discourse is replete with several instances of this 'boot-for-boot or tit-for-tat' verbal duel, so to speak – much of which is credited to leading members or followers of the two major political parties. As an example, the 'all-die-be-die' statement attracted quite a few verbal reprisals from NDC sources, characterizing the NPP flag-bearer Nana Akufo-Addo as 'fruitcake', 'the short man', and 'a cocaine addict'. These of course were also criticized as an affront to the flag-bearer's person.

Three years after the 2008 Ghana-Kenya allusion, less than a year after the 'all-die-be-die' statement, and with elections around the corner, an NPP member of parliament (MP), Mr. Kennedy Agyapong stated that should the NDC attempt to rig the 2012 elections, 'Ghana would not be like Kenya; Ghana would be like Rwanda' (Citifmonline, November 2011). Also, commenting on a radio talk show on the rampant use of 'the politics of insult' and intimidation in Ghana's politics ahead of Election 2012, NPP Communications Director Nana Akomea categorically stated that

while his party would not be the ones to 'cast the first stone', it would 'not sit idly by [when attacked]'. He added that 'a tit-for-tat approach was absolutely the best way" to deal with the NDC if they 'insist on physically attacking NPP functionaries and verbally abusing the flagbearer, Nana Akufo-Addo' (Essel, February 2012). Stating his opinion on what fuels this unhealthy verbal duel in the country's political discourse, one respondent noted that:

> 'In Ghana if you are a politician and you do not use words that can cripple your opponents, your supporters would see you as being weak. I am a radio panelist for my party, sometimes you do not want to react to some of these derogatory statements but then the pressure that you are subjected to by your own supporters would be such that you would have no choice but to respond in an equal manner. If you don't react, you may lose your credibility.[34]

It is also generally recognized that all politicians have followers or supporters who believe and share in their ideology, therefore any language that is derogatory in nature would undoubtedly elicit some response from supporters of the individual against whom this derogatory language was directed.[35] For example, the NPP's Young Patriots cautioned NDC government appointees that if they continued to insult and use derogatory statements against their flagbearer, they would meet them 'boot-for-boot' and in the same measure (Daily Graphic, 20 July 2011). However, this 'boot-for-boot' manner of politicking orverbal combat whereby leading members of political parties cast aspersions on each other does pose a potential threat to the peace and stability of the country and the consolidation

[34]Interview with NPP Central Regional Communication Director, Cape Coast, 5 May 2011
[35]Focus Group Discussion with Azorka Boys, Changli Tamale, 3 May 2011

of democracy simply because it can incite people to commit violent acts. The 'emerging politics of intolerance, [also] threaten to denigrate our social values of communication, leading to a creeping culture of combative discourse, and the celebration of verbal abuse and invectives on decent political platforms' (Yankah, 2011). Furthermore, such rhetoric and the public response generated also substantiates the securitization process that the inadvertent use of certain utterances or speech act does indeed beget a form of reaction from the audience that may have implications for critical issues of security and governance.

Does the promise of rewards fortify rhetoric?

More often than not, it has been realized that promised or expected rewards encourage hateful speech, insults, and derogatory statements. These rewards come in many forms: money, ministerial appointments, parliamentary candidate positions, party leadership positions, or appointment into any government institution if the party is able to capture power. To some extent, it could be argued in the Ghanaian context that people are rewarded for the use or abuse of language against their opponents. These people are seen as forces to be reckoned with, so that when the parties are able to gain power they are often among the first to be rewarded with jobs or other incentives. Consequently, political activists consider the use of offensive language against political opponents as a medium to political prominence and recognition. For instance, during the 2008 elections, Mr. Victor Smith, then Special Assistant to former President Rawlings, stated that, 'the whole nation would be engulfed in hellish inferno if one hair of the Rawlingses was lost'. As soon as the NDC took over the reins of government, Mr. Smith

defected to the Atta Mills camp and was then rewarded with an ambassadorial position (Offei, 2011).

Some respondents from the focus group discussions were also of the view that a number of political activists engage in much inflammatory speech and insulting language because they are sheltered and supported by their political parties.[36] An example was when the NPP minority in parliament boycotted parliamentary proceedings in support of Nana Darkwa, a known party member and radio panelist, who had made presumptuous remarks and allegations about the fire that had destroyed the house of former President Rawlings and was subsequently arrested (Darko and Koomson, September 2011). One political party activist remarked:

> When high ranking members in the NPP use derogatory remarks against their opponents, their supporters are very happy; the same applies to us (NDC) – when we insult, you would have people calling to congratulate you, and some might even ask you to pass by their shop, home, or office for monetary rewards.[37]

Additionally, the emerging trend of serial callers that did not exist 10 years ago is now becoming a common practice in furthering the 'politics of insult' culture in Ghana's political discourse. Funded by politicians, these 'serial callers' receive money or phone recharge credits to call in to media programmes on behalf of their parties.[38]

[36] Field work, June 2011
[37] Interview with NDC Ashanti Regional Youth Organizer, Kumasi, 27 June 2011.
[38] Interview with the host of a political programme, Kessben Fm, Kumasi, 28 June 2011.

The Weakness of the State: Legality and Political Culture in Ghana

Recent happenings in the sub-Saharan Africa region have brought the issue of the weakness of the state and state legitimacy to the fore. The weakness of the state is manifested in the lack of development, corrupt and unfair judiciary, lack of adherence to democratic principles, ineffective civil society, unreliable electoral process, and a media landscape that is teeming with non-professionals. Likewise, the lack of trust in the institutions of state has virtually rendered them ineffective and slow to pursue their core mandates. Even though the Ghanaian state has, by the very existence of its 1992 Constitution, legitimized governments that are democratically elected and the various institutions that are supposed to work with it, the gradual erosion of the powers of the state weakens and threatens to destroy the democracy and free society that the Constitution seeks to build.

The 1992 Constitution and the Political Parties Act of 2000 (Act 574) provide the legal framework for the establishment and operation of political parties in Ghana (Jonah, 2005). Currently, there are several active political parties in the country with the NPP and NDC being the dominant ones. The unhealthy competition between the various political parties that sees every election as a 'do-or-die affair' vis-à-vis the winner-takes-all approach has greatly influenced the way politicking is being pursued in Ghana (Aning and Lartey 2009). For instance, the political climate that has characterized the Fourth Republic period ranges from the use of violence against political opponents, the wanton use of national security to harass political opponents, political vendettas, ethnocentrism, the culture of impunity, and, in recent

excessive 'politics of insult'. While the phenomenon of seeking to undermine one's opposition through hateful speech or vituperation dates as far back as the early years of Ghana's independence (Rooney, 1988; Aning and Birikorang, 2011), it appears arguable that the abuse of political rhetoric has since been on the rise.[39] The indiscriminate use of intemperate rhetoric within the country's political discourse is cause for alarm as such language by political actors becomes 'liable to interpretation as institutional reparations for lawlessness, hooliganism, and civil strife…' (Yankah, 2011).

The contemporary Ghanaian state is sharply divided along political, sociological, ethnic, and ideological lines. The state basically serves the interest of the two major political parties. Besides, the issue of ethnicity is projected to a level where the state is seen as pursuing the particular interest of a specific ethnic group, be it the Ashanti, Fante, Ewe, Dagomba or Ga-Adangbe, among others.[40] Also, some people see the state as being dominated by certain groups, and will on that basis question any decision or programmes of any state institution.[41] These possibilities hint at dire consequences for the state in an era of indiscriminate use of hate speech and abusive language that may lead to a spate of violence and political chaos.

The Fourth Estate: Its Contributory Role to Political Discourse and Violence

Though several conduits may exist for the expression of hateful speech or defamatory rhetoric that could foment violence against specific individuals or groups of people, the media is the principal and crucial method. Owing to its extensive audience,

[39] Annex 1 highlights the increasing reportage in 2011 alone of the use and abuse of language in Ghana's political discourse
[40] Interview with NDC Regional Propaganda Secretary Kumasi, 27 June 2011
[41] Ibid.

the media, in its entirety – television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet – can either greatly exacerbate the trend of hateful speech or curtail it. Here again, the Rwandan genocide serves as an ideal example of the media's negative impact and its crucial role in societal relations (Thompson, 2007). The extent and effects of hateful speech in the media, including the likely relationship between such speech and the manifestation of electoral or political violence, therefore cannot be disregarded. While it is usually not 'the defining factor in determining whether [such] violence will or will not occur, the role of the media is a significant aspect of the overall context' (Stremlau and Price, 2009, p.5). This is because language used in the media does shape both public attitudes to current events and social policies, and also creates avenues for the strategic manipulation or manifestation of political violence by politicians, political operatives, and media personalities (Stremlau and Price 2009).

Without question, a free and vibrant media that allows for the freedom of expression is considered one of the inherent tenets of a good democracy. Media freedom, however, also comes at a price as 'unprofessionalism and ethical breaches such as biased reportage, publication of outright lies, libelous and sensational stories [become] rife' (Asah-Asante, 2007). Arguably, the use of inflammatory speech on media platforms has risen in recent times in part because of the vast range of communication platforms that have become available and accessible to people.

> '[T]he use of mobile phones, the proliferation of radio stations, and an increasingly ability to connect to like-minded individuals through Facebook and other social

> networking platforms facilitates and accelerates the spread of messages in a less controllable way. [The media and technology thus] … speeds up the way in which such messages penetrate communities and mobilize individuals and groups for action' (Stremlau and Price 2009, p.8)

In Ghana's case, the proliferation of media stations, particularly the local language ones, and the culture of 'serial callers' can be considered critical factors with regard to the reach and impact of intemperate language. Congruent with this, a number of selected politicians and even media personnel in separate discussions intimated that the prevailing 'politics of insult' that is rife in Ghana was largely the media's doing as they open up the space or platform for political actors or the public to engage in such language:

> 'Who carries the message out there? We do. Who sits behind the console and allows people to fight? We do. … We allow people to speak [intemperately] or spew invectives all in the name of enriching our shows while we can stop it right there… I think [by this] we are throwing the [media] ethics into the gutter. …We are the catalysts actually speeding the reactions [and responses] to some of these things.'[42]

Political programmes or discussions, mostly on radio stations, are thus often characterized by discussants screaming, shouting, negatively criticizing, or sometimes exchanging insults. Some of those who go on radio/television stations are the ones who engage in, or fuel the casting of insinuations, derogatory references, and provocative speech, while the 'serial callers' are

[42]Interview with Journalist/ News Editor at Kapital Radio, Kumasi, 28 June 2011

guilty of engaging in insults, ethnic slurs, and the use of language that marginalizes and denigrates others. Regrettably,[43] the situation has slumped to a level where,

> '…media heroes are made sometimes on the basis, not of reasoned argumentation, but fiery speech comportment. In response to these emerging standards, political discussants including public officials outshout their opponents and scream at the top of their voices in media talk. This mode of discourse is sometimes in keeping with the objectives of some talk shows or discussion programmes that thrive on heat, noise and verbal dueling among discussants. The situation of late has taken a more dramatic turn; for not only may listeners call in and issue instant rejoinders, listening "footsoldiers" may join radio discussions by breaking into the studio and participating with their fists, assaulting political opponents'. (Yankah, 2011)

Furthermore, negative media reportage of political rhetoric, discourse or occurrences contributes to deepening political cleavages and perpetuating denigrating language. Similarly, media partisanship or polarization can also be quite harmful to a democratic dispensation and can stoke violent actions. During Ghana's 2008 run-off elections for instance, '[s]ome media establishments embarked on Radio Mille Collines (of Rwanda fame)-style hate-mongering, exhorting their listeners to take the law into their own hands, thus adding to the foreboding sense of impending doom' (Ghana Center for Democratic Development, May 2009, p.5). When you have certain media houses affiliated to particular political parties or their ideologies, that media's

[43]Interview with NPP Ashanti Regional Communications Director, 27 June 2011

newsfeed or political programmes ultimately seek to push forward the agenda or interests of the party they support; even to the point of defending or commending their every action or words, even when they are wrong. This, however, does raise doubts regarding the equity and professionalism of the media and its personnel.

> 'The political stance that some of our colleagues have taken is not even helping. There are people who are openly showing their bias and openly asking questions in a leading manner in certain ways that seek to portray where they stand and that has not helped us.'[44]

Commendably however, some media houses are putting measures in place to curb the perpetuation of the 'politics of insult' on their platforms. With the electronic media for instance, 'serial callers' or panelists/discussants guilty of abusive speech or defamatory statements during radio or television phone-in programmes or panel discussions are either cautioned, taken off air, or asked to withdraw their statement and apologize.[45] In the print media, published articles that are defamatory or misguided are often retracted or emended in a rejoinder.

Interrogating the media's negative contribution in stimulating the 'politics of insult' begs the critical question of whether speech in this fourth estate arena should be regulated as a solution to curbing the problem. In addition, will there be a need for the utterances of people in leadership positions to be regulated? There are, however, more questions than answers. For instance, would putting in place such regulations or prohibitions not contravene the fundamental democratic principle of free speech?

[44] Interview with Journalist/ News Editor of a political programme at Kapital Radio, Kumasi, 28 June 2011

[45] Personal observation during the field research suggested that some of the radio stations, for example Joy Fm, use a delay system for some of the political discussions they broadcast.

In a democratic society like Ghana for instance, although individuals, politicians and laypeople alike have the freedom to engage in any discourse, there are constitutional rights and responsibilities that regulate speech acts. The Constitution has fully entrenched the right to freedom of expression and assembly as captured in Article 21(1), guaranteeing all persons the right to 'freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media'. In trying to establish the extent of the need to regulate speech, the effects of hate speech and rhetoric in political discourse need to be evaluated to establish the actual or potentially detrimental impact they have on a democratic society. While free speech is a fundamental element and demonstration of a 'democratic society', it is increasingly becoming necessary to draw a distinction between free speech and hate speech. This is because freedom of speech or expression is not a license for persons to engage in insulting language, dehumanizing statements or hostile rhetoric targeted at specific individuals or groups on the grounds of identity, ethnicity, political party or religious affiliation, for instance. Because, by so doing, one would have overstepped the boundary of free speech and entered into the domain of hate speech.

Going back to the question of whether speech should be regulated in Ghana, two schools of thought have always emerged. The first being freedom of speech enhanced by seeking self-determination (positive thought), while the second elaborates on the dire consequences of such utterances if not checked (negative thought) – an example of the latter being that they can destroy the stable democracy that the country currently enjoys. From real-life experience, it would seem that the need to regulate free speech arises particularly when public discourse of a

provocative, inciting and insulting nature tends to have a linkage to political violence.

Conclusion: Towards Election 2012

Although Ghana has not experienced electoral violence on a scale as extensive or as devastating as that which has occurred in African states such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, or Kenya, there is growing concern that failure to address the pervasive trend of abusive political language being thrown carelessly about by politicians may push the country down that path. Ahead of its December 2012 general elections, the rampancy of vitriolic statements and rhetoric within political discourse in Ghana does indeed raise the question of whether or not Ghana can escape widespread violence. The intemperateness in political discourse reaches a climax in an election year when politicking to gain power is at its peak. At this point, opposing political actors often engage each other in negative propaganda, inflammatory rhetoric or vitriolic confrontations with the aim of undermining, discrediting, or intimidating the other so as to ensure electoral victory. According to Aning and Lartey (2008) although 'no single political party [in Ghana] officially espouses the use of violence as a tool for gaining political power', instances of electoral violence in the past have appeared to be engineered by leading politicians through the 'politics of insult' and counter-insults, particularly between members of the two major political parties. Thus, rather than serve as a means of ensuring the steady progression of democracy, the holding of elections in such highly volatile conditions could pose a threat to national peace, security and stability.

As it stands, both main parties believe they are assured of electoral victory in Election 2012: the NDC is confident of a second term in office, while its main opposition, the NPP, is also certain the incumbent will be voted out of power and he voted in. Thus in a 'game' in which there can be but only one victor, one wonders what the strong convictions of both parties, coupled with the sharp rise in intemperate language within the political discourse, mean for the security of the country come the elections. Furthermore, with oil exploration and commercialization having begun in the country, the stakes seem to have been raised. In interviews with sections of the public, many believed Ghana's democratic process and stability were threatened, particularly because of the 'politics of insult' culture together with the polarizing factors and tensions evident in almost every facet of society. On the basis of the opinions, arguments and the samples of intemperate statements that have been presented and discussed above, one can understand why such public pessimism might be warranted. The country, in their opinion, is gradually moving towards an unavoidable collision:

> We are sitting on a time bomb, if these statements come and are glorified by people who are supposed to condemn it. … I think this is something that the moment it is said, no matter which [side of the] political divide it is coming from, it should be condemned outright.[46]

It should be noted that the full repercussions of some of these vitriolic statements might not be apparent now, but the statements might spark off vile (re)actions later, for example on the day of voting or in the period right after.

[46]Interview with Journalist/ News Editor at Kapital Radio, Kumasi, 28 June 2011

Thus, it is imperative that certain measures be put in place now to address the gnawing problem of such rhetoric and the risk it poses. Taking a cue from other African countries on the contribution of hate speech in fuelling electoral violence, particularly from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire and from Kenya, political actors in Ghana must of necessity desist from verbally abusing opponents and spewing forth invectives and statements that have the potential to incite violent reactions from their political support base and from the general public. Also to avert political unrest and ensure a violence-free election, it is essential that all politicians across the board demonstrate a high tolerance level for opposing views. In regulating speech, particularly within the media domain, the National Media Commission (NMC) and the Ghana Journalists' Association (GJA) can vigorously enforce media ethics and standards to ensure strict adherence by media houses. To this end, they should be ready to impose and implement sanctions against media professionals and people using the media platform who go contrary to these ethics and standards.

Annex 1 : Sample statements[47] culled from various media

No.	STATEMENT	DECLARER	REPORTING NEWS AGENCY	DATE REPORTED	SPEECH CATEGORY
1.	'If you beat someone, beat him well well'	Sir John (NPP General Secretary)	Myjoyonline.com	8 June 2011	
2.	'All-die-be-die'	Nana Akufo-Addo (NPP flagbearer)	Citifmonline.com	10 February 2011	
3.	'Fire for fire, bumper to bumper for election 2012'	Ignatius Baffour Amuah (NPP MP for Sunyani West)	Ghanaweb.com	1 May 2011	
4.	Baba Jamal declares 'Jihad'	Baba Jamal (Deputy Minister for Tourism - NDC)	Daily Guide	14 August 2009	
5.	'Ghana would not be like Kenya, Ghana would be like Rwanda…We want peace, nobody wants to fight in this country…but an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth …this time we will not sit down for NDC to intimidate anybody, if they hit one we would hit three.'	Kennedy Agyapong (NPP MP for Assin North)	Ghanaweb.com	25 November 2011	Inciting Language
6.	'If the NDC wants to destroy the process, we would aid them in doing so… if you dress up anybody in fake police outfit and present him, we will lynch him. If you dress up anybody in fake military attire, we will lynch him. This is war ….Yes! I declare war today.'	Kennedy Agyapong (NPP MP for Assin North)	Peacefmonline.com	17 April 2012	
7.	'Rawlings would end up like Gaddafi if he continues to support NPP'	Alhaji Iddrisu Bature (editor-in-chief, Al Haji newspaper/ NDC social commentator)	Ghanaian Chronicle	26 October 2011	

[47] Inciting language in the above context refers to language or rhetoric that has the propensity to deliberately encourage people to fight, and engenders threats and violence; insulting language refers to statements that are rude and offensive and can be psychologically injurious to the one at the receiving end.

8	'We would win election 2012 by "Hook or Crook"'	Madam Ladi Ayamba (NDC Deputy National Propaganda Secretary)	VibeGhana.com	4 September 2010
9	'The whole nation would be engulfed in hellish inferno if one hair of Rawlings is lost.'	Victor Smith (Eastern Regional Minister - NDC)	Daily Guide	17 September 2008
10	'NDC is not for Rawlings.... He is a 'Suarez' in the party.'	Hon. Kwaku Shaibu (NDC constituency youth organizer)	Peacefmonline.com	19 April 2011
11	'NDC can go and bum the sea.'	Titus Glover (Member of NPP Communications Directorate)	myjoyonline.com	14 September 2011
12	'Gas in NPP are fools.'	E. T. Mensah (NDC MP for Ningo Prampram)	Daily Dispatch	1 April 2004
13	'People in Kumasi (Ashantis) are more enlightened than those in Accra (Gas).'	Osei-Prempeh (NPP MP for Nsuta Kwamang)	Crusading Guide	5 April 2004
14	'If you treat people like dogs, be surprised if they're not barking.'	Ex- President Jerry John Rawlings (NDC)	Ghanaweb.com	23 October 2011
15	'Rawlings is the most agitative foot soldier for the year 2010.'	Kofi Dokyi Apeatu-Ampaw	Asempa FM	14 September 2011
16	'We are fighting against two enemies – a 'perceived enemy' [NPP] and a 'traitor' [NDC].'	Ex-President J.J. Rawlings (NDC)	The Chronicle	16 May 2012

17	'How can the NDC expect to win the 2012 elections when they are rejecting the values and ideals of June 4?'	Ex- President Rawlings (NDC)	Daily Guide	5 June 2012	
18	'Nana Akufo-Addo is an "untidy man" and a "fruitcake" (mad man).'	Kobby Acheampong (NDC Deputy Minister of Interior)	Daily Guide	22 March 2011	
19	'Atta Mills is "Impotent"'	Dr. David Sunu (Friends of Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings [FONKAR] member, NDC)	Daily Guide	25 May 2011	
20	'Nana Addo looks like a frog, he is an ugly mammoth.'	Mohammed Uthman (NDC activist)	Peacefmonline.com	14 September 2011	
21	'President Mills looks like a chimpanzee.'	Alexander Adu Gyamfi (NPP social commentator)	Myjoyonline.com	14 September 2011	
22	'Sir John is cocoa ase kuraseni, to wit a "a villager/bushman from a cocoa-growing community."'	Kobby Acheampong (Deputy Minister of Interior, NDC)	The Statesman	21 October 2010	Insulting Language
23	'Nana Addo is uncircumcised.'	Nii Lante Vanderpuije (Aide to President Mills - NDC)	Citifmonline.com	10 May 2011	
24	'Fanatics of NPP flagbearer are "sociopathic apologists"."	Kwadwo Twum Boafo (CEO, Ghana Free Zones Board)	Radio Gold	28 February 2011	
25	'Nana Addo is a sexy old fool.'	Dr. Hannah Bissiw (Deputy Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing - NDC)	Daily Guide	24 March 2011	
26	'Paul Collins Appiah-Ofori is a bed wetter.'	Bernard Allotey Jacobs (NDC Central Region Communications Director)	Peacefmonline.com	21 February 2012	

27	'Michael Teye Nyaunu is a "Dudui" (a left over) element.'	Stan Dogbe (Presidential Aide - NDC)	Citifmonline.com	9 July 2011
28	Ursula Owusu is a 'disgrace to womanhood'.	Dr. Hannah Bissiw (Deputy Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing - NDC)	Daily Guide	21 March 2011
29	'Mills is a "Kwaseampanyin" who doesn't look after his children.'	Ursula Owusu (NPP)	Daily Guide	25 March 2011
30	'President Atta Mills is a "sheep" who behaved sheepishly.'	Francis Annoh-Dompreh (NPP Eastern Regional youth organizer)	Daily Guide	19 May 2011
31	'Nana Akufo-Addo is a serial smoker who smokes like a "rat".'	Justine Ampofo (NDC)	Daily Guide	19 May 2011
32	'President Mills is a hypocrite who pretends to be do-goody … to deceive the good people of Ghana'	Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey (NPP National Chairman)	The Statesman	14 May 2011
33	'President Mills is blind; can't read anything; and is not in control of his ministers.'	Michael Teye Nyaunu (FONKAR Campaign Coordinator, NDC)	Citifmonline.com	23 May 2011
34	(Some) Ghanaian journalists are 'Useless' and 'Stupid Fools'.	Maxwell Kofi Jumah (NPP MP for Asokwa)	Citifmonline.com	16 February 2012
35	Nana Akufo-Addo is a 'wee smoker and would thus be an embarrassment to the country when elected president in the December (2012) elections'.	Felix Kwakye-Ofosu (Member of Mills Communication team – NDC)	Daily Guide	27 February 2011
36	'With the exception of female MPs, 80% of MPs in the country are womanizers who chase "small girls" and even married women in the streets.'	Emmanuel Aboagye Didieye (MP, Afram Plains North – NDC)	Adom FM	18 March 2011

37	'Mills is number one hypocrite.'	Chris Dugan (Brong-Ahafo Communication Director for FONKAR – NDC)	Daily Guide	28 May 2012
38	President Kufuor 'injected the economy with "steroids" (drug money)'.	Kojo Adu Asare (NDC MP Adenta)	Multi TV	14 September 2011
39	'I thought you were inviting men of integrity; I didn't know you were inviting thieves like (ex-president) Kufuor.'	Ex-President Rawlings (NDC)	Peacefmonline.com	28 August 2009
40	'President Mills is the lousiest president Ghana has ever had.'	Ursula Owusu (NPP activist)	Myjoyonline.com	14 September 2011
41	'Kufour nie, Ataa Ayi nie, …Kufuor nie, Kronu nie' (a comparison of ex-president Kufour to Ataa Ayi, a convicted notorious armed robber)	Ex-President Rawlings (NDC)	The Ghanaian Chronicle	18 March 2005
42	'Mills has surrounded himself with greedy bastards.'	Ex- President Rawlings (NDC)	The Ghanaian Chronicle	17 November 2009
43	'Parliament is "den of thieves"'.	Kobby Fiagbe (Editor of The Lens newspaper)	The Lens	3 June 2009
44	President Mills is surrounded by 'sycophants, bootlickers and fair-weather friends'.	Alban Bagbin (Majority Leader)	Myjoyonline.com	14 September 2011
45	Rawlings is behaving like an 'uneducated illiterate'.	Daniel Titus Glover (member of NPP Communications Team)	Adom FM	5 April 2011
46	'Kobby Acheampong is a disgrace to governance.'	NPP Press Release (Nana Akomea – NPP Communications Director)	Citifmonline.com	21 May 2011

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Chapter 5

Inter- and Intra-Party Conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana

By John Mark Pokoo

Abstract

This chapter examines the inter- and intra-party conflict dynamics and democratic consolidation in Ghana. It focuses on party politics in Ghana as part of wider political development since the 1990s. Political development in the above context refers to the ability of a political system to acquire a transformative strategy that recognizes difference in terms of political equality and integration. The chapter argues that the central pillars of successful political development are the nature, interest and values of the political elites; the relationship between the elites and the general public; and the legal-historical context of the particular society. Where advances occur in any of the above pillars at the expense of the others, the resultant disharmony can lead to violence. Thus, partisan politics in Ghana requires reforms within the legal-historical context to cope with demands of politics.

Keywords

Political parties, inter-party conflict, conflict in Africa, political structures, electoral candidates, democracy.

Introduction

According to Lane (1994), political development in any society relates to the ability of such a society to acquire a political system that initiates new patterns of integration and penetration that in turn regulate the tensions and conflicts produced by increased differentiation. Inherent in the above definition of political development is the recognition of multiple actors in the political system so acquired, the nature of the relationships between these actors and the organizing principles that situate political interactions within the particular social, political and economic environment.

Integration entails harmonization of competing goals, aspirations and interests while penetration reinforces the kinds of self-serving influences that result from interaction among actors in a particular political context. In partisan politics, beyond political parties as institutional actors, the interaction between party officials and voters provides grounds for penetration in which party officials engage the electorate for votes while the electors seek transformation in the quality of their lives in return. Jabri (1995) reinforces the importance of the political environment as a key pillar of political development when she states that 'the specific instance of conflict is always a manifestation of the deeply embedded social processes which regulate conflict within a complex network of symbolic orders, interpretative schemes, and normative expectations reinforced through differential access to resources'. Above all, Kifordu (2010) argues for coherence between elite interests and values with public preferences. Where coherence is deficient, the resultant lack of legitimacy can bring on a major crisis (Lane, 1994; Kifordu, 2010).

Thus, the above fit between agency and structure in the political development syndrome and the transformative context apply to the changing political circumstances of Ghana. Ghana returned to constitutional democratic rule in 1992. It has since held five successful general elections in which the power of government has changed hands between the two main parties – the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

However, some studies have shown that politicization and polarization of issues along party lines constitute the principal drivers of conflict in Ghana as they infect, distort and magnify all other underlying causal factors of conflict (Draman, Mohammed and Woodrow, 2009). The significance of the Ghanaian experience is that in the same period since 1992, post-election related violence has disrupted political processes in many West African countries.

While the chequered political experiences of the other West African countries elevate Ghana to an exemplary status, manifestations of conflict in the Ghanaian political space become a matter of concern not only to Ghanaians and fellow West Africans but also to the international community.

This chapter looks at the evolution of partisan politics in Ghana in the context of the different pace of development between the legal-historical environment, the nature and dynamics of political elites and political burden on election candidates, and the changing expectations of the electorate. It argues that much of the progress made in partisan politics under the fourth republican constitutional democracy of Ghana has largely occurred in terms of the consolidation of two political traditions as the main

institutional actors. However, these traditions lack clear strategies and standards for leadership recruitment, resource mobilization and political communication. At the same time, the wider social and political structures in Ghana exhibit a dual value system that widens the gap between the aspirations of the political elites and the voting population. Until all the above gaps are bridged through political and legislative reforms, the risk of violent conflict inspired by acrimonious political interactions will remain.

This chapter explores such questions as: how do political actors behave in a changing environment; what informs intemperate political discourse in the mass media; what kinds of regulatory reforms have occurred to contain changing political interactions; and how does the electorate respond to the conduct of political elites?

The first section explores the nature of political development in the context of partisan politics in Ghana and the inherent structures that promote interaction among the actors. The nature and characteristics of political leadership and political interactions is then discussed. The subsequent section explores the impact of the above on political participation. The paper concludes by highlighting key points raised in the discussion.

The Legal-Historical Environment in Ghana since 1992

In 1992, the then military regime of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) led by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings returned the country to constitutional rule following a national referendum that accepted the Fourth Republican Constitution in 1992.[49] This provided for general elections every four years as the mechanism for ushering in a new government, with the first

[49]The Constitution then entered into force on 7 January 1993 under the Constitution of the Republic of the Fourth Republic of Ghana (Promulgated) Law, 1992

commencing on 7 November 1992.

Among other features, the 1992 Constitution guarantees the fundamental freedoms of all the people of Ghana through the inclusion of the concepts of participation, equal opportunity and human rights. For example, while Chapter Five of the 1992 Constitution focuses on the promotion of fundamental human rights in the country, Chapter Six[50] provides for broad policy guidance to all 'citizens, Parliament, the President, the Judiciary, the Council of State, the Cabinet, political parties and other bodies and persons in applying or interpreting this Constitution or any other law and in taking and implementing any policy decisions, for the establishment of a just and free society.
Thus, political parties are mentioned as being among the key actors that implement provisions of the 1992 Constitution to transform the quality of life in Ghana. However, political parties operate within a wider social and political environment that affects the performance of party politics in Ghana.

Structural Gaps

For example, in Ghana, the traditional cultural system coexists with the rules-based official system (Aning, 2011). However, each system operates along different lines. In the traditional system[51], one finds issues of biological ties, ethnic affinities and chieftaincy that connect to a geographical location with particular sets of values, precedents and traditions that apply to the group. Although a range of social interventions[52] have been implemented

[50] The Directive Principles of State Policy under Chapter 6 of the 1992 Constitution provide broad guidelines within which national policy should be formulated, interpreted or implemented.

[51] i.e. the 1992 Constitution; Acts of Parliament; existing laws; case law; legislative, executive and constitutional instruments, local government bye-laws etc

[52] Since independence, inter-ethnic marriages, boarding schools , free education for people from the northern parts of the country, and the National House of Chiefs system are among several social interventions that have contributed to de-compartmentalizing traditional social groupings.

to de-compartmentalize traditional social groupings since independence, the traditional system features very prominently in the geopolitics of the country. While these informal groups lobby the formal state for national positions for their members and also for their share of national resources, political officers also court the support of traditional and opinion leaders as entry points for votes in towns and communities.

The other form of duality ignores the role of the political parties at the grassroots level by banning partisan politics in local political leadership recruitment (Local Government Act, 1993). Based on historical experience, Ghana's political laws prohibit discrimination and require parties to have a presence in all parts of the country (Avoidance of Discrimination Act, 1957; Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1993; Fridy, 2007). However, political parties are not allowed to participate in local government elections. Although the law permits political parties to operate in the districts and therefore mobilize political support from constituencies that are located in the districts for parliamentary and presidential elections, the parties are not allowed to have a formal voice in the governance of the districts in which their supporters live.

Partisan Politics in Ghana

According to Ninsin (2006), party politics began in Ghana during the colonial era as an instrument for self-determination in the struggle for political liberties. Movements such as the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS; set up in 1897) and the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC; set up in 1947) sought to participate in governance and advocated the extension of civil

and political liberties to Ghanaians (ibid.). The quest for political power to develop the country with the participation of the broad mass of Ghanaians in politics became the goal of partisan politics with the launch in 1949 of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP). Described by some as Ghana's first genuine political party, the CPP played a crucial role in introducing mass-based politics into the country (Fridy, 2007) in the context of the struggle for independence.

According to Morrison (2004) and Fobih (2011), the political processes in the country have produced two separate traditions – one liberal and the other populist, although they are not substantially different. The UGCC led by J.B. Danquah, and its descendant formations later led by K.A. Busia, belong to the liberal (Danquah-Busia-Dombo) tradition with a focus on fundamental human rights and private ownership of the factors of production. Nkrumah's CPP constitutes the populist/Nkrumahist tradition with a belief in public ownership of the factors of production.

Throughout the period following political independence in 1957, every political regime including military regimes have leaned towards one tradition or the other. Also, military regimes tend to ban party politics once they assume power. However, when military regimes decide to return the country to constitutional rule, they tend to ban the party name and symbols of the government they toppled. For example, the National Liberation Council (NLC) banned the CPP in 1969. The Supreme Military Council (SMC) regime banned the Progress Party (PP) in 1978. The Provisional National Defence Council regime banned all previous political party names in 1992 (Aryee, 2008).

These military tactics have contributed to splits and aggravation of differences among groups within the above traditions.

As a result, in the current partisan political dispensation, one finds several parties largely subscribing to the ideals of either the liberal or populist traditions (Morrison, 2004). However, the major parties have exploited a combination of ideological affinities, economic policy convergence and common social ties of leading figures in the different parties to squeeze out the lesser parties. For example, on a number of occasions, the minor parties have come together to support either the NDC or the NPP in different run-off elections. In 1996 for instance, the NPP went into a political alliance with the National Convention Party (NCP) – that party is now part of the current CPP – and made its then leader (Mr. Kow Nkensen Arkaah), the Vice Presidential candidate of the resultant Great Alliance which subsequently lost the 1996 election. Earlier on in 1992, Mr. Arkaah (and his NCP) had allied himself with the NDC and the Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE) Party in the 1992 presidential elections and became Ghana's Vice President until 1996. The NPP again appointed a prominent member of the CPP (Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom) to lead its public sector reform programme and other ministerial positions for the greater part of its tenure in office between 2001 and 2008.

Again, the current vice-presidential candidate of the NPP is married to the daughter of the current chairman of the People's National Convention (PNC) and that became an issue during the talks over whether the PNC should support the NDC or NPP during the presidential run-off election in 2008. On the other hand, the NDC recruited much earlier on from the Nkrumahist

camp (this point is revisited below) at a time that old political party labels such as Convention People's Party were banned. These smart gestures create an identity crisis for the smaller parties, a development that serves the interests of the two big parties. This chapter thus focuses on the two main political parties in Ghana – the NDC and the NPP.

Currently, the practical differences between the two traditions are in the areas of leadership recruitment, political socialization, organization and styles of manipulating the political environment (Morrison, 2004). Additionally, the current partisan political dispensation tends to highlight a patron-client framework, a strong and centralized leadership, and regulatory gaps that legitimize the conduct of politicians, promote conflict and diminish the virtues of accountability and transparency within the parties (Ninsin, 2006; Fobih, 2011; Lindberg, 2003). In the course of interviews for this study, one respondent quipped that some erring members of the political parties are not punished (a situation that frustrates other members) while the difference between attitudes to private and public ownership of property – a major point of ideological difference between the two main political parties (NDC and NPP) – is eroding.

Political Laws in Ghana and the Burden on Election Candidates

The electoral laws of Ghana place an emphasis on the political cohesion of the country (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1993). However, the laws overlook three core issues linked to the effective performance of political parties.

The first such issue relates to the economy of partisan politics; the second concerns checks on the conduct of politicians in the accumulation and distribution of resources through the structures of the state; the third relates to the contribution of political parties to local governance.

First of all, to prevent the emergence of sub-state and sectional political parties from participating in the electoral process of the country, Article (3) of the Political Parties Law (2000) requires that political parties legally and operationally demonstrate their presence in all parts of the country prior to certification. This means that the documentation an aspiring political party submits for certification to the Electoral Commission must show that it has founding members from each administrative district of the country who agree and accept to form that political party. In addition, the party must demonstrate that it operates functional offices in at least two-thirds of the country.

Much as the above requirements are rooted in the political history of the country and seek to prevent sectarian politics, they gloss over the financial implications of maintaining a presence in all parts of the country. The state does not finance partisan politics in Ghana. Political parties are required to mobilize contributions from their membership. They can also obtain funding from Ghanaian companies.[53] This system tends to favour the parties that are built on longstanding traditions with widespread connections across professions and across geographical boundaries. Even those parties are not able to raise enough resources through the approved channels. The emerging reality is that political parties are prone to accepting donations from any quarter without scrutinizing the source of

[53]This include companies with a minimum of 30 percent Ghanaian ownership

such funds.

Although there has been growing public perception of illicit funds financing politics, no significant evidence has been found apart from one case involving a sitting NPP Member of Parliament who was arrested and jailed in New York for trafficking heroin to the United States. Even in that case, there was no established trace of any linkage to the financing of his political party. Additionally, there is a mysterious involvement of party functionaries in the procurement and tendering processes of the country particularly at the district and regional levels. Party officials sit on the district and regional tendering committees where contractors are selected (Ghana News Agency, 2007). The link between the above development and: (a) the quality of contractors who win public tenders; (b) the spate of uncompleted projects; and (c) increasing allegations of vital files disappearing during political transitions is yet to be rigorously explored but these are among the complexities and challenges that Ghana's constitutional democracy continues to encounter.

Secondly, the unregulated political party financing regime is supported by the reality that the country's electoral laws only compel political parties (as entities), elected party officials and certain categories of public office holders to declare their assets – in the case of political parties, they have to publish their accounts. The political party laws do not compel candidates to declare their assets prior to and after the elections. While the above regime allows candidates to mobilize endless resources, elected officials have the opportunity to recoup their investment through the manipulation of the legal and procurement system. Losing candidates are, however, denied any such opportunities

and are consigned to repaying their debts on their own while in opposition. In addition, the under-resourced circumstances of the law enforcement agencies render them incapable of investigating and unravelling financial misconduct by politicians. Going into elections, the fear of financial loss also adds to the acrimonious relations among parties and also among candidates in internal and inter-party elections.

Thirdly, given that the administrative districts are the lower level tiers of local government, hosting town/area councils as well as unit committees, mobilization at the district and community levels is quite crucial for election success. However, the political party laws perceive partisan politics at the district level as divisive and a threat to internal cohesion within the district. As a result, political parties are not allowed to take part in political leadership selection at the district level. There may be merit in this dispensation because, for example, certain opinion leaders such as chiefs and eminent senior citizens who cannot go through the rigours of political campaigning are given the opportunity to bring their expertise and experience to bear on the local governance process without partisan politicking.

At the same time, banning partisan politics at the grassroots presents yet another political paradox and a recipe for conflict because, for example, youth[54] mobilized for electoral campaigning in the districts increasingly and violently turn to the district assemblies and other public institutions in the districts for jobs.

In the current administration, the country has witnessed cases of grassroots supporters of the ruling NDC party violently demanding the removal of District Chief Executives and/or heads

[54]These are also referred to as footsoldiers in Ghanaian politics. They constitute the informal campaign personnel recruited by party officials to ensure that party information reaches the grassroots. Their diverse operations permit people of various backgrounds to be recruited into this group of party functionaries – muscle men, former security officers, etc.

of specific public institutions, especially where those heads are perceived to have sympathies that lie with an opposition political party (Myjoyonline, 2011).

Thus in one breath, the parties are required to mobilize their support base from the districts but in another breath, they are not allowed to (a) seek political power within the districts; and (b) be able to economically empower their supporters in the districts by providing jobs (e.g. at the Assemblies, Area and Town Councils and Unit Committees), at least, for their district and community-level leaders.

Faced with the above conditions, however strong the party machinery at the grassroots level, as the parties are officially denied the means to reward their supporters in those localities, it becomes important for political officials in the districts to develop their own core constituencies for their own sustainable campaigning. Thus, every aspiring parliamentary candidate or national political official has their own core of supporters, including emissaries and aides, in the constituencies or districts. These 'footsoldiers' may include muscular men popularly known in Ghana as 'macho men' not only for campaigning but also for warding off any form of perceived threat or intimidation from the camps of their opponents. Footsoldiers depend on the politicians for their livelihood and it is to them as an audience that intemperate political communication in the mass media is often directed. Violent clashes among these core supporters of politicians constitute yet another dimension of inter- and intra-party conflicts in Ghana.

While the regulatory gaps significantly reduce the leverage of politicians who loose elections and make them vulnerable, it transforms the leverage of election winners and opens up opportunities for entrenching themselves in office. Linked to the heavy financial cost of politics in the country – in which individual candidates bear the greater portion of the cost of political campaigns – there is a lot at stake in terms of the relations between politicians during the electioneering processes.

Political Participation and Conflict Dynamics in Ghana – an Empirical Approach

Both the NDC and the NPP have common structural problems that manifest themselves differently. In both parties, the sources of tension relate to the elitist preference for a dominant role in both parties for party financiers who together with the political godfathers control the structures of the party at every level (Aryee, 2008). Secondly, priority attention is often given to children of former political activists in the past who served actively in any of the two political traditions (i.e. children of former ministers and former members of parliament in the First, Second, and Third Republics as well as children of functionaries of the PNDC regime – i.e. NDC).[56] Through nostalgia for the former political activist, the initiative for appointing their children into political positions can come from either the communities in which such past activists lived or from the leadership of the political parties.[57]

Children or descendants of past political figures continue to dominate partisan politics in the country. They are seen as people coming from trusted backgrounds and with political

[56]Personal interviews with leading political journalists who have observed the political terrain of the country for decades

[57]Personal interview with a veteran political journalist

constituencies that make it easy to market to the wider electorate. Such people also come with connections and networks that favour fund raising and they go on to assume the status of political godfathers who influence appointments and key decisions once their parties are voted into office.

The table below shows examples of current party leaders across the traditions whose parents or relatives served in a past government. It has to be stressed that these individuals and the majority of those not cited below have worked very hard to merit the positions they occupy.

Table1: Politicians and their heritage[58]

No.	Name	Party	Ancestor/heritage	Regime served by ancestor	Political Tradition
1.	Alan K. Kyerematen	NPP	Dr. A.A.Y. Kyerematen	Kumasi City Council in the 1960s	Liberal/Danquah-Busia/Dombo
2.	Nana Addo-Dankwa Akufo-Addo	NPP	Mr. J.B. Danquah and Mr. Edward Akufo-Addo	J.B. Danquah, leader of UGCC; E. Akufo-Addo President of Ghana in 2nd Republic	Liberal/Danquah-Busia/Dombo
3.	Agyemang Badu Akosa	CPP	DC Akosa (Mampong)	CPP	Nkrumahist/Populist
4.	Jake O. Obetsebi-Lamptey	NPP	Obetsebi-Lamptey	UGCC; one of the 'Big Six'	Liberal/Danquah-Busia/Dombo
5.	Kofi Totobi Kwakye	NDC	DC Kwakye	MP in 2nd Republic	Nkrumahist/populist
6.	John Dramani Mahama (Vice-President)	NDC	Mr. J.D. Mahama	Upper Regional Minister - CPP	Nkrumahist/Populist
7.	Nii Okaija Adamafio	NDC	Tawiah Adamafio	CPP Minister – 1960s	Nkrumahist/Populist
8.	Samia Nkrumah	CPP	Daughter of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	Ghana's first Prime Minister and President	Nkrumahist/Populist
9.	Abena Busia	NPP	Mr. K.A. Busia	Prime Minister, 2nd Republic	Liberal/Danquah-Busia
10.	Mahamadu Bawumia	NPP	Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia	2nd Republic; later Chairman, Council of State during the 1992-2000 NDC administration.	Worked under both traditions

[58]Author's own compilation

Alongside these elite politicians, there is a growing army of intellectuals and entrepreneurs who feel capable of representing the party at various levels including Parliament, as Ministers, as District Chief Executives and as heads of government agencies and departments. Such 'ordinary' members require the support of political godfathers (Aryee, 2008). Without the blessing of political godfathers, it becomes very difficult for 'ordinary' members to rise to the top echelons of the two parties.

In relation to elections, clashes tend to occur between 'ordinary' member candidates and opponents who either come from a 'political home' or have the backing of someone from a 'political home'. In most cases, the national executives of both parties have tended to support the elite candidate, with resultant resistance reflected in clashes at constituency level. Linked to the above, the burden of mobilizing campaign finance rests with the candidates (whether for parliamentary or presidential elections). However, the party provides the political capital through its presence at the grassroots and financiers are required to notify party leaders or their confidants in order to be accorded the needed recognition once voted into office.[59] As a result of the huge investment that candidates commit to their campaign, any unfair loss in elections is linked to unfair financial loss. In the aftermath of intra-party primaries that end up in disputes, some disaffected candidates resign from their parties in order to contest the seat as independent candidates against their former parties (Morrison, 2004).

The African elections database reveals that two independent candidates got elected to Ghana's Parliament in 1992, none in 1996, four in 2000, one in 2004 and five in 2008 (African

[59] Various interviews with political journalists and politicians

Elections Database, 2012). Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) has published detailed parliamentary election results for 1996, 2004 and 2008. Kwame Ninsin (Ninsin, 2006) provides data for the remaining gaps. The analysis reveals more startling figures regarding the number of independent candidates that sidestep their parties and stand in parliamentary elections against candidates of their former party .

Table 2: Independent candidates in Parliamentary elections in Ghana

Year	Independent candidates	Independent MPs
1992	12	2
1996	57	None
2000	59	4
2004	122	1
2008	94	5

Data source: Electoral Commission website; and Kwame Ninsin, Political Parties and Political Participation in Ghana, 2006

It is worth noting that the source data do not indicate which party the independent candidates broke away from. Also, because of the periodic redemarcation of constituency boundaries, old results such as those of 1992 may not reflect current realities. However, the above analysis provides a very useful indicator of the locations of unresolved political tensions such as Atebubu North, Ledzokuku-Krowor and Wulensi.[60] There are many more constituencies that featured independent candidates in the 2004 and 2008 parliamentary elections. In most cases, the independent candidates took votes from their former parties and contributed to the victory of the opposing parties, thereby affecting their former party's share of seats in Parliament. Coincidentally, both the NDC and NPP have taken steps to address such election-related grievances of their candidates since 2000 but as the above figures show, the impact is yet to be felt.

New Patriotic Party (NPP)

In terms of managing conflicts, the main blocs within the party are the Kufuor bloc and the Akufo-Addo bloc. The genesis of the division dates back to the run-up to the 1996 NPP presidential primaries in which the two candidates traded accusations. Kufuor won the primaries then, but lost the national elections to the then NDC candidate President Rawlings. The rivalry was to resume in the primaries for the 2000 presidential elections in which Mr. Kufuor won the primaries and went on to win the presidential elections over then candidate Atta-Mills as the NDC flagbearer (Mills was also the sitting Vice-President at the time). Party insiders believe that the Kufuor's victory resulted in reprisals against Akufo-Addo supporters across the country (Daily Guide,

[60] These three constituencies featured several independent candidates in the parliamentary elections of 1996, 2004 and 2008.

September 2011) but Akufo-Addo nevertheless pledged his support to Kufuor who then appointed him first as Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, and later made him the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. In 2004, the NPP endorsed the candidature of Kufuor who went on to win the presidential election and served a second four-year term.

The division between these two high-profile members of the NPP was to resurface in the campaigning for the 2008 presidential primaries when more than 10 ministers in the Kufuor administration resigned from their posts to campaign for the party's primaries for the 2008 presidential elections. A total of 17 top NPP officials contested that primary. Among them was Mr. Alan Kyerematen, who was believed to be the preferred choice of J.A. Kufuor. There has been no official acknowledgement of this allegation from Mr. Kufuor's office.

However, it is believed that during campaign meetings held by the other candidates in the run-up to that primary, political appointees (e.g. Regional Ministers, District Chief Executives, Presiding Members of District Assemblies, etc.) of President Kufuor were rarely seen. However, those officials often showed up at meetings of Mr. Kyerematen. Nana Akufo-Addo won the primaries but such were the alleged reprisals by his supporters against known supporters of the Kyerematen/Kufuor bloc that Kyerematen temporary resigned from the NPP in protest (The Statesmanonline, 2008).

Akufo-Addo also had to contend with some political decisions taken prior to the 2008 presidential elections by the outgoing Kufuor

administration that some of his supporters felt were meant to undermine the Akufo-Addo campaign. For example, the Kufuor administration raised fuel prices ahead of the elections and nominated then opposition candidate Atta-Mills[61] for a national award (Ghanadot.com, 2008). These decisions were heavily criticized by some party insiders. Subsequently, there were attempts to heal the divisions, including through behind-the-scenes negotiations, which managed to reduce the tensions. Nevertheless, each bloc knows the identities of the supporters of the other group. A more disturbing trend is emerging in which an inner core of supporters of each camp is beginning to describe its counterparts along ethnic lines. In that vein, people around Akufo-Addo are referred to as 'Akyem Mafia' while those around Kyerematen are referred to as 'Ashanti Clique', a reminder of the historical rivalry between the Akyem (Akufo-Addo's ethnic origin) and Asante (Kufuor and Kyerematen's ethnic origin, though the latter has a Fanti mother). This set the precedent of putting an ethnic tag on the campaign team of candidates (Kennedy, 2009).

There is still no evidence of former President Kufuor showing support to Kyerematen. However, historical accounts reveal that in 1967 when Kufuor returned to Ghana from his studies overseas, it was Kyerematen's father (Dr. A.A.Y. Kyerematen) who gave him his first job as Clerk of the Kumasi City Council and went on to encourage him to stand for the Atwima Nwabiagya seat which he won and became a Member of Parliament at a very young age.[62] In line with the political godfather theory discussed earlier in this paper, the mentorship role played by Kyerematen's father in Kufuor's political life provides a useful perspective on the allegations linking Kufuor to the younger Kyerematen.

[61]Professor Atta Mills, however, turned down the award.

[62]Personal interviews

National Democratic Congress (NDC)

The NDC was formed out of the military regime of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) led by then Chairman Jerry John Rawlings. Party faithful describe the NDC as a third political tradition (or force) in Ghana though some of the literature classifies it under the populist/Nkrumahist tradition. For example, Nkrumah's subscription to Non-Alignment allowed him to pragmatically choose his external partners from either the former East or West blocs. The PNDC operated as a populist regime under the tenets of probity, accountability and transparency. However, by 1983, the regime had worked out with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank a programme to implement the cost recovery-oriented structural adjustment programme with associated austerity measures. Many of is hard-core leftist members and supporters of the PNDC resigned over the implementation of the structural adjustment programme.

In 1987, the regime initiated the current local government system as a way of promoting popular participation and empowerment of the masses. Beyond the stated objectives of the local government system, critics have argued that the PNDC prepared itself for the imminent constitutional democratic regime by using the local governance system to accommodate many grassroots functionaries of the PNDC – i.e. members of the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) and the People's Defence Committees (PDCs) – who were later recruited into the local government structures.

For example, the local governance system was in principle

insulated from partisan politics yet the sitting Head of State appointed District Commissioners (now District Chief Executives) and also recruited non-partisan District Assembly members through a combination of non-partisan elections and direct presidential appointment. Many PNDC functionaries also ended up as staff members of some of the new constitutional bodies such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), which had offices across the length and breadth of the country. At the same time, during the 10 years of PNDC rule, the regime recruited some of its leaders from both the Danquah-Busia-Dombo and the populist/Nkrumahist traditions. Personalities such as former President J.A. Kufuor, the late Justice D.F. Annan, Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia (father of the current Vice-Presidential candidate of the NPP) among many others were recruited from the liberal Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition. Mr. John Mahama (Ghana's sitting President and son of a former Upper Regional Minister, J.D. Mahama, Mr. Kofi Totobi Kwakye, Nii Okaija Adamafio (both sons of former Ministers) and many others were recruited from the populist/Nkrumahist tradition.

Professor John Evans Atta Mills – incidentally a graduate of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute – was recruited to head the country's Internal Revenue Authority and was ostensibly 'groomed' for 10 years before President Rawlings allegedly sidestepped party procedure and singularly appointed him to become his Vice-Presidential candidate for the 1996 Presidential elections in what was termed 'the Swedru declaration'.[63]

There are two implications for the adoption of right-wing policies by the PNDC in the early 1980s and the broadbased recruitment drive by the NDC in the 1990s. While the structural

[63] The appointment of Professor Mills triggered some disaffection within the NDC as he was seen as an outsider. Some dissatisfied members left the NDC to form the National Reform Party and contested the 2000 elections but they have since been reunited with the NDC.

adjustment programme brought the (P)NDC closer to the political centre and marked yet another substantial convergence between the two main political traditions, the appointments to public and political office fed into African patrimonial political theory and also expressed the solid foundation upon which the NDC was built as an umbrella platform that amalgamated the left, the right and the military elements of the PNDC regime into a united political grouping under the Fourth Republic constitutional order .

Additionally, the appointments expressed the political leverage that the party founder – Rawlings – had over the fortunes of the party. No wonder allegations of incumbency abuse were quickly cited by the opposition in the 1992 and 1996 general elections. The human rights record as well as the commitment to institutionalism of the PNDC regime falls outside the remit of this paper. However, differences in approach to the protection of human rights and observance of due process underpin some of the current divisions within the NDC.[64]

Current Divisions in the NDC

The main political blocs within the NDC revolve around former President Rawlings (and his wife, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings) and President Atta Mills with most of the other Nkrumahist elements within the party (e.g. Ahwoi brothers, Totobi Kwakye, Vice-President Mahama – now the sitting President etc.) uniting behind the Atta Mills.

In 2008, the NDC won the presidential elections under the leadership of John Evans Atta Mills. Ex-President Rawlings played a key role in campaigning for the NDC. Ahead of the

[64] Under the indemnity clauses of the 1992 Constitution, PNDC functionaries and those of previous military regimes are immune from court action.

elections, public perceptions about the health of Atta Mills and his ability to assert himself against the desires of Rawlings were some of the weak points of the Atta Mills campaign (Ghana News Agency, 2008). Immediately after the elections, comments from the office of former President Rawlings indicated a rocky co-existence between his office and the new administration. First, there was a public announcement from Rawlings' office requesting the dismissal of all DCEs appointed by the previous administration as well as Kufuor's security chiefs within the first three months of the Atta Mills administration (Myjoyonline, 2009). This was followed by calls for the arrest of functionaries of the Kufuor administration. Then came allegations of corruption against the Atta Mills functionaries and a mockery of the quality of the government team put together by the President (ModernGhana.com, 2009). The major evidence of the division appeared in 2011 when a longstanding rumour of interest in the presidential seat became a reality with Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings' announced decision to contest the NDC presidential primary against the sitting President Atta Mills. That contest took place at Sunyani Coronation Park where the former First Lady obtained 3.1 percent of the total votes cast (citifmonline.com, 2011) and Mills won 96.9 percent.

The Sunyani Coronation Park verdict further widened the divisions between the two blocs. As one interviewee put it, 'Mr. Rawlings wants a total grip of the NDC and wants to call the shots but others think his time is past, giving way to a new era. He wants him [President Mills] to be combative and robust and arrest and prosecute all functionaries of the Kufuor administration who

are perceived to be corrupt. The Rawlings bloc also accuses some of the Atta Mills appointees as corrupt. On the other hand, the Atta Mills administration wants to build a sustainable party that can survive any political turbulence in the future. The administration also wants to use due process in arresting and prosecuting suspected criminals while asserting itself against perceived aggressive demands from the Rawlingses.

Implications for conflict

What is emerging is that across both parties, there are no clear strategies for recruiting a new crop of leaders and grooming them to take over from the aging group. Once elder statesmen maintain an active interest in partisan politics, such divisions and conflicts will never go away.

Secondly, the reward system for politicians in Ghana does not only motivate people to go into politics, it empowers political office holders to continue to stay in office. For example, DCEs, Members of Parliament, and Ministers of State (who serve a minimum of one year in office) as well as the President and his Vice-President all look forward to a generous package of ex gratia awards and gratuities that is linked to the end of their current term of office rather than the end of their respective political careers.

Although these gratuities have been designed to enhance life after political office, because eligibility is not linked to retirement from a political career, it has rather become a further motivation for political office holders to want to be re-elected irrespective of the quality of their performance. Thus, combined with the

trappings of political office, parliamentarians, for example, can collect ex gratia awards as many times as they win the parliamentary elections in their constituencies.

In the run-up to party primaries and also the lead-up to parliamentary elections, a combination of genuine grassroots protests and politically orchestrated rebellions take place against one candidate or the other. When this takes place within a given political party, it leads to acrimonious campaigns of attacks and threats that arm opponents of the other party ahead of the actual elections. When it occurs between candidates of different parties, it poisons the general political atmosphere and generates a state of insecurity throughout the campaign period. It is also at this time that underserved and deprived communities intensify their protests over official inaction regarding excessive exploitation of natural resources, pollution of their sources of water supply, degradation of the environment through surface mining, and inappropriate location of new district capitals, among other issues. For example, chiefs in the Western Region have been lobbying the government to set aside a proportion of expected oil proceeds solely for the development of that region, although that demand runs contrary to the traditional approach to the disbursement of proceeds from other agricultural and natural resources of the country.

Additionally, communities around the country continue to mount pressure on the government to rename capital towns for new districts in their favour, threatening to vote en bloc one way or the other depending on government responses to their demands. Furthermore, because of the social diversity within communities and districts, the geographical area from which a DCE is selected is

important for the development prospects of other areas even within the same district. Similarly, the general pattern of voting of districts, communities and even regions is politically important. It indicates areas of safe zones or strongholds as well as difficult or unfavourable areas as far as political parties are concerned. These elements provide leverage for the communities as parties explore entry points into communities as part of their mobilization strategy. Within the above context, isolated disputes over chieftaincy succession, land ownership and location of new district capitals have historically developed into violence and have served as entry points through which national politics is invited into local disputes.

For example, faced with an opportunity to have their candidates installed as the Ya-Na of Dagbon in the Northern Region in 1954, the Andani leadership including their Member of Parliament crossed over to the then ruling party, the Convention People's Party (CPP) and since then, while the Andani gate has been associated with the populist tradition (CPP and now NDC), the Abudu gate has been associated with the right wing Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition which is now represented by the NPP (Osei-Tutu and Danso, 2012; Mahama, 2003).

In the above forms, a rise in tensions is associated with which group is feeling disadvantaged by the conduct of the sitting political regime and which group has its preferred regime in office. In March 2002, the sitting Ya-Na Yakubu Andani and 40 of his elders were killed on the eve of the celebration of the Bugum (Fire) festival in Yendi. In the NPP government, which had assumed office in January 2001, some key positions (including security) were occupied, coincidentally, by members of the Abudu

gate (Vice-President, National Security Coordinator, Minister of the Interior and the Northern Regional Minister who is chair of the Regional Security Committee). These circumstances placed the killings squarely within the associational politics of the country, and the fact that the killers have not been found has not improved the underlying terrain of accusations and counter-accusations (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011; Tsikata and Seini, 2004).

A similar situation is emerging at Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region where the Paramount Chief of the Techiman Traditional Area has been having problems with the chief of Tuobodom, a nearby town in the same region. Historically, the Tuobodom chief swears allegiance to the Asantehene though the area is within the administrative district of the Techiman Municipality. The Techimanhene (Chief of Techiman), feeling that the area falls within his territory, installed a rival chief at Tuobodom and this has generated a protracted proxy chieftaincy crisis that feeds into the interests of both the Asantehene and the Paramount Chief of the Techiman Traditional Council (MyJoy Online, 2012).

In 2009, the Asantehene threatened to arrest the Chief of Techiman after it was reported to him that the Chief of Techiman had caused the capture and assault of the Tuobodom chief. One of the concerns raised by the Asantehene was that the Chief of Techiman thought that 'his regime' was now in power (MyJoyOnline, 2010) (Mensah, 2011). Such associational politics is evident all over the country and remains a source of tension before, during and after general elections. Traditional authorities have a following and, therefore, are important for political mobilization purposes. Winning over communities and

their leaders is one thing and having a sustainable political relationship with them is another. Where there is no structured approach to engaging such political stakeholders, public political communication is directed at appealing to the sensibilities of one's stakeholders by denigrating opponents in a way that resonates with one's political support base.

Recommendations

The way political parties organize themselves is important, particularly at the local level. Equally important are the mechanisms for reaching out to identifiable groups in the constituencies. Thus, this paper is advocating effective bottom-up policy-making processes within the party systems that allow multiple stakeholders – not just the youth, women and business community – to make inputs into party decisions. That will provide a more structured basis for political discussions in the country.

Ultimately, it will be politically expedient to open up local government positions to election processes, enabling political parties to sponsor candidates for political offices at the district and unit levels. That will help deconstruct the paradox around political recruitment at the grassroots level. This, together with an enforceable code of conduct for political actors, will help in mitigating the aggressive and derogatory political communications that dominate political discourse today, especially in the mass media.

Finally, the excessive concentration of power in the national

executives of political parties and the rising levels of dissent must be reversed. More so, a strategy is required to spread the burden of political party/campaign financing that should reduce the risk and damage incurred for those who lose an election.

Lastly, this chapter has looked at the dynamics of inter- and intra-party conflicts in Ghana, focusing on the conditions and processes that inform the operations of political parties. It has highlighted certain paradoxes that need to be deconstructed while proposing reforms for dealing with the inherent problems identified. By and large, the chapter concedes that progress has been made on the political front but demonstrates that the progress made throws up inherent problems that challenge the legal basis of the entire political arrangement. Thus, it is important that the laws regulating partisan politics in Ghana, including the Constitution, are reviewed to accommodate the new and emerging challenges to partisan politics in Ghana.

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Chapter 6

Interrogating the Relationship between the Politics of Patronage and Electoral Violence in Ghana

By Afua A. Lamptey and Naila Salihu

Abstract

Political patronage is quite common in most political systems across the globe. In Africa, the return to multi-party democracy was initially greeted with high expectations, particularly as it was seen as a possible remedy for neo-patrimonialism with its attendant patronage politics. Nonetheless, the system has continued to perpetuate itself not only in Ghana but also in other African countries despite some structural interventions over the years. This has been attributed to several factors among which are the zero-sum nature of political competition and the weak nature of formal structures for guaranteeing physical security, status and wealth. Patronage trends are especially heightened in election years when political parties employ an elaborate network to win political power in order to control access to the vast political and economic resources often vested in the presidency. Individuals or clients tend to attach themselves to 'big men' or patrons who are capable of securing their needs. The patrons in turn resort to extracting resources from the state, kinfolk, followers and other sources to meet the expectations of their 'clients'. This has the tendency to turn elections into fierce competitions often with violent repercussions, particularly in instances where supporters of political aspirants are prepared to go to any extent to ensure that their patrons emerge victorious in elections.

Key words:

patronage, neo-patrimonialism, patron-client networks, clientelism, politics of exclusion, winner-takes-all.

Introduction

Across the West African sub-region, leaders are generally perceived to hold onto office by purchasing support through the distribution of state resources. Conflicts, therefore, erupt when the resources are either monopolized by the elites in government or denied those outside the circle of the leaders' patronage systems, as happened in the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone.[65] Conversely, patronage systems have also been used to explain the exceptional durability of some African regimes. The classic cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya[66] in the early 1980s, suggest that leaders can achieve a degree of stability for their regimes by using state resources to facilitate intra-elite accommodation (Arriola, 2009: 1345). Patronage systems are also not new to politics in Ghana; the very fabric of the society promotes patronage as a system for survival. The winner-takes-all nature of political competition in Ghana, where the victor sweeps everything in his wake including access to state resources, patronage systems and the prestige and privileges of office and the vanquished is left to count his losses, makes the competition quite fierce, with sporadic eruptions of violence.

[65] Greater centralization of patronage by party leaders effectively shrank the political arena and made the entire system less responsive to the periphery's growing demands for state resources (Clapham, 1982).

[66] The current received wisdom posited by Médard (1991) and Widner (1992) argues that both Côte d'Ivoire's Houphouët-Boigny and Kenya's arap Moi in the 1980s used patronage systems to consolidate their stay in power.

In Ghana, the utilization of patronage systems by the two main political parties – the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) – has resulted in an ad hoc approach to governance, whereby party loyalists are placed in positions of governance not essentially based on merit and opposition members are usually excluded from state resources. Patronage trends are especially heightened in election years where both parties employ an elaborate network to win political power. This has meant over the years that supporters of the two main political parties are not averse to engaging in electoral malpractice because of the rewards assured. For instance, under the tenure of both the NDC and NPP, it was not uncommon to observe incidence of violent actions by supporters who flout the rule of law and engage in all manner of 'uncivil' behaviour to claim their expected rewards especially if such rewards are not readily forthcoming from the party they helped attain political power. This trend, coupled with certain pronouncements by the party leaders, therefore portends possibly violent actions by supporters of both parties, especially as Ghana has joined the league of oil-producing countries.

This chapter will interrogate the possible relationship between the politics of patronage and electoral violence in Ghana. It examines trends of political patronage in Ghana's electoral processes from 1992 to date and evaluates the potential for election-related violence, proposing policy alternatives for peaceful elections in 2012 and beyond. The chapter is structured as follows: section one undertakes a conceptual discussion on neo-patrimonial politics in Africa generally. The second section situates the trends of patronage politics in the Ghanaian bodys

politic in recent times and examines in the third section how this brings about election-related violence. The chapter concludes with some recommendations in the fourth section. The paper argues that political patronage is a contributing factor to election-related violence in Ghana.

Exploring the Potential Nexus between Patronage Politics and Electoral Violence

Neo-patrimonialism and the associated patron-client relations are deeply rooted in the political dispensation of African countries. With the introduction of multiparty democracy in Africa, there was the hope that neo-patrimonial politics would diminish. However, there are indications that it has actually gained strength and intensity, especially during elections (Lindberg, 2003; Lindberg, 2010; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). Neo-patrimonialism is an informal political system based on personal rule and organized through clientelistic networks of patronage, personal loyalty and coercion (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Bayart, 1993). Bratton and van de Walle describe neo-patrimonialism as a system in which an individual 'rules by dint of prestige and power; ordinary folks are treated as extensions of the "big man's" household, with no rights or privileges other than those bestowed by the ruler. Authority is entirely personalized, shaped by the ruler's preferences...The ruler ensures the political stability of the regime and personal political survival by providing a zone of security in an uncertain environment and by selectively distributing favours and material benefits to loyal followers who are not citizens of the polity so much as the ruler's clients' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 61).

It is argued that typically, African regime systems of patron-client ties bind leaders and followers in a relationship not only of mutual assistance and support, but also of recognized and accepted inequality between 'big men' and 'lesser men' (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). This political culture is reinforced by the view that when a society's impersonal legal guarantees of physical security, status and wealth are relatively weak or non-existent, individuals tend to seek personal substitutes by attaching themselves to 'big men' capable of providing protection and even advancement (Sandbrook, 1992:109). This stems from the fact that formal institutions in this type of political system are often weak and function primarily to enrich political leaders and maintain their personal rule (Jackson, 1987). Therefore, power is arrayed through 'a system of relations linking rulers not with the "public" or even with the ruled (at least not directly), but with patrons, associates, clients, supporters, and rivals, who constitute the "system"' (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982:19). Patrons offer resources to their clients in exchange for their loyalty, and clients support their patrons to gain access rewards that cannot be readily attained in a weak, formal economy. The state is thus a venue in which political actors bargain over the allocation of resources and secure their consumption under conditions of economic scarcity (Hyden, 2006; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). Leaders resort to extracting resources from the state, kinfolk, followers and other sources, usually in a coercive and predatory manner, in order to sustain their grip on power (Lewis, 1996; Clapham, 1993). Therefore, neo-patrimonial political systems have the tendency to monopolize material resources, and turn the political game into a zero-sum struggle for control of the state, thereby making it the key to political and economic benefits.

Political patronage, which is one of the key characteristics of neo-patrimonial political systems, refers to a direct exchange relationship between two actors of unequal status and power. It is based on the control by one of the actors of critical resources (such as land, water, jobs, skills, state-related resources) and the disposition of the other actor to establish 'a moral dependence to get access to them' (Chubb, 1982:44; Buve, 1992). This dependence is often manifested in political loyalty and services. Within the context of elections, it can be construed as the ways in which party politicians distribute material resources, public jobs or special favours in exchange for personal loyalty and electoral support. The political party is the major unit in this use of the term (Weingrod, 1968). Key writes that patronage may be considered 'as the response of government to the demands of an interest group – the party machinery – that desires a particular policy in the distribution of public jobs' (Key, 1964). Thus, patronage is best thought of as an incentive system – a political currency with which to purchase political activity and political responses (Sorauf, 1961). The chief functions of patronage are: maintaining an active party organization, promoting intra-party cohesion, attracting voters and supporters, financing the party and its candidates, procuring favourable government action, and creating party discipline in policy making. In essence, political parties exchange jobs and favours in their quest for support at election time (Sorauf, 1961). Political patronage in this context is, therefore, how political leaders seek to turn public institutions and public resources to their own ends, and how favours of various kinds are exchanged for votes.

Patronage networks in politics are, of course, not peculiar to Africa. In most political systems across the globe, personal

relations and networks also play an important role in the management of public affairs and administrative-institutional rules (Titeca, 2006; Arriola, 2009; Reeves, 2011). Indeed, in United States and British political life, party politics patronage was very prevalent (Arriola, 2009). The patronage dispensed by parties facilitated the coordination of office seekers and, thereby, the formation of stable majorities. According to Huntington (1968), the active use of patronage 'contributed directly to the building of some of the most effective political parties and most stable political systems' (p. 70). Because of the prevalence of political patronage in almost every political system, some analysts have indeed argued that political patronage should not be identified with one or another specific phenomenon, but rather ought to be perceived as an almost universal principle of political representation which may assume quite different forms and content depending on the societal context. Hence, patronage is a dependent variable, which can assume 'different degrees of significance in response to the forces at work in the wider environment (Buve, 1992).

In the case of Africa, neo-patrimonialism and patronage politics were a common feature of the political landscape, especially during the first four decades of independence, which were characterized by conditions of limited competition in one-party systems (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). Nonetheless, there are remnants in contemporary African politics. The intensity and impact of these networks tend to be much bigger in Africa, considering the strong impact of neo-patrimonialism and networks on the attitudes of citizens vis-à-vis the services provided by the state (Titeca, 2006:45). It has been argued that in Africa 'people do not expect the services of the state to be there

for everyone, but only for the people of their "political camp" or network. The service-providing role of the state is seen as strongly personalised, as the "big men" are perceived to have taken over the service-provision activities of the state' (Titeca, 2006:46). The extensive reliance on patronage politics in African societies often affects every facet of government functions, leading to gross inefficiencies in public service delivery, and increased corruption and rent seeking in the public sector (Reeves, 2011). Partly due to this, the reliance on patronage has led to greater instability in Africa through the distortion of economic policies and political institutions. Consequently, some analysts have attributed the cause of the region's civil wars to this form of governance (World Bank, 2000; Collier 2007) and lagging democratization (Diamond and Plattner, 1999).

In the case of Ghana, Ayee (2007) argues that among other factors, cultural underpinnings such as kinship and ethnicity have contributed to the creation of three modes of political patronage in Ghanaian politics. These vivid illustrations are worthy of quotation: a) 'the connection between national leaders and local communities through direct links with local leaders; authority figures and respectable rich persons in communities who have been courted by political leaders to garner support in their local areas with the promise of personal gain, public office and local improvement; b) so-called democratic or popular organizations have become key vehicles for the disbursement of benefits, just as card-bearing membership of the party in power has become one of the main means of access to government resources; and c) so-called "mafia" groups that have made political leaders at the local and national levels'. Ruling coalitions have depended heavily on the approval of ethnic groups that contributed to their

electoral victory (Ayee, 2007:172). 'Therefore, patrons at the centre tend to direct state resources and funds to their clients to ensure continued political support. This has generated a thinking of politics in Ghana as an avenue for the source of benefits with wealth in its broadest sense, and reward for successful engagement. With this kind of thinking by politicians and electorates, a vicious cycle of competition for access to and control over national resources has been encouraged.' (Ayee 2007:172)

Political patronage takes place at the elite and grassroots levels. At the elite level, patronage is manifested as a dual relationship between 'like-minded' people who may share a common political leaning whereby patrons offers resources to their clients in anticipation of loyalty. For example in Ghana, and to some extent in other African political systems, political participation is 'limited to a relatively small, largely male-dominated elite working in the executive branch, and manifested through political parties built on clientelistic networks that to a significant degree cut across the country's principal socio-economic cleavages of ethnicity, religion, and region' (USAID, 2011:) For instance, there is always consensus among political elites on the rules of political competition because the rules benefit the elite from those parties. Most often, the rules are exclusive to those elites and thus they seek to maintain a status quo that perpetuates a neo-patrimonial system of governance based on executive dominance and the capture of public resources to ensure self-perpetuation (USAID, 2011). It can therefore be argued that the consensus exhibited by elites at this level does not lead to political violence and thus could even enhance loyalty and political

stability (Clapham, 1982; Brown, 2004). In this context, patronage does provide an avenue for maintaining strong political parties by offering rewards to party supporters. It also lets the President surround himself with people who share his vision, and fosters a culture of loyalty and trust. It additionally introduces new people with fresh ideas into the political scene, thereby improving upon governance (Weingrod, 1968).

However, the tendency for corruption, incompetence and greed usually derails the entire process, leading to 'witch hunting' by opposition forces when they assume power. In addition, the net impact of this evolving neo-patrimonial system of governance in Ghana especially is to effectively disenfranchise and exclude significant numbers of citizens, women and men alike, from meaningful participation in political life (USAID, 2011). This is because the nature of political patronage in the African politico-economic systems is often a zero-sum game, where there is simply 'not enough cake for everyone'. As such, there are always groups or even regions that are going to be left out in the sharing of the 'national cake' (Titeca, 2006:52-53).

At the grassroots level, patronage networks are manifested through unequal relationships between the supposed 'big men', usually political elites and their supporters. For example, Ichino and Nathan (2011; 2012) contend that the introduction of primary elections in new democracies to select political nominees for both presidential and parliamentary elections has propelled the tendency of patronage and clientelism. Thus, aspiring candidates compete for nomination through the distribution of patronage (usually financial and material rewards) to local party members, rather than through policy positions or the democratic

image such persons present to voters. This often results in patronage spending ties between political aspirants and local party members. As a result, there is the likelihood of intra-party conflict, especially in cases where defeated aspirants use their support base within local party structures to dispute the results of primary elections, or even defect from the party after the primaries (Ichino and Nathan, 2011; 2012). The likelihood of patronage politics, especially at the grassroots level to engender violence or conflict, both at the intra and inter-party levels cannot be underestimated. This linkage will be discussed further in subsequent sections of the chapter.

Due to the high stakes attached to political power in Africa, elections are characterized by fierce competition. More often than not, supporters of political parties or candidates have the tendency to resort to violent conduct to promote the interest of their political patrons, considering the rewards at stake for them should the latter emerge victorious from the elections. Sisk defines electoral violence as politically motivated violence in which actors resort to coercion as an instrument to advance their interests or achieve specific political ends through actions such as violence against people, property or the electoral process before, during or after elections (Sisk, 2008:5-6). Such methods, geared towards winning political competition for power through violence, subvert the electoral and political process (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2001). The tools of the trade include the intimidation and disempowerment of political opponents. Electoral violence can also be explained from cultural and structural perspectives. The cultural perspective presupposes the existence of a political culture of thuggery, which generally predisposes actors to resort to violence and intimidation during

political contests. A structural angle argues that society and politics are organized in a manner that is likely to generate conflict (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2001:1). These two perspectives are reinforced by ethnic rivalries and mobilization in politics in most African countries that have been volatile during elections (Atuobi, 2008:11).

Elections in themselves do not generate violence. However, in the case of Africa one can allude to the fragility of states and societies, coupled with the deep-seated, ethno-religious rivalries and the poor socio-economic conditions that reduce electoral processes to avenues for settling differences. Dissatisfied political leaders and/or their supporters often resort to violent protests, destruction of property, injuring and at times killing perceived political opponents as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with the outcomes of electoral processes (Atuobi, 2008:11). This is especially so in the instances of post-elections violence. Furthermore, election-related violence is closely linked to the neo-patrimonial nature of African states, the nature of power contestation as well as weak democratic institutions (Omotola, 2010:51). Therefore, during elections, sympathizers or 'political clients' who have been offered or promised some reward by their patron politicians in their quest for power, would do all that it takes to ensure that their patrons emerge victorious in elections, even if it means resorting to violent tactics to exclude political opponents.

The foregoing conceptual perspective provides a framework for analyzing the trends of political patronage, its impact on and its role in contemporary Ghanaian politics.

Examining the 'Politics of Patronage' in Ghana

Political patronage can be found at most levels of society in Ghana, but it is particularly observed in the unequal relationships between political leaders and their 'supporters'. It is also noteworthy that the illiberal nature of most African democracies and especially their characteristic centralization of power around the presidency and the pervasive clientelism that make up the relationship between the state and the citizenry has made the allure of 'state capture' all the more rewarding to political leaders (van de Walle, 2003). Following from this, one of the primary reasons for the entrenchment of patronage systems in Ghana is directly linked to the 1992 Constitution, which allows power to be overly concentrated in the hands of the executive branch and by default, the presidency. This has led to an excessively powerful presidency, and has created a situation in which control of the executive branch is the overwhelmingly dominant objective of multiparty political competition in Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi 2009). Thus, the hegemonic presidency in Ghana has encouraged reliance on political patronage and corruption and has also fired up political competition for power. The Constitution even gives the President discretionary authority to make temporary appointments and even evade parliamentary scrutiny.[67]

The presidency is, therefore, the dominant area for decision making, raising the stakes in the electoral process as to who gets in to control power. It has also resulted in the Office of the President becoming a parallel government with considerably

[67]The Constitution, in Chapter Eight, outlines the powers of the executive arm of government. For instance, Article 70 empowers the President to appoint heads of public institutions in consultation with a Council of State which he himself appoints. To further illustrate this point, the NPP in the election year 2000, indicated in its manifesto dubbed 'Agenda for positive change' that it would reduce wastage in the system by pruning down the then current number of ministers from 89 to only 19 (Amoah, 2000: 1). However, by the end of its two terms, the NPP government had about 90 ministers, an indication perhaps of the many 'clients' it had to service.

more executive power than the actual ministries (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Operatives in such positions are able to place party loyalists and other supporters in roles that they may not be qualified for. Both the NPP and NDC governments, without fail on assuming power, have replaced officials appointed by the previous government to head governmental institutions. This has deprived the country of much needed competence, and change rather than continuity characterises the overall development of the nation. When the NPP government took over in 2000 for instance, most of the NDC loyalists at post either 'sacked' themselves or were relieved of their duties since the NPP government had long been in the political 'wilderness' and therefore it was their time to 'chop'. Similarly, in 2008, the NDC followed 'due process' by repeating the trend – despite the assertions by President Mills on the campaign platform that his was a government of national unity that would make use of national resources evenly and judiciously distributed (Bonney, 2008: 17). There was much urging on this score by a rather impatient ex-President Rawlings who lamented the slow pace of ridding the country of allegedly corrupt NPP officials (Daabu, 2009). Until Ghana develops a system whereby such positions are filled without the coloration of party affiliation, the current system will perpetuate itself and the much coveted democracy and good governance will only be a window dressing.

The centralization of power in the presidency has also meant that clientelistic access to state resources is highly concentrated in the presidency (van de Walle, 2003). Because of the vast networks of economic and political patronage that the presidency controls, to be outside this system closes off many opportunities

for economic and political gain. Therefore, persons who may not even hold strong political convictions or partisan leanings, such as some private sector actors and some elements of civil society, feel compelled to show electoral support so as to ensure they are part of the winning coalition, therefore gaining access to a piece of the 'national cake' (USAID, 2011:16). It is no secret, therefore, that Ghana's oil discovery will raise the stakes in the elections. As such, patron-client relationships will be more eagerly sought (Economist Intelligence Unit Report, 2012). This is because the formal institutions that would otherwise have channelled the benefits of the state's resources to citizens through the provision of basic services, among other things, are often too weak or unreliably slow.

Additionally, the political currency used in a particular community in election campaign exercises usually depends on the nature of the community, groups or individuals and their political sophistication (Ango, 2008). A study done of the Ablekuma Central constituency in Accra, indicates that politicians were measured by the electorate according to how they met the daily needs of the people by, for example, showering the people with gifts, paying school fees, giving generous funeral donations and generally hosting them whenever they visited. The electorate also viewed its political interest in terms of religion, ethnicity, finances, party, tradition and personality (Ango, 2008). As Ninsin succinctly puts it, 'the Ghanaian electorate does not vote as sovereign individuals, aiming to implement certain democratic ideals or rights, but as members of the community aspiring to improve their own material conditions' (Ninsin, 1993).

This indicates that the politics of patronage is a two-way street in Ghana whereby the 'patronised' are active participants and the game is not the exclusive reserve of elites. Lindberg (2003:127-128; 2010:123-127) illustrates this further in his survey of members of parliament (MPs) regarding their election campaigns. His data revealed that the MPs were actively engaged in patron-client networks to a significant degree in a bid to get re-elected. Additionally, the trend of patronage politics had shown a consistent increase since Ghana's return to democratic rule. Lindberg concludes that the persistent pattern of patronage politics is a threat to democratic consolidation because it threatens vertical accountability and legitimacy by breeding alternative pacts of loyalty, expectations of corruption and tendencies to delegate mandates.

The executive branch's grip on power and control of patronage has, moreover, stalled the constitutionally mandated devolution of administrative power to District Assemblies and their sub-structures. Presidential appointments of District Chief Executives (DCEs) and a third of the members of the District Assemblies (DAs) are often made on the basis of loyalty or kickbacks rather than merit. (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009) This has impeded any meaningful decentralization and has led to a lack of responsiveness and accountability to the citizenry on the part of these agencies and their officials. Local development also suffers from the award of service delivery contracts to party chairmen and their cronies. It must be noted here that democratic decentralization requires the transfer of power and resources to sub-national authorities which are 'a) largely or wholly independent of the central government; and b) democratically elected' (Manor, 1995: 81-2). This has resulted in several stakeholders expressing their preference for

elected DAs and DCEs. In a survey conducted by the National Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council, (2008:31) a majority of respondents (71.2 percent) reiterated the need for a constitutional amendment to allow citizens to elect their DCEs. For as long as the Constitution allows the President to appoint people to these positions, patronage systems will continually be utilized to fill these positions.

It must again be emphasized that in Ghana, and for that matter in much of Africa, programmatic and ideological cleavages have not shaped political competition nearly as much as ethnic and regional factors (van de Walle 2003). Fridy (2007) and Tonah (2009) further state that the history of Ghana's electoral processes shows that at least in popular perception, ethnicity matters more than any other socio-economic variable. Many voters view the two major parties, the NDC and the NPP, as representing mainly Ewe and Ashanti interests respectively (Jockers et al., 2010). Regarding the 2008 elections, for instance, Jockers et al. argue that despite the generally free and fair election, serious malpractices and electoral fraud seemingly occurred with the most contested results coming from the Ashanti and Volta regions. These were largely not investigated and both the NDC and NPP accused each other of electoral fraud. The inability or unwillingness of the Electoral Commission to carry out full-scale investigations into these allegations has the potential to create a culture of impunity in which both parties will continue to influence their supporters to make sure they win at all costs in their respective strongholds.[68] It is also interesting to note that during elections in Ghana, most parties adopt a vague populism and pitch their campaign around fighting corruption, providing better services and even more vague promises of a better future under their

[68] The NPP exploited the advantage of incumbency in the Volta Region by distributing items such as books to the villages, and T-shirts and traditional presents to the chiefs and queen mothers. The NPP is also alleged to have given out cash as an incentive to vote for the 'right' candidate. The Volta Region also has a history of irregularities in the form of abnormally high registration rates in some constituencies, bloated voters' registers as well as rigging and ethnic bloc voting in favour of the NDC (Jockers et al., 2010)

leadership. A pattern emerges in a survey of the Daily Graphic newspapers in the election years; 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 and indicates a general trend of political leaders of the NPP and NDC especially promising the electorate better jobs, youth employment, good roads, a curb on corruption, and an all-inclusive government. However, once they attain political power, they are unable to roll out these populist promises effectively. For example, Prof. Mills on the campaign trail in 2008 stated that when voted into office, prices of petroleum products would be further reduced, adding that the then incumbent NPP government was insensitive to the plight of the people (Daily Graphic, 2008). When he won political power, however, petroleum prices rather went up, leading to protests in parts of the country. This has reinforced the perception that promises made on the campaign platform are merely meant to gather in votes and not so much to improve the welfare of the electorate.[69] In short, politicians in Ghana have over the years gained a reputation of not being true to their promises and generally taking the electorate for granted.

When it comes to the complex area of funding for political parties, because Ghana's Constitution does not allow the state to fund political parties, 'clients' are identified who can help the parties to compete with the incumbent government since there is, invariably, abuse of incumbency to divert state funds for party gain.[70] In such an environment, the 'client' is often rewarded when the government comes into power with lucrative contracts, positions in government, etc. However, most of these clients

[69] To buttress this point is the exploitation of the youth. In this particular instance, Muslim youth were enlisted by one parliamentary aspirant with the promise of jobs in order to win political power in the Nima Zongo area. After the elections, when the Muslim youth approached the MP, they were told to bring their certificates, the lack of which the MP had conveniently not considered when he contacted them initially. (KAIPTC/FES 2012).

[70] Incumbents generally have access to state resources, presence on the state-owned media, private contributions from businessmen in the expectation of winning tenders and contracts. The opposition, on the other hand, is dependent on the goodwill of sympathetic 'big men' (Nugent, 2001).

prefer to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals of being identified with a particular party. This indicates that more research and attention should be given to the complex area of funding for political parties as they are one of the areas that breed patronage or patron-client relationships in Ghana.
Traditional authorities also play a significant role in Ghana's patronage systems. The constitutional ban on chiefs engaging in party politics has not stopped political party leaders from courting or exploiting their support. Gyimah-Boadi puts this in context by stating that 'Traditional leaders were prevailed upon to organise grand durbars to showcase the ruling party and its candidates in the elections. It is common practise depending on the incumbent government, to take over funeral ceremonies and there display largesse and great patronage capabilities (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001b).

Having highlighted the trends of patronage in Ghanaian politics, we now interrogate the relationship between political patronage and election-related violence in Ghana.

Linking Patronage Systems and Electoral Violence

Geographically, the occurrence of election-related violence cuts across all the 10 administrative regions in Ghana. However, some areas such as the Northern, Ashanti and Greater Accra regions have the highest incidence of electoral violence. Most of these incidents occur in the regional capitals – Tamale, Kumasi and Accra metropolis (Fayome et al., 2003; Aning and Lartey, 2008). Patronage systems are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for violence. Political leaders have become more careless in their campaign speeches and sometimes promise what they cannot

realistically deliver. During the 2008 elections, the stakes were high as the incumbent President Kufuor had just finished his constitutionally mandated two terms and could not stand for re-election. The stage then was set for a new political leader to step in and both the NDC and NPP were determined to win by all means. This resulted in them coming up with slogans such as the 'mother of all elections'; 'win or die'; 'there can be no loser'; 'we will win at all cost' (Aning and Lartey, 2009). These phrases created uncertainty, fear, heightened tensions in the society and created distrust among the politicians. Both sides then resorted to negative campaigns not based on any issues.

The menace of violence and intimidation had surfaced during the first round of voting, as members of 'keep-fit clubs' acted in essence as vigilantes for their preferred parties and candidates and sparked violent pre-election clashes in Bawku and Accra (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). During the run-up to the second round, such threats escalated. Former President Rawlings spearheaded the NDC's 'popular resistance' movement. His campaign messages actually exhorted supporters to take up arms, and flanked by retired military commandos, he led emotionally charged rallies that climaxed with the militaristic hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Even though the run-off election was generally peaceful, there were more instances of intimidation and violence than in the first round, especially in the Volta and Ashanti regions. Both parties had their polling agents harassed, with local vigilantes mounting roadblocks to prevent 'outsiders' from observing the polls in parts of the Volta Region. This summary of the 2008 elections underscores the effects of the patronage systems embedded in the country's politics. The idea of patronage has become so ingrained in party members and

supporters that their every action is tainted with it, and they utilize all manner of fair or foul means to make sure their parochial interests are met, regardless of the possible outcomes. It is also important to note that electoral violence not only targets party supporters, but also electoral officers, journalists and social and security analysts (Aning and Lartey, 2008).

Ayee (2002; 163) and Lindberg (2003) write that political parties in Ghana regard service in government as a means of building a network of patronage to further their political ambition. In the 1996 elections, sitting MPs of the NDC were deselected in favour of wealthy aspirants whose personal record and or credentials were questionable[71](Nugent, 1999). President Mills also felt the sting of party supporters in the early stages of his tenure while contending with the overwhelming task of fulfilling at least some of his campaign promises[72] while simultaneously steering the country through the global economic crisis. His work was compounded when some NDC supporters, with the backing of Rawlings, began complaining about the President's inability to fulfil his promises or 'support those who supported him' (Nyame, 2011). This is a clear reference to the patronage networks that continue to underpin Ghanaian politics. This gave birth to the phenomenon of what has become known as 'footsoldiers', some of whom went on a rampage and seized public places of convenience, took over the offices of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), as well as the buses of the Metro Mass Transit Ltd. Additionally, footsoldiers successfully engineered the removal

[71]In one instance, the winning candidate had just been removed from his job at the Ghana Water and Sewerage Company following complaints of poor performance by then president Rawlings himself (Daily Graphic, 13 August 1996 , p.13)

[72]President Mills had stated on the campaign trail in 2008 that among other things, he would create a one-time premium for the NHIS, and bring the killers of the Ya-Na (Overlord of the Dagbon Traditional Area, Northern Ghana) to book.

of some District Chief Executives (DCEs), managers and staff of NHIS and NYEP offices. These actions were usually performed through public agitation and sometimes forceful removals, threats and acts of violence (Nyame, 2011). It is also interesting to note that many of these so-called 'footsoldiers' who are largely semi-skilled or illiterate, demanded top jobs and 'juicy' government contracts.[73] These and many similar disturbances by supporters of the NDC demonstrate how patronage systems can deteriorate, with possibly violent eruptions if the perceived rewards are not forthcoming. The police also demonstrated during this period that they were either unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes committed under the umbrella of politics (Aning and Lartey, 2009).

Related to these incidents was the seizure of public toilets, which is not new in Ghana. Over time, public toilets have become politically protected business opportunities that, like taxis or drinking bars, are given out as political favours. In Kumasi in particular, Nana Akwasi Agyeman, the Metropolitan Chief Executive appointed by Rawlings in 1994, openly distributed the toilet contracts to 'loyal' Assembly Members, and denied them to critics (Ayee and Crook 2003). During his regime, the sub-metropolitan assemblies in Kumasi became virtually moribund as both revenue and patronage were centralised under the control of the Metropolitan Chief Executive and Metropolitan Assembly departments.[74] There are numerous instances of conflicts

[73] Some media houses carried interviews with some of these footsoldiers who generally stated that they deserved positions comparable with that of ministers of state and 'top dollar' contracts (Nyame, 2011). For instance, Joy FM, an Accra-based radio station in April 2010 broadcast an interview between one of the leaders of the footsoldiers and a Minister of State when violent demonstrations had begun in Yendi (Northern Region) to remove the incumbent Municipal Chief Executive for failing to give contracts to members of the NDC. During the interview, the footsoldier told the minister that 'if the footsoldiers were good enough to work to bring the NDC into power, they were good enough to occupy high offices and take up juicy government contracts like the Minister' (Nyame, 2011).

[74] In one instance, an NDC chairman and his group managing the public toilets in the Ayawaso district was replaced by a new group of people from the NPP after a change in government. After the swearing in of the new Metropolitan Assembly in November 2002, a group calling themselves 'Concerned Citizens' took over all the toilets in Accra with the overt or covert support of the assembly and people in high authority (Ayee and Crook, 2003). These takeovers involved violent clashes betwen incumbent and opposition forces.

generated by the toilets and the associated arm-twisting tactics of politicians. A change of regime, therefore, simply leads to a re-allocation of patronage.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Political patronage in Ghana is on the ascendancy, with no clear sign of it abating. While political patronage is not totally bad, the tendencies for corruption, divisive politicking and exclusion do tend to cancel out any benefits. As Ghana elects leaders every four years, it is vital that political leaders reduce the inclination to make populist promises just to win the votes of the electorate. Party policies should also seek to diversify the governmental process by gradually creating an all-inclusive government, rather than merely paying lip service to forming 'national governments' in their campaign speeches. To this end, security of tenure for public officials devoid of political interference should be institutionalized.

The global economic crunch has indicated that foreign aid to developing countries will continue to decline steadily and states must begin to draw more and more on their own resources to survive. This means that in the long run, states must be more pragmatic and prudent in the management and disbursement of the wealth and resources of the nation. Discouraging clientelistic access to state resources, therefore, will ensure that patronage systems will be significantly starved of resources, thereby causing a parallel reduction in election-related violence.

Additionally, there is the need for politicians as well as the electorate to strive towards institutionalizing issues-based

politicking. For there to be any significant change in the status quo, strong institutions and structures must be prioritized as this will provide the necessary checks and balances needed to halt political abuse and rent-seeking tendencies in the provision of public service. The review of the Constitution of Ghana also promises hope for addressing critical areas, especially with reference to curbing the powers of the President and cleaning up local governance structures. Ghana has made giant strides in democracy, but if those gains are to be sustained, certain structural factors such as the politics of exclusion must be critically addressed for the nation to forge ahead to the desired destination.

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Chapter 7

Use of Abusive Language in Ghanaian Politics

By Gilbert K. M. Tietaah

Abstract

The media in Ghana have been uniquely instrumental in stimulating national public discourse and political activism, and in spotlighting issues of good governance and the rule of law in the country. However, there is a palpable rise in concern about the blatant use of abusive language in and by the media. This chapter discusses the hypothesised link between media malaise and political efficacy to suggest that the use of indecorous language in the media could threaten Ghana's reputation as an oasis of electoral peace and democratic stability in West Africa. Using examples of how the media have been either complicit in, or direct casualties of, political violence in other countries, this chapter seeks to point out the potential of the Ghanaian media to ignite or stoke the embers of politically related violence/conflict in the country. An analysis of the discourse of intemperate language in the media is then used to provide the empirical evidence of the fault lines in Ghana's tenuous electoral processes. The chapter proposes policy and capacity-building interventions for improving the ability of the media to help – rather than hurt – the

institutionalisation of multiparty democratic governance under the Fourth Republic.

Key words

Media malaise; political efficacy; abusive language; partisan journalism; freedom and responsibility

Introduction

As the country moves inexorably towards Elections 2012, the political campaigning process is also assuming a characteristic turn. Political propaganda arsenals are out of the armoury: battle lines are being drawn, the gloves are coming off, and the electoral contest is quickly sliding into a bare-knuckled, verbal slug match between the parties laying claim to the mandate of Ghanaians. In this process, candidates and their supporters will need public platforms and they will crave media exposure. Scholarly opinion in the 'media effects' tradition suggests that in this role, the media are not always neutral, arms-length arbiters. They are like a double-edged sword: they can help or hurt, abet or abate, the values and pursuit of democracy, peace and national security.

This observation is not new. As early as 1934, Sampson (arguably the first indigenous chronicler of Gold Coast journalism) made a strong statement of faith in the political role of the Gold Coast press as an instrument for fighting administrative ills, and generally for checking reprehensible colonial methods of dealing with indigenous African affairs. The press, he noted, 'deserves'

nothing but praise ... because it is the press which educates public opinion and which also, by its agitations, is capable of dismissing Governments from power and parliamentarians from their seats' (Sampson 1934, pp. 7, 8). But, while expressing these confident sentiments about the role of the media in furthering democratic ideals, Sampson insisted that the 'sacred duty' of the journalist was 'to make the press helpful to the cause of peace and mutual understanding, rather than to encourage sham fights between individuals or parties'. He would, therefore, 'without any hesitation condemn the journalist who would always make it a business to write on the bellicose side or who would encourage anything like that' (Sampson, 1934, p. 29). Echoes of these mixed sentiments have continued to resonate in the contemporary scholarly discourse of both media and political science researchers.[75]

In the nature of partisan political systems, the government is constantly seeking space and airtime in order to address and impress Ghanaians on how far it has gone in delivering on the electoral mandate. On the other hand, the opposition would welcome every occasion of a press conference to respond to government actions and claims. The question to answer is: what diagnosis can we make of Ghana's political health by examining the content of media coverage of political issues? In this chapter, I attempt to address this question by examining the norms and values underpinning the presumed relationship between democracy and the media under the multiparty political system of governance. (Ampaw, 2004; Gunther and Mughan, 2000; Watson 2003).

[75] See, for instance Doris Graber, 'Mediated Politics and Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century', Annual Review of Psychology, 55 (2004), 545-71; Sally Young, Saskia Bourne and Stephanie Younaneg, 'Contemporary Political Communications: Audiences, Politicians and the Media in International Research', Sociology Compass 1/1 (2007), 41-59.

The organization of the chapter is as follows. The first section leans on conceptual arguments – specifically the proposed link between media malaise and political efficacy – to suggest that the Ghanaian media have a particular and pressing stake in ensuring that the current constitutional order is preserved, and not subverted.

The second section discusses the experiences of Kenya (in 2007/2008) and Côte d'Ivoire (since the abortive electoral outcome of 2010) where the media were blamed for being either instrumental accomplice or victim and unwitting pawn in the political violence that afflicted those two countries. Drawing on the two cases leads to a discussion of the potential of the Ghanaian media to cause (or contribute to) politically related conflict (even violence) in the country.

The third section notes the growing concern about the increasing use of indecorous – and incendiary – language by and in the media. From the examples cited here, it can be argued that this development belies Ghana's reputation as an enduring oasis of electoral peace and democratic stability in West Africa.

In conclusion, the chapter proposes some policy and capacity-building interventions for improving the ability of the media to support, rather than subvert, efforts to institutionalise multiparty democratic governance under the Fourth Republic in Ghana.

Media Freedom and the Democratic Mandate

Invoking a public interest-inspired paradigm of democratic theory, Garnham argued that the free access to and exchange of

information is indispensable to notions of popular participation and deliberative democracy (Garnham, 1992). The public interest prerogative of a free media hardly bears illustrating here. What is of concern is that to the extent that they pander to the commercial or partisan interests of their benefactors or proprietors, the media are not, in fact free, any nominal constitutional guarantees notwithstanding. Herman and Chomsky identified a number of factors – including ownership, financing, ideology, news sources – that 'filter' the news that is considered 'fit to print'[76] In the Ghanaian experience, Ansu-Kyeremeh (2007, 141) has called attention to the threats posed to media freedom and the integrity of Ghana's democracy by the phenomenon of '"mercenary" or "stomach" journalism' which 'largely involves a client paying the journalist for print space or airplay'. This phenomenon, variously referred to in the local journalistic lexicon as 'soli' or 'brown envelope', or 'black polythene bag' journalism, encapsulates the political patronage and low remuneration that characterise the Ghanaian media sphere. As Ansu-Kyeremeh (2007, p. 143) has noted, 'There is the mutual suspicion of politicians preying and playing on journalists in their quest for power, wealth and fame, while journalists sometimes earn their living by preying upon politicians'. The spectre that stomach journalism raises for free expression and democracy is that if the media are observed to be compromising professional ethical norms in the pursuit of pecuniary or partisan goals, then they may be doing more harm than good to the cause of democracy in Ghana.

[76] Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's [1988] (2002) Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media posits that the news media are essentially businesses, and consequently, their practise in news reporting — i.e. types and nature of items selected, and how they are framed — is a consequence of the profit motive. Habermas' hugely influential book, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1989) makes similar arguments about how political and economic elites have hijacked the media sphere and made contemporary politics a mere spectator sport for the masses to view passively.

Two theoretical constructs provide a framework for a more fruitful exploration and illustration of the concern about the relationship between the output of the Ghanaian media and the outlook of the Ghanaian democracy: 'media malaise' and 'political efficacy'.

Media Malaise

In return for the liberties that the media (are supposed to) enjoy, the media under a democracy are (supposed to be) guided by a common set of principles and instrumental conventions – a professional code of ethics. The media malaise proposition suggests that the media are not always able or willing to do this. Rather, the normative tendency is to pursue scandal and sensation. As the newsroom maxim goes, if it bleeds, it leads.[77] Newton (1999: 577) expressed it quite succinctly (even if somewhat cynically) when he noted that, 'If there is little conflict, the media will exaggerate what exists, or try to create it'.
This evokes the mirror metaphor. In their coverage of routine issues and events, the political media can act as the reflective mirror with which the public may evaluate the promises and claims of parties and candidates. On the other hand, since some mirrors can also distort, the media can pervert, and even subvert, the rights of the electorate to legitimate representation by resorting to distortion and disinformation. Since multiparty political contests are inherently adversarial, the more likely prospect is usually for the media to blur their 'journalistic values to the point where fact and fiction are indistinguishable within politics itself' (Livingstone and Markham, 2008, p. 355).

The implication in the Ghanaian case is that the 1992 Constitution's guarantees of freedom per se will not always

[77]Anne Nelson first used the expression in a 1994 article in Index on Censorship in which she expressed the concern that the news media's growing tendency towards sensationalism was pre-empting quality content.

assure a commitment of the media to their mandate as 'watch dog' of the public interest.[78] For example if the media, taking advantage of their right to free expression, contrive to publish pseudo-events or to propagate outright falsehoods, the interested public who rely on that media will be hard pressed to secure proper accountability or responsiveness to their social needs and political preferences.

In Newton's formulation, therefore, the term media malaise 'is used broadly to cover those types of democratic pathology which are supposed to be caused, at least in part, by the modern mass media – political apathy, alienation, distrust, cynicism, confusion, disillusionment and even fear' (Newton, 1999, p. 581).

Political Efficacy

Political efficacy is a theoretical construct that suggests that citizens' faith in and commitment to democratic values are related, in some way, to their conviction about the capacity of the electoral process to enable them to exact redeemable promises and hold the feet of elected leaders to the fire of public accountability. Therefore, all agencies of political socialisation (the family, school, religion, political parties, the media) must help the citizenry to become more politically conscious and empowered.

The empirical evidence suggests that the use of incendiary rhetoric, and of falsehood and fear-mongering in and by the media, leads inexorably to a public feeling of cynicism – and even antipathy – towards electoral politics and the democratic alternative.[79] Therefore if, rather than deliver the quality of

[78] Ansu-Kyeremeh provided a typology of various constitutionally grounded canine metaphors by which the Ghanaian media might be characterised: watch dog (Articles 21(1)(a), 41, 162, 163, 164); attack dog (Articles 21(1)(a), 41 (f), 162); lap dog (Act 449(19), Article 55 (12)) in 'Ka nea woahu (Publish only the verified) – An African Communication Paradigm', Inaugural lecture, University of Ghana (2008), 16, 17.

[79] Cf. Peter L. Francia and Paul S. Herrnson, 'Keeping it Professional: The Influence of Political Consultants on Candidate Attitudes toward Negative Campaigning', Politics & Policy, 35 (2) (2007), 246-272; Stephen Ansolabehere, Shanto Iyengar, and Adam Simon, 'Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout', American Political Science Review, 93(4) (1999), 901–9.

discourse that citizens need to make enlightened electoral choices, the media are used to spread insults and incite bigotry, the eventual outcome of elections becomes perverted. Wright (1993, p. 110) had no doubts about the effect on political accountability and the mandate to govern:

> '…when someone wins an election only by convincing the public to vote against the other candidate, e.g., by running a purely critical campaign, then when it is time to govern, the winner's positive ideas will not have been heard. The voters will have been motivated by antipathy for the opponent instead of by support for the new official.'

And, to the extent that there develops among the public a mood of antipathy towards democratic institutions and processes, the media might be deemed to have produced (or at least contributed to) a malign effect on the political process.

To return to the example of the media publishing half-truths and falsehood, the political efficacy argument calls attention to the danger of the media actually hurting the democracy that secured the freedom they enjoy. For, if the public are exposed to, and persuaded by the distortions and falsehoods that they read or hear, they may consequently vote for and make demands on their leaders based on those misrepresentations. And if the use of negative propaganda and fear-mongering were to discourage the public from becoming politically engaged or even voting, then the political system would be defective. Kantians and liberal puritans might even argue that in this case, the legitimacy of office is questionable, and the moral authority to govern is

undermined.

Relationship between Media Malaise and Political Efficacy

The link between media malaise and political socialisation should become self-evident. A media that is suffering from some professional or structural malady cannot produce or promote a healthy democracy.

To illustrate, the normative role of the media is to be the bridge between the contenders for political office and the electorate. The candidates must depend upon the media to explain to the electorate what they and their parties will do about the citizens' kenkey-and-fish concerns. At the same time, since a bridge is not crossed in only one direction, the media become the arena within which individuals and groups can crusade for specific items on their electoral 'wish list' to be ratified in a party manifesto or policy position; and subsequently, the platform on which to hold elected officials accountable for their use of the public purse.

On the other hand, the media can, by being used as the forum for the trading of insults between parties and candidates and supporters, exert a malign influence – a mood or climate of opinion that is dubious about democratic government and politics – and ultimately, a reduction of political efficacy (Young, Bourne and Younaneg, 2007, p. 54).

By extension, the feeling of political disaffection could lead to a parallel decline in the general public's assurance in the promises of multiparty democracy. Given Ghana's particular political history and experience, any sense of disillusionment with the

democratic alternative could conceivably encourage – or in any case provide the pretext for – a subversion of the sovereign will of 'the people of Ghana in whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in the [1992] Constitution'.[80] The history further shows that in such an eventuality, the media become the first casualty in that they are co-opted and employed as pawns in the usurpation of the constitutional order. Ansu-Kyeremeh (2007) has itemised 14 separate occasions, between 1966 and 1983, on which the facilities of the (radio) media were commandeered in the (attempted) subversion of the three previous democratic constitutions and the six junta regimes that have punctuated Ghana's democratic journey from 1957 to 1992. On each occasion, media rights, including media plurality, have also been arbitrarily abbreviated; and only those media and journalists that would submit themselves as propaganda instruments for legitimizing the illegality have been allowed to operate. State monopoly of and stranglehold on the media has, therefore, been the principal feature of government-media relations any time the Constitution was suspended.

Since the return to multiparty democratic governance in January 1993, there has been a burgeoning of media outlets and activities in the country. The Ghanaian media have, indeed, been complimented for their surveillance role in all the five successful general elections since the advent of the Fourth Republic. The media have also been uniquely instrumental in stimulating national public discourse and political activism, and in spotlighting issues of good governance and the rule of law in the country.

[80] Ghana, Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992), Article 1 (1)).

In spite of these positive credentials, there is a palpable rise in the frequency with which concern is voiced about the blatant use of abusive language in and by the media. At the 16th Ghana Journalists' Association (GJA) Awards ceremony, Vice-President John Mahama lamented this state of affairs:

> '... a cursory look at our media would seem like we are a nation at war. Newspapers and radio stations are lined up in the political trenches with their political allies or paymasters; throwing printed and verbal grenades and taking pot shots at the "enemy lines". ... The recent Wikileaks cables have accentuated the media warfare. Nothing matters any more'.[81]

Indeed, in a continent desperate for inspiring examples, these observations and concerns raise important questions about the touted credentials of Ghana as a cocoon of peace and democratic progress. To what extent are the media honouring their constitutional and professional mandate in the advancement of Ghana's politics and democracy? What lessons can the Ghanaian media learn from the experiences of countries that have witnessed politically related conflict and electoral violence?

Experiences from Other Countries

As the country approaches the December 2012 elections (and with politicians and their supporters making increasingly trenchant comments) the lessons from other countries should provide the media in Ghana (and relevant stakeholders – including regulatory authorities such as the National Media Commission (NMC) and National Communications Authority

[81]Speech delivered at the 16th GJA awards, 9 September 2011 at the Banquet Hall, State House, Accra

(NCA); professional associations such as the Ghana Journalists' Association (GJA) and Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA); and NGOs such as the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) with sufficient warning; as well as cues on how to protect the country's burgeoning democracy from the deleterious effects of a predictably acrimonious contest on the horizon.

Kenya

Until the disputed 30 December 2007 elections, Kenya was widely lauded for its example of political stability, peace and economic progress in Africa. However, within an hour of the Electoral Commission declaring the results in favour of incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, plumes of smoke were seen billowing from Kibera (the biggest slum in Africa) and suburbs of Nairobi. In the following six weeks, more than 1,000 people across the country had been reported killed and an estimated 500,000 displaced.[82]

The election campaign itself had been characterized by the deliberate stirring up of longstanding sectarian (especially religious and ethnic) grievances. The voting process was also considered by independent observers to have been flawed, and the vote count itself probably rigged. While no single narrative can fully explain the violence that followed, hindsight – as well as direct empirical evidence – suggests that the media, and particularly local language radio stations in the country, were responsible for fanning – if not igniting – the flames of ethnic violence and reprisals. Rival sectarian groups began to stir up a sense of collective threat among their members, with the effect

[82]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2008), Available online at http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/kenya

that Kibaki's traditionally dominant Kikuyu people were pitched against main opposition leader Raila Odinga's Luo, along with the other ethnic and religious minorities that made up his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) coalition.

A British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) briefing paper on the elections and their aftermath singled out talk show hosts for particular criticism, noting that they were 'not trained in conflict reporting or moderation'.[83] The BBC report quoted a radio journalist as admitting that, 'The ethnic hate our radio station was propagating about those from outside the community was unbelievable. The unfortunate thing is that we let these callers speak bile and laughed about it'.[84] Perhaps more instructive is the observation by Caesar Handa (a public relations practitioner in Kenya) that the messages were often implicit, not explicit:

> 'There were no clear messages that we should kill or burn these people or chase these people away, there were rather coded messages that were being presented and most of them from people who were calling [in through the talk shows]... saying very clearly that we want to liberate ourselves from certain positions and certain communities.... In this way the local language stations played a role, in my opinion, in the escalation of the violence.'[85]

Handa added that the incitements to ethnocide were given currency and credibility by being broadcast on radio: 'People would have positions... on whether certain communities were [to blame for their problems] but when aired on the radio the believability of those positions is strengthened and it galvanizes people into action....'[86]

[83] BBC World Service Trust, 'The Kenyan 2007 Elections and their Aftermath: The Role of Media and Communication' (Policy Briefing #1, 2008), 2
[84] Ibid. (2008), 4
[85] Ibid. (2008), 4
[86] Ibid. (2008), 4

Côte d'Ivoire

The outcome of the 28 November 2010 presidential election run-off between incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo and former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara was a political stalemate in which there were two sets of 'final' results', two swearing-in ceremonies, and two presidents.

Four days after the run-off, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) went before the international media and declared Ouattara the winner (with 54.1 percent of the vote). The following day, the Constitutional Council took to the state-owned Radiodiffusion-Télévision Ivoirienne (RTI) and proclaimed Gbagbo the winner (with 51.45 percent of valid votes cast). Both candidates inaugurated themselves as president at separate functions and formed rival governments. Sporadic violence and gunfire then punctuated a six-month long stalemate and deepened the longstanding division of the population into the pro-Ouattara north (xenophobically labelled Ivoiriens douteux; i.e., 'doubtful Ivorians' because many were of Burkinabe and Malian origin) and the pro-Gbagbo south (the so-called vrais Ivoiriens multiséculaires; i.e., 'true ancient Ivorians"). The Ivoirité ('Ivorian-ness') ideology and associated rancour had been simmering since the 1995 presidential elections when the candidacy of Ouattara was rejected because of doubts about his nationality. These geopolitical divisions also deepened inherent ethnic and religious dichotomies.

The standoff was eventually to be settled by armed combat in which pro-Ouattara forces, with the backing of French forces,

captured and detained Gbagbo on 11 April 2011. By this time more than 1,000 civilians had been killed, and over one million forcibly displaced (Cook, 2011, p. 20).

Among the reasons for the standoff were the deep historical undercurrents of geo-political, ethnic and religious sectarianism that divide Côte d'Ivoire. Other reasons can be located in the negative role of the Ivorian media in activating or aggravating these divisions. Historically, the Ivorian media have been no more than political propaganda mouthpieces and have, therefore, been employed in the perpetration of strident, sectarian rhetoric and, generally, in fomenting a climate of mutual suspicion and hostility. Hate messages and the sheer disregard for basic professional ethics and norms have characterized their content and ideological bent. The Linas-Marcoussis Accord (of 2003, which had brought peace after a year of civil war) actually indicted sections of the media for 'incitement to hate and xenophobia'.[87]

The incipient malaise that festered within the Ivorian media led to the press and journalists being openly labelled as either close to one faction or the other. In the heady days of the disputed run-off, the protagonists each deployed a media mix of broadcast and newspaper articles and blogs, websites and foreign lobbyists for the propagation of hate and mutual recrimination. There were also reports and visual media evidence of atrocities allegedly perpetrated by one side against the other and vice versa.

The two cases cited above illustrate that with respect to the fledgling democracies of Africa, the presumptive.

[87]MFWA, 'The Ivorian media: Victim and Unwitting Pawn', Zongo-Giwa, 2(3), 3.

characterisation of the media as the 'oxygen of democracy[88] is at best only partially, or conditionally, true. Indeed, there are important social, cultural and historical experiences that must guide professional media conduct if they are to help rather than harm the progress of democracy and peace in Africa's nation-states, including Ghana.

Lessons for the Ghanaian Media

To what extent are the media manifesting sensitivity to both the normative professional principles and local realities that should define political coverage in Ghana? Bonnah-Koomson (2005, p. 5) has suggested the use of 'media coverage as a proxy measure to gauge the culture of democracy in transitional democracies'. This involves analysing the content of discourse in the Ghanaian media.

One political statement that has provoked arguably the longest run of partisan media commentary and coverage is the now famous "all-die-be-die" pronouncement made by the flagbearer of the leading, opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo on 8 February 2011. The statement has been given so many spins and twists – as either literal or figurative – that it provides sufficient illustrative material for the purposes of this paper.[89] It is also appropriate because the circumstances of its

[88]Article 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression organisation.

[89]Skimming through the partisan press in Ghana, one comes across a litany of incidences of the use (by origination or by repetition) of obvious insults and insinuations, particularly between the ruling NDC and main opposition NPP parties. Examples include: a deputy minister allegedly referring to the NPP flagbearer as "a sexy old fool" (Daily Guide, accessed online at http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=3026, Posted on 23 March 2011); a deputy minister referring to the NPP general secretary as a cocoase kurasini (literally, a 'villager from the cocoa-farming hinterland'; Daily Guide, 21 October 2010); and allegedly describing the NPP flag bearer as a 'fruit cake, a madman who dresses shabbily (Daily Guide, accessed online at http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=10753, posted on April 29, 2011); the NPP flag bearer referring to the president as "Professor-Do-Little" (accessed online at http://politics.myjoyonline.com/pages/news, 14 September 2011); an NPP youth activist alleging that the President is gay (myjoyonline.com/politics, posted 26 July 2011); Kofi Wayo, the maverick leader of the United Renaissance Party (URP), describing the chairman of the NPP as 'an educated buffoon' (Peace FM, 10 October 2011); supporters of the NDC alleging that the NPP flagbearer is a 'wee' smoker (Daily Post, 21 July 2011).

utterance and publication illustrate the role of the media in giving motive power to statements that might otherwise be frozen in space.[90]

Addressing party executives in Koforidua, Nana Akufo-Addo encouraged supporters to demonstrate pluck in any future occurrence of intimidation or attempt to subvert the 2012 elections by members of the ruling NDC. He then added (in the Akan language) that '2012 is going to be a do-and-die affair, after all, all die be die.'[91]

The NDC took umbrage for propaganda capital. It accused Akufo-Addo of making bellicose and belligerent[92] statements, and organised a news conference, addressed by party General Secretary Johnson Asiedu Nketia, at which it alleged that:

> 'Nana Akufo-Addo has reconfirmed his credentials as a war monger who will stop at nothing in his bid to pursue his selfish political ambition of becoming President at all costs even if it means plunging this nation into civil and tribal war. These pronouncements are typical of Nana Akufo-Addo whose political life has been characterized by violence all along'.[93]

The statement accused the NPP of an orchestration 'to disintegrate this nation along ethnic, political or religious lines'; adding (with a whiff of xenophobic stereotype) that:

'If Nana thinks suicide bombing is the best way to achieve his political ambition then we suggest he considers relocating to countries like

[90] The words were apparently uttered 'off the record' and would probably not have been the subject of heated public discourse if they had not been 'covertly' taped by a journalist and played back in a radio news voiceover.

[91] It is important to indicate that many of these media reports, particularly those that are English translations of statements originally uttered in Akan, have tended, often wittingly, to be misrepresentations or embellishments of the intent, inflection, or context in which they were originally used.

[92] Press conference by NDC, 10 February 2011

[93] Ibid.

Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq to pursue that ambition'.[94]

Nearly one year on, the ferment of this statement – and fallout thereof – has intoxicated the public political discourse. In particular, NDC supporters and the pro-NDC press have not ceased to make propaganda mileage at every opportunity.

On 31 October 2011, Akufo-Addo addressed a group of TESCON students (Tertiary Education Students' Confederation) and indicated that the NPP would win power at all costs. The pro-NDC Informer newspaper accused him of having moved his '"all die be die" desperation for power notches higher'[95] and went on to denounce the NPP flagbearer, using a stream of invective, accusing him of:

> '... continuing to incite his supporters, as he readies them for bloodbath after he loses the election... In other words, Akufo-Addo has reiterated his "all die be die" war cry, calling on NPP supporters to shed blood and cause mayhem in Ghana immediately after the Electoral Commission (EC) declares President Atta Mills winner of the 2012 general elections'.[96]

The paper subsequently made the scurrilous claim that Akufo-Addo had been under the influence:

> '... the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) flagbearer, Williams Addo-Dankwa Akufo-Addo, is busy getting high on a lot of wee, making nuisance of himself all over the place. The man ... has turned himself into a war lord; beating war drums all over the country'.[97]

[94] Ibid.
[95] The Informer, 3 November 2011.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

In another story, the writer alleged that Akufo-Addo had resorted to preaching of violence in his crazy craving for power, and that,

> '... Nana Akufo-Addo, Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey, Ursula Owusu, and the NPP's looting brigade want power not to develop the country, but to line their pockets with, and plunder the country's oil resources...
> Speaking to a group of people who seemed to have no important things doing, and for that matter chose to waste their time listening to the "all die be die" crusader, Nana Addo told his audience that it is because of the oil resources that he and the NPP are red-eyed for political power'.

Akufo-Addo had indicated (while on a visit to Germany) that the stakes in the 2012 elections had been heightened by Ghana's discovery of oil in commercial quantities, because there would be more money in the basket. The Informer put a spin on the statement, claiming that the reason for Akufo-Addo's 'all die be die' war cry was to urge innocent young men and women to die, 'so he and the likes of Ursula Owusu can lay hands on the oil wealth and live like Arabian kings and queens'.

In response to the repeated criticisms and public calls by the NDC for Akufo-Addo to recant and apologise unconditionally to all Ghanaians,[98] the NPP flagbearer and some leading party members and supporters have been adamant, defiantly repeating the controversial remarks on multiple platforms, including radio, TV, press, T-shirts and online.

Consequently, in an interview with a radio station in London (Focus FM), director of communications at the presidency, Koku

[98] Press conference by NDC, 10 February 2011, held at party headquarters in Accra and addressed by General Secretary Johnson Asiedu Nketia

Anyidoho, threw down the gauntlet, daring Akufo-Addo and the NPP to make the wrong move and they will see where power lies:

> 'We are waiting for them since they say "all die be die". They should be careful they would not be the first to go visit their ancestors. Akufo-Addo, Jake, and Mac-Manu should be very careful … because we will not just sit down in laxity and watch for Akufo-Addo … destroy this country.'[99]

The communications director's belligerence, and his subsequent statement that he had had the prior sanction of the President when he issued the warning, was met with a sharp riposte from the NPP. A deputy communications director of the Akufo-Addo's campaign dared the NDC to 'bring it on and they will meet Kyeiwaa and her children'.[100] Then came a bewildering barrage of personal attacks on Anyidoho by the NPP press.

A highly polemical piece in the Daily Guide newspaper included the following:

> It is strange that the President would appoint someone with such uncouth character and upbringing as spokesperson for this country…. When others talk about resisting intimidation, threats or cheating, the madness so warehoused in your tummy gives passage to very pungent effusions on an international network. Threatening to show where power lies? I am sure your own wife is surprised at the imaginary power you pretend you have since you do not do foko in the house as a man. I hear as soon as you get home you start lamenting about how tired you are and throw yourself onto the poor bed. The next moment, the air that comes when you snore is enough to blow off the roof

[99] Daily Guide, 23 November 2011.
[100] peacefmonline.com News: http://elections.peacefmonline.com/politics

> of a house at Gomoa Denu. ...You should not over rate yourself and the position you are holding because I and all well-meaning Ghanaians will laugh your siege to scorn.[101]

Another article, headlined 'Koku Anyidoho: An Arrogant Spoilt Brat' was equally laden with a tirade of expletives:

> 'Someone out there should do me a favour by telling this man who represents the face of our president to seek decency, protocol and decorum when addressing a crowd because we are fed up with his show of abundant buffoonery and absurdity....If Koku thinks power lies in his protruding belly, he can decide how to use it but surely nobody is afraid of any power in the hands of an idiot. We know how to take a sharp implement from the hand of a child without harming him.'[102]

And then, wondering why the NDC was so 'nervous' about 'this all die be die thing', the writer announced (again with a tinge of prejudicial stereotyping) that, 'Anytime any of my children come home with tears in their eyes and complain that they were beaten by their classmates, I send them to go back and fight. Yes, that is how Zongo boys act'.[103]

He then concluded by serving notice that:

> '... if this contemporary Don Quixote called Koku Anyidoho is not checked by the President and advised to stop the contemptuous manner in which he treats the flag-bearer of the NPP, some of us will never hesitate to administer the most appropriate verbal punishment to him, and trust me, I have

[101] Daily Guide, Friday, December 2, 2011
[102] Ibid
[103] Ibid

> more than enough in my arsenal. What you just read is just a tip of the iceberg. Our elders say every human being has red saliva in his or her tongue but we deliberately spit the white one for the sake of peace.[104]

While every decision to publish may be a legitimate exercise of the constitutionally guaranteed free expression rights of the media,[105] it is important not to overlook the professional and ethical obligations to exercise discretion and sensitivity to social and cultural norms.[106] On account of the role of the media in giving amplitude and mileage to clearly aggressive statements as well as to otherwise unobtrusive comments, these examples suggest the potential for the contagion of the unrestrained exercise of media freedom to produce a reduction of the 'political efficacy' of Ghana's democratic practise. (The examples are also, ironically, an illustration of how potentially provocative language gets repeated to new audiences – just to head-off the charge of self-indictment!). More importantly, the examples expose the mediated trigger nodes of political disputes – particularly in the context of recent general elections and by-elections in the country. As Schumpeter (2003, p. 257) famously noted, 'Newspaper readers, radio audiences, members of a party even if not physically gathered together are terribly easy to work up into a psychological crowd and a state of frenzy in which attempt at rational argument only spurs the animal spirits'.

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[104] Daily Guide, 30 November 2011

[105] Article 162 (1) and (4) of the Ghana Constitution, 1992

[106] See, for example Articles 2, 11 and 17 of the GJA Code of Ethics; Section 4, para. 4.2 of the NMC's Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting; and Section 13 of the NMC's Print Media Guidelines. At the third edition of the Mills government's annual Editors Forum, a journalist asked the President's opinion about the trading of insults among politicians and public office holders. Lamenting the attritional effect on Ghana's political legacy, the President remarked, "What lessons do we want the younger generation to learn ... let's remember we have a culture'.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the preceding discussion and illustrations, we can distil the following traits of potential threat to the social cohesion and democratic progress of the Ghanaian nation-state:

- A deficit of professional and ethical capacity;
- A blatant bi-partisan polarisation of media and practitioners;
- A propensity to sensationalise and exaggerate stories;
- A tendency towards the flagrant (politically motivated) misrepresentation of issues;
- A lack of cultural sensitivity in the treatment of sectarian (ethnic and religious) issues;
- A propensity towards personal attacks in the name of free expression.

These are the combustible ingredients with which the flames of conflict can be ignited. And given the increasingly competitive and combative nature of elections since 1992 – and the underlying winner-takes-all nature of political power in Ghana – the likelihood of political strife in Ghana is putatively strong. What must the relevant stakeholders (media institutions, practitioners, educators, regulators, professional associations) do to inoculate the media against their potential to infect Ghana's democratic health? Two inclusive interventions are in my view, required, namely, training and regulation.

First, it would appear that the exponential growth in media outlets since the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution has not been matched by a qualitative (and quantitative) growth in the professional training of practitioners. There is a need for

minimum thresholds of education and training for hiring news reporters. Local language stations in particular have a compelling need for training. It is not difficult to observe, for instance, that (local language) programme anchors are employed more on account of their language proficiency than any strong training/educational qualifications or professional journalistic credentials. The Poynter Institute has developed a three-point canon of journalism principles which is a useful guide in the coverage of political (and especially election) issues in Ghana: (1) seek the truth and report it as fully as possible; (2) act independently; (3) minimize harm (Black, Steele and Berney, 1993, p. 19). Close adherence to these principles should help overcome the concerns about misrepresentation, sensationalism and blatant partisanship.

Second, while the constitutionally defined rights to media freedom may be considered inalienable, (self-)regulatory mechanisms are required to encourage the responsible exercise of those freedoms. As Fish (1994, p. 102) noted, 'free speech ... is not an independent value but a political prize'. This is the reason why hate speech, for instance, is universally repudiated. The relevant institutions (GJA, NMC, NCA, MFWA, National Peace Council) must actively engage the media in the search for common ground in terms of how much value to place on freedom of expression vis-à-vis the value Ghanaian society places on competing ideals and the heritage of cherished cultural norms. The parameters must then be operationalised through active, continuing sensitisation and education (and appropriate sanctions where necessary). In this regard, a useful guide for striking the delicate balance between freedom and regulation would be John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle.[107]

[107] John S. Mill, On Liberty (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Press, 1978), 9. The Harm Principle states that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.

To sum up, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that the media and democracy have a symbiotic need for survival, and a consequent mutual obligation for self- and other-preservation. The conceptual arguments, historical experiences, and the empirical evidence adduced support the proposition of a nexus between media malaise and political efficacy in Ghana.

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Chapter 8

Election Observation and Democratic Consolidation in Africa: The Ghanaian Experience

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Abstract

Although by continental standards, the electoral process in Ghana has been fairly smooth when compared to elections in countries like Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire, internal peace and stability has always been fraught with election-related violence. In this context, election observers have been likened to a 'democracy police' who by their mere presence are expected to imbue the electoral process with legitimacy and transparency. Drawing key experiences from the different elections under the Fourth Republic, this chapter explores the contributions of election observers to the democratic consolidation process in Ghana and how they help prevent and mitigate election-related violence. The paper argues that the peaceful and largely transparent outcome of Ghana's five successive elections could not have been possible without the strong commitment and vigorous engagement of domestic and foreign observer missions. Their large presence and visibility during elections has enhanced the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and helped deter overt acts of electoral violence, fraud, and corruption while boosting public confidence in the electoral process.

Key words:

Election Observation, Credible Elections, Legitimacy, Transparency, Conflict Prevention and Professionalism

Introduction

The growing demand for good governance and dissatisfaction with one-party systems and authoritarianism has contributed to the trend towards competitive elections across Africa. However, as Brahm (2004) posits, opting to go the electoral route has not been without risk. The hope that elections would indeed consolidate emerging democracies on the continent has, however, remained elusive. Recent elections in countries such as Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria have been replete with intimidation, violence and controversy over election results, further reinforcing the Afro-pessimism and perception of Africa as the graveyard of democracies (Ayee, 1998; Odukoya, 2007; Boafo-Arthur, 2008). In these volatile and precarious circumstances, Geisler (1993) notes that domestic and international observers have been likened to a 'democracy police' who by their mere presence are expected to imbue the electoral process with legitimacy and transparency (Gyekye-Jandoh, 2009). Although the practice of election observation in Africa began in the early 1980s with the independence election of Zimbabwe, the work of election observers did not gain much traction until the 1990s. Consequently, it has acquired widespread acceptability as a means of providing a coherent as well as independent assessment of electoral processes (Cranenburgh, 2000). Evidently, Ghana is a vivid example of the

impact of election observers as it is one of the few countries in Africa that has conducted five successive presidential and parliamentary elections since 1992. Drawing on key experiences from elections since 1992, this chapter seeks to interrogate the contributions of domestic and international election observers to the democratic consolidation process in Ghana.

The chapter after the introduction proceeds in six sections. The first section defines election observation by giving a panoramic survey of the concept. The second section provides a historical overview of election observation in Ghana since 1992 and catalogues some relevant national and internationally accepted laws, principles and regulations that underpin the practice of election observation. The third section evaluates the organization and the different methodologies used in observing elections by both domestic and foreign observers. Specifically, the election observation activities of the largest and most vibrant local observer group, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is thoroughly discussed in tandem with the activities of foreign observer groups such as the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The nexus between election observation and the prevention of election-related violence is evaluated in the fourth section. The emerging issues and challenges of observing elections in Ghana are given particular attention in the fifth section. The last section synthesizes the lessons learnt and concludes by making practical policy recommendations on how election observation should evolve in the future if it is to deepen the democratic process in Ghana.

Election Observation: A Panoramic Survey

Before discussing what election observation is all about, it is necessary to distinguish it from two other forms of election engagements that have often been confused and used interchangeably without any explicit distinction. These are the concept of election monitoring and supervision or auditing. While election observers only gather information about the electoral process and make informed judgments without interfering in the electoral process, election monitors, besides observing the electoral process, can intervene when laws are being violated (International IDEA, 1997; African Union, 2002; Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2007). The Electoral Commission (EC) framework for domestic election observation in Ghana concurs with this definition and points to this distinction by stating that while election observers have no role in the actual administration of an election, an election monitor has (EC, 2007: 9). The mandate of election supervisors, on the other hand, is to certify the validity of the electoral process. In a nutshell, observation is a passive activity and entails no interference while monitoring is an interventionist and preventive activity where monitors can give binding instructions (Kuhne and Hett, 2004).

Usually organized outside the realms of the state, but with its consent, election observation has become a critical feature of the democratization process worldwide. It has been universally accepted as a mechanism for ensuring the integrity of elections in countries undergoing democratic transitions and in post-conflict societies. It may vary in terms of modalities but not so much in terms of objectives. In emerging democracies for instance, observing elections has become a confidence-building measure,

a deterrent against electoral violence and malpractices as well as a mechanism for conflict resolution in post-conflict situations. The functions of observers are limited to observing and reporting; they have no authority to instruct, assist or interfere in the voting, counting, tabulation, or other aspects of the electoral process. They are only entitled to collect information, investigate and verify complaints and utilize universal standards of free and fair elections to derive their findings (Abbink and Hesseling, 2000; Kadima, 2000). The rationale behind election observation is to detect infractions in the electoral process; deter election violence, alert election management bodies and stakeholders on the progress of the process; and guarantee the integrity and legitimacy of the election outcomes (Carothers, 1997; Bjornlund, 2004). Elections are also a celebration of fundamental human rights such as civil and political rights and election observation largely contributes to the promotion and protection of these rights.

Observation is typically carried out in either the short term or long term. Short-term observation covers the voting, counting and declaration of results while long-term observation assesses holistically the events that define the electoral process. Thus, it covers a broad range of issues including the administration and functioning of the election process, the legal and institutional framework, voter registration, voter education, political campaigning, media issues, voting, counting and the declaration of results. The choice of any of these two approaches is usually shaped by some important structural considerations. The objectives and capabilities of the observer organization in terms of finances, logistics and human resources is one of the important

considerations. Another equally significant factor is the political terrain of the country to be observed. However, the long-term approach has been found to be the most effective form of observing elections because it allows observers to acquire adequate knowledge and to be better exposed to the context within which the elections are taking place (International IDEA, 1999).

To ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of their work, observers are required to adhere to certain ethical and professional standards (Carothers, 1997; Bjornlund, 2004). Regional and sub-regional groups such as the AU and ECOWAS have, for instance, developed codes of conduct, operational rules and reporting standards that guide the behaviour of their observers when they are deployed to host countries (ECOWAS, 2001; AU, 2002). ECOWAS observation teams are entreated to conduct their activities in accordance with the 2001 ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the ECOWAS Handbook on Election Observation. Some of the behavioural standards in these documents include: respecting the sovereignty of the host country; not compromising objectivity by being partisan and biased; not interfering in the electoral process; and ensuring accuracy of their reportage.

Election Observation in Ghana: An Historical Overview

Election observation has a brief history in Ghana. Elections were organized in 1951, 1954 and 1956 during British colonization, and in 1960, 1969 and 1979. Arguably, all these elections were not witnessed by observers. The presence of observers became a major issue only during the 1992 presidential and parliamentary

elections, mainly due to external and internal insistence on and demand for multiparty democracy and concerns over the freeness and fairness of the elections (Jeffries and Thomas, 1993; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999; Open Society Initiative for West Africa, 2007). This was because since independence, Ghana's democratic process had been disrupted on several occasions – 1966, 1972, 1979 and 1981 by military coups d'état. On 31 December 1981, for instance, the then Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings took power in a military coup and banned all political parties until 1992 when multiparty democracy was restored with a new Constitution (Oquaye, 1995; Aning, 2001). Therefore, the 1992 elections represented the first pluralist election under the Fourth Republic[108]and being a transition situation, the institutions and structures supporting free and fair elections were very fragile. The first Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) established in 1991 to manage the 1992 constitutional referendum and the general elections was, for example viewed by opposition parties with great suspicion because they feared interference and manipulation by the ruling regime (Jeffries and Thomas, 1993; Oquaye, 1995; Fall et al., 2011). Observing the elections therefore became not only a practical necessity but also a confidence-building measure and a deterrent tool against electoral fraud, enabling the newly elected government to assume office with legitimacy.

The main foreign observers at the 1992 elections were the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG), the African American Institute and the Carter Center, the European Commission (EC), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and some foreign embassies and high commissions in Ghana. The role played by local observers was very limited as compared to their role in

[108] The First Republic was in 1960-1966 under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah; the Second Republic was under ceremonial President Edward Akufo-Addo and Prime Minister Kofi Abrefa Busia from 1969 to 1972; and the Third Republic under President Hilla Limann from 1979 to1981.

subsequent elections. The key domestic observer groups included prominent civil society organisations (CSOs) such as the Ghana Legal Literacy and Resource Foundation, the Christian Council, and the Conference of Catholic Bishops (Ayee, 1998). The mandate of observers, both foreign and domestic, was to observe the organization and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Ghana pertaining to elections and to assess whether the elections had been free or fair. At the end of the process, the COG judged the entire elections to be 'free and fair' despite allegations by opposition parties of irregularities which culminated in the New Patriotic Party (NPP) publishing its Stolen Verdict report in 1993 (New Patriotic Party, 1993). The Carter Center, on its part, was more critical of some aspects of the organization of the elections than the COG but concluded that despite the prevalence of serious irregularities, it did not mar the credibility or validity of the results (Carter Center, 1992). The opposition parties criticized the COG and the Carter Center for failing to spot many instances of electoral malpractice. Generally, these allegations were not surprising because the COG in particular came into the country a week to the elections and only observed 487 polling stations which only represented 3 percent of the total 18,000 polling stations in the country (Jeffries and Thomas, 1993; Oquaye, 1995). In the view of Boafo-Arthur (2008) for instance, 'The hasty declaration of the presidential results as free and fair by the COG was an apology of what actually transpired'. Subsequently, the biggest opposition party, the NPP, boycotted the 1993 parliamentary elections due to mistrust and the fear of massive electoral irregularities by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government.

The 1996 elections saw an increased impact of observers' activities on the democratic process in the country. The involvement of domestic observers in this election was remarkable. Two important domestic observer groups emerged on the political scene – one led by Joseph Kingsley-Nyinah, a former Appeals Court Judge and chairman of the Electoral Commission, was called the Network of Domestic Election Observers (NEDEO) and the other was Ghana Alert, led by Ben Ephson, a veteran journalist. These two bodies, together with other domestic poll-watching groups such as the Ghana Commission on Human Right and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) observed the elections. Unlike the 1992 elections, local observers were adequately prepared to better observe the elections than even the external observers from the COG, European Union (EU), National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the OAU. For the first time and in marked contrast to the 1992 elections, the election outcome was accepted by all observers and the political parties as being transparently 'free and fair' (Ayee, 1996; Gyimah-Boadi, 1997; Jeffries, 1998).

The elections in 2000 were witnessed by external observers from the OAU, Canada, United States and Britain. This time, there were even more local observer groups, including Ghana Alert, Forum for Religious Bodies and CODEO[109] (Gadzekpo, 2001). At the end of the elections, despite reported cases of malpractices and abuse of incumbency through alleged misuse of state resources, both domestic and foreign election observers pronounced the outcome of the elections as being relatively 'free, fair and transparent' (Smith, 2002).

[109]CODEO, which co-opted some members of the moribund NEDEO of 1996, was formed in 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).

The 2004 and 2008 elections were undoubtedly a marked improvement over the previous elections in 2000, 1996 and 1992. Unlike them, the two 2004 and 2008 elections had an even greater number and more visible presence of international observer groups in the country. These included observers from the AU, the Carter Center, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), EU, ECOWAS, and the Pan-African Parliament witnessed these elections (Adu, 2009; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). The active involvement of CODEO, Civil Forum Initiative, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and public institutions such as CHRAJ and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) also reflected the high level of participation and entry of new local observers in the electoral process. Their increased vitality and assertiveness cannot be underestimated. The IEA in 2004 and 2008 organized televised presidential and vice-presidential debates and CODEO, led by CDD-Ghana, carried out for the first time in 2008 a Parallel Vote-Tabulation (PVT)[110] exercise to provide independent verification of official election results (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009:145-146). It is instructive to note that these two elections also saw increased involvement of the media (radio, television and print)[111] in the election process, in part due to the repeal of the Criminal Libel and Seditious Libel laws and further amendment of the Criminal Code in 2001.[112] Special election programmes were aired daily by some radio and TV stations and others relayed live updates to viewers and listeners on the conduct of the elections. The print media also reported almost on a daily basis issues regarding the conduct of elections. In fact, the activities

[110] This is a process through which observers report actual polling station results via mobile phone text messages to a central point, where they are tabulated. The PVT provides a valuable means of checking whether officially announced results accurately reflect those announced at the polling stations.

[111] Some of the vibrant media houses in Ghana include: radio stations such as Joy FM, City FM, Unique FM, Peace FM and Adom FM; television stations such as Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), TV3 and Metro TV; and newspapers such as Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Chronicle, Daily Guide, The Finder, Daily Dispatch and Ghanaian Times.

[112] See the Criminal Code (Repeal of Criminal Libel and Seditious Libel Laws) (Amendment) Act, 2001 (Act 602). This law brought to an end the repression of free expression (thus press freedom) by a law that had been in the Ghana law books for more than a century.

of the media contributed significantly in enhancing the transparency of the electoral process. Table 1 below represents some of the domestic and foreign observers groups that have witnessed Ghana's elections since 1992.

Table 1: Some Domestic and International Observer Groups Since 1992

Domestic Observer Groups	International Observer Groups
Civil Society Organisations • Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) • Civil Forum Initiative • Institute for Democratic • Governance (IDEG) Institute of Economic Affair (IEA) • Ghana Legal Literacy and Resource Foundation • Forum for Religious Bodies • Network of Domestic Election Observers (NEDEO) Ghana Alert	**International and Regional Organisations** • United Nations and its Agencies such as UNDP • ECOWAS • AU and the Pan-African Parliament • EU • Commonwealth Secretariat

Religious Bodies ▪ Ghana Christian Council ▪ The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission ▪ The Federation of Muslim Councils ▪ Conference of Catholic Bishops	**International Non-Governmental Organisations** ▪ Carter Center ▪ Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) ▪ The African American Institute (AAI) ▪ National Democratic Institute (NDI
Academic Institution Ghana Institute for Management ▪ and Public Administration (GIMPA)	
State Institutions ▪ Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) ▪ National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE)	**Countries (through their Embassy or High Commission in Ghana)** ▪ Canada ▪ United States of America ▪ Britain ▪ Denmark ▪ Norway
Media ▪ Television stations ▪ Print media ▪ Radio stations	

Legal Framework for Observing Elections

As an active member of the United Nations (UN) and regional organizations such as the AU and ECOWAS, Ghana has ratified many important international and regional treaties that have a bearing on elections. These include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Political Rights of Women; and the Convention on People with Disabilities. In addition, Ghana has ratified regional instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (see Chapter 7 in this book on Democratic Elections), The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa and the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (particularly Section III, Article 11-18). Most of the relevant provisions and principles in these international instruments are incorporated in the laws governing elections in Ghana such as the 1992 Constitution. Some of these include the provisions on guaranteeing fundamental freedoms and political as well as civil rights such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly, movement, speech, and participation in public affairs (see chapters 5 and 7 of the 1992 Constitution).

At the national level, the laws governing elections are contained in the 1992 Constitution, especially in Chapter 7, and other statutes, decrees, constitutional and legislative instruments as well as specific rules and regulations which the EC is empowered to enact. The Electoral Commission Act 451 (1993); the Political Parties Law, Act 574 (2000); Representation of the People Law (1992); Presidential Elections Law (PNDCL; 285, 1992 as

amended); and the Ghanaian Public Elections Regulations (1996) represent some of the main laws that govern elections in Ghana. The EC has also produced the Framework for Domestic Election Observation (2007) and a Political Parties Code of Conduct (2004/2008) to ensure the successful conduct of observation and political party campaigning. All these national laws and regulations supplement and elaborate on the relevant international legal instruments and recognize the need for respect and protection of fundamental human and political rights. The commitments to these international treaty standards and national laws provide the legal foundation for the practice of election observation in Ghana.

Election Observation in Praxis: Organization and Methodology

Both international and domestic observers are required to receive accreditation from the EC in order to gain access to and observe proceedings at all polling stations throughout Ghana (EC, 2007:16). In order to be accredited, observer groups are required to apply to the Chairman of the EC a reasonable time before elections; they are not supposed to be affiliated to any political group in Ghana; they must submit a copy of their membership list to the EC; and more importantly, prospective observers must not be political activists (ibid: 15-16). What this means is that the practice of allowing political party activists to observe elections is illegal and, therefore, should be stopped, as it constitutes a major breach of the EC's framework for domestic election observation. In principle, political parties can only act as election supervisors who are to certify the validity of electoral outcomes through their

party agents at the various polling stations and not observers or monitors.

Once accredited, observers are permitted to enter the polling stations to observe; request information from the EC and its officials on election matters; gain access to and observe proceedings at any vote collation centre; and to ask questions of polling station officials and other election officials, political party polling agents, and other observers; and within reasonable limits, to inspect and verify election materials (EC, 2007: 16; Hagen, 2009: 3). Observers are mandated to observe all relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections in accordance with the laws of Ghana. Most importantly, observers are to consider all factors that impinge on the credibility of the electoral process and, on that basis, form their judgments with reference to international and national election-related laws and regulations (EC, 2007). In carrying out this role, they are obliged by law to behave in a neutral, non-partisan and professional manner in line with applicable national laws and international standards for election observation. Most observer groups have different strategies for carrying out this function although they all follow similar standards of election observation. The following section discusses the activities and strategies used by the local observer group, CODEO, and international observers such as ECOWAS, AU, COG and EU to observe elections in Ghana.

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) Observation Recipe

CODEO is currently made up of 39 secular, religious and non

governmental organisations and has since its inception in 2000 observed every election in Ghana. It represents the most vibrant as well as the largest domestic election observation group in Ghana. The main objectives of CODEO are to promote free, fair and transparent elections; prevent electoral fraud; encourage citizens' participation in elections; promote issues-based campaigns; and lend credibility to electoral outcomes. These objectives are pursued through training and deploying election observers; and collating, analyzing as well as disseminating the reports generated from field observations. Apart from Ghana, CODEO has observed elections in Liberia, Malawi and Nigeria.[113] But what is yet to be seen is for CODEO or any of the other domestic observer groups to observe elections in any of the Western countries since they have been very active in terms of observation in Africa.

Typically, the election observation activities of CODEO cover all three phases of the election process: pre-election; voting day; and post-election. In the pre-election period, CODEO usually undertakes two main programmes. First, the organisation embarks on a long-term election environment monitoring exercise by training and deploying observers across the country to observe the political and electioneering activities in selected constituencies across the country. In particular, they observe aspects of the election process such as voter registration, party primaries, political campaigning and media issues. Periodic press briefings and monthly reports are released to inform the public on the status of the election process and also to inform the interventions of national institutions such as the National Peace Council (NPC),[114] security agencies and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to foster peace and safeguard the

[113] Interview with Mr. K. Aborampah, CDD-Ghana and Officer at CODEO Secretariat, 19 April 2012

[114] The National Peace Council has the mandate to foster national cohesion through peace-building and provide mechanisms through which Ghanaians can seek peaceful, non-violent resolution of conflicts (for more information see the National Peace Council Act (Act 818) 2011).

the integrity of the elections.

The most important aspect of these press briefings and reports are their contribution to reducing electoral tensions in many part of the country, although their effectiveness is yet to be quantified. Secondly, parliamentary debates are organized for aspiring MPs in selected constituencies especially the conflict-prone areas and the constituencies that have minority groups such as the physically challenged. These debates enhance citizens' participation in the electoral process, enabling them to engage with political parties and candidates in order to make informed electoral choices. Additionally, they also help to reduce the tensions and acrimony that often characterize the political landscape during campaigns by bringing opposing groups together in a congenial atmosphere to discuss issues of community interest.

On voting day, CODEO carries out an 'election conflict and violence monitoring exercise' and a 'Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)' in conjunction with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC).[115] The election conflict and violence monitoring exercise is a form of early warning reporting system that targets at least 30 violence-prone constituencies. The information gathered is relayed to the EC and the security agencies for preventive action to be taken when the need arises, especially in cases of violent clashes between political opponents.[116] The PVT on the other hand, is an advanced observation methodology that enables observers, in addition to their regular observation duties, to transmit results from polling stations through short message service (SMS) technology to feed CODEO's parallel tabulation database at the

[115] See the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department of KAIPTC CPMRD Newsletter, Vol. 2, Issue 4, December 2008.
[116] Discussions with Mr. Ernest Lartey, Head of Conflict and Security Programme, KAIPTC, March 2012

KAIPTC. In 2008, PVT results and the results of the EC were almost the same.[117] Although the use of PVT has caused controversy in some countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, its peaceful adoption by CODEO is an indication of how effectively and efficiently the coalition executed the project. However, while PVT has the advantages of ensuring independent verification of official election results and thereby preventing the manipulation of those results, it also has the tendency to generate violence if not professionally managed. It becomes very risky, for example, if the implementing organisation goes ahead to declare results ahead of official declaration or declares results that contradict those of the official election management body. Moreover, with the improvement in information and communication technology (ICT), some unscrupulous people can even tap or hack into the system and manipulate election results if the system is not well managed. The neutrality and the integrity of people managing the PVT system can also not be underrated. It is instructive to note that although CODEO is currently the only organisation in Ghana that uses the PVT observation methodology, the likelihood of other CSOs, especially those that are politically affiliated, adopting it in the near future is very high. This can actually pose a very significant threat to Ghana's stability if groups use or manipulate it to serve their parochial interest. Thus, while the use of PVT is a welcome innovation in the observation of elections in Ghana, its use should be professionally and cautiously managed so as not to cause any violence.

Besides PVT, CODEO looks at the packing and transportation of election materials, the voting process, and the counting and collation of election results at the constituencies. In gathering facts about the electoral process, observers used a checklist of

[117]Interview with Justice V.C.R.A.C Crabbe, Co-Chair of CODEO on Joy FM by Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, 19 March 2012.

issues similar to those of foreign observer's checklist to guide their observations.[118] This helps in gathering factual evidence as well as providing a firm basis for their reports. However, looking at the discomfort and danger that observers go through and the limited monetary compensation, the point must be made that observing elections is purely voluntary and based on individual commitment.[119]

Sometimes, observers have to go to very remote places in the country, walk for several miles or cross rivers without any protection before getting to their destinations, all in the name of ensuring a peaceful and transparent election. One of the officials interviewed narrated a situation where an observer had to walk about 30 miles to climb a mountain in order to get mobile network service to convey information to Accra during the 2008 elections.[120]

The post-election activities cover the counting, tallying of votes, and declaration of results as well as observing the adjudication of election disputes that may arise. The final report that covers the general conduct of the elections is compiled and issued after a stakeholders' conference involving the EC, political parties, police, CSOs and donor partners.

[118]The checklist covers issues such as whether received blank ballots were counted; whether the packages containing ballots were sealed; whether intimidation was observed inside the polling station; whether security agents were present in the vicinity of the polling station; whether the entry was overcrowded; whether the environment was calm and orderly; whether anyone was allowed to vote who was previously inked, or who appeared to be a minor, or who was not on the registration or transfer list. They were also concerned with whether the voting was secret; whether the counting of ballots was clearly visible to the party agents and observers; whether the total of spoiled, used and unused ballots matched the total ballots provided at the beginning; whether the results were signed by all party agents and sealed in tamper-proof envelopes in clear view of the party agents and observers (Hagen, 2009:5).

[119]Some local observer groups such as the CODEO pay observers on voting day as little as 30 Ghana cedis, equivalent to under 20 dollars, covering food, transportation and all other subsistence needs. Most of the observers are normally not paid; they just do it voluntarily, all in an effort to ensure that elections are free, fair and peaceful.

[120]Interview with Mr. K. Aborampah, 19 April 2012.

Foreign Observer Missions

Most foreign observer groups usually go in for short-term or a combination of short- and long-term observation. After receiving an invitation from the EC, observer groups such as ECOWAS and the AU send assessment missions or fact-finding observer missions two or three months before voting day to assess the status of the country's preparations towards the elections.[121] An observation team made up of independent persons and nationals of member states are later dispatched to the country to observe the general conduct of elections and pronounce an independent judgment on the entire process. Foreign observers usually meet with the EC, political parties, CSOs, representatives of the media and domestic observer groups to acquaint themselves with the political situation of the country. Some, such as the EU, even collaborate with domestic observer groups such as CODEO with respect to their deployment of personnel. In order to obtain a general idea of the election atmosphere, they deploy in teams across the country before election day. Typically, they observe the extent of preparations for the election, the conduct of campaigning, and media coverage during those few days to the elections. On polling day, they focus on observing the voting processes, counting and compilation of results by using a checklist of issues similar to the one used by domestic observers to guide their activities. An interim statement summarizing their initial impression on the entire process is issued a day after the elections and a final comprehensive report is issued later in the post-election period.

[121] For more information see Section III (on Election Monitoring and ECOWAS Assistance) of the 2001 ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; see also Chapter 7 (on Democratic Elections) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.

Election Observation as a Conflict-Prevention Mechanism

The occurrence of violent acts during elections has always undermined the impressive strides made in consolidating democracy in Ghana. These acts of violence – usually seen in the form of assault, molestation, murder, mob action, wanton destruction of property, disruption of campaign rallies and meetings, arbitrary detention and arrest without warrant – have occurred because of the absence of political tolerance; non-compliance of rules of orderly political competition; and the manipulation by political parties of deep, regional and ethnic cleavages (Chazan, 1982; Boafo-Arthur, 2006; Fridy, 2007: 281-305; Atuobi, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Various mechanisms have been developed to prevent and mange these violent acts when they occur and election observation remains one of the most visible mechanisms.

By acting as effective guardians of election integrity, election observers have through their civic and peace education initiatives helped defuse tensions between political parties. In particular, the findings in their reports and occasional press briefings on the conduct of elections have contributed to reducing the tensions and conflicts that often characterize the political landscape during campaigning and in the aftermath of the official declaration of election results. Besides, their censure and recommendations in their reports have served to inform major institutional,procedural and electoral reforms in the country. The enactment of the Political Parties Law (Act 574, 2000) and the Political Parties Code of Conduct (2004/2008) by the EC attests to this fact.

The long-term gain is that observer activity and reports have to some extent contributed to the correction of key irregularities in the electoral process. However, it is important that observer reports are not altered for the purpose of conflict prevention. Glossing over flaws and inadequacies in the electoral process for the sake of stability can create long-term tension as people may resort to violence if they feel their concerns are being ignored or no appropriate action is being taken.

The involvement of observers in the electoral process has also enhanced the accountability and transparency of election administration and boosted public confidence in the credibility of electoral outcomes. Thus, their vigilance and scrutiny of the electoral process have indisputably increased the legitimacy and acceptance of election results, thereby forestalling conflicts that might have resulted from any disagreements between the political parties. The use of the PVT observation methodology by CODEO and the live updates of election results from the polling stations by radio and TV stations represent a graphic case in point. The PVT results, for instance, assisted in efforts to check claims of fraud and manipulation of election results during the 2008 elections (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009: 138-152; Jockers, Kohner and Nugent, 2009: 7-10). Given that the margin of victory of the NDC in the 2008 elections was only 40,586 votes, it can be argued that the PVT results and the live updates of election results by the media houses prevented any violence that might have erupted as a result of disagreements over the electoral outcome.[122] However, in spite of this, media houses in particular should be extremely careful in their live announcements of election results and forecasts/predictions since this practice also tends to generate conflict. A case in point was in 2008 when it was reported that

[122] The presidential candidate of the NPP, Nana Akufo-Addo had 4,480,446 votes while candidate John E. Atta-Mills representing the NDC had 4,521,032

some Accra-based radio stations like Radio Gold and Joy FM declared John Evans Atta Mills the next president of Ghana before the official declaration by the EC (Boyefio, 2008).

Additionally, the mere presence of election observers – especially those from ECOWAS, AU and EU – has in itself also helped to deter overt acts of electoral fraud, violence, chicanery and corruption during elections. In fact, the presence of these observer groups puts pressure on political parties to behave according to electoral rules and standards in order not to be reported or tagged as violent parties. Such a tag has far-reaching, negative implications for their international reputation. Perhaps this explains why most domestic observers are sometimes threatened and prevented from entering certain polling centres, often the strongholds or so called 'World Bank' of parties by political party thugs. Furthermore, local observers have also provided early warning signals and other relevant information to the appropriate state institutions about potential crises or conflicts for preventive action to be initiated. A perfect example is the election violence monitoring project of CODEO at KAIPTC. This project has to a large extent reduced the occurrence of violent acts and prompted the intervention of other election stakeholders such as the security agencies and the National Peace Council (NPC) to foster peace and security in the country.

Challenges and Some Emerging Issues

First, financial constraints appear to be one major challenge affecting both domestic and external observer groups. Domestic observers in particular depend heavily or almost completely on external donor funding and support to carry out their activities

such as training, voter education, deployment and remuneration of observers. Their reliance on external sources of funding and the untimely manner in which funds are given restricts their operational ability in terms of the volume of planned activities and, more importantly, the number of observers they can train and deploy throughout the country.

Secondly, the credibility, professionalism and impartiality of domestic observers has been questioned in recent times, mostly due to their inadequate training and orientation before elections. Furthermore, some observers have also been targets of intimidation or threats by political party thugs mainly because the observers are perceived as 'enemies' or impediments to their evil agendas'.[123] There have been instances where observers were molested and prevented from even entering the polling centres. These situations affect the observers' ability to travel, observe freely and report on the information collected without self-censorship or fear of retribution.

The limited scope and coverage of foreign observer groups has also raised doubts about the credibility and accuracy of their reports. Because their presence in the country is often too short, most irregularities and acts of fraud and intimidation that domestic observers may see and report often go unnoticed by foreign observers. In addition, they are unable to observe many polling stations in the country due to the relatively small number of team members deployed. For example, there were over 21,700 polling stations in 230 constituencies for the 2008 elections. ECOWAS deployed 200 observers, the AU sent 25 observers, and the EU deployed 75observers (Zounmenou, 2009). Certainly, this number of observers cannot cover even half the total of

[123] Interview with an election observer, CODEO Secretariat, April 2012

polling stations across the country. Moreover, most of the polling stations they visit are confined to the regional capitals and the cities, a fact usually explained by citing reasons of security and communication problems. This limitation affects the accuracy of their reports – because the reporting is done with insufficient data, the observers sometimes underestimates the true extent of electoral irregularities.

Fourthly, building collaborative relations between foreign and domestic missions as well as with other election stakeholders has proven very difficult due to the independent nature of observer missions. Nevertheless, as more groups seek to undertake election observation, there is the need to coordinate their activities in order to avoid overlapping. There is also no evidence to suggest that critical remarks and reports of electoral fraud or voter irregularities by observers are sufficiently investigated by the Electoral Commission before the final declaration of official election results. The 2008 elections are a case in point – despite allegations of implausible results from the Ashanti and Volta regions by CODEO and other observer missions, the EC disregarded them and went ahead to declare the available results it had without any in-depth investigations (Jockers, Kohnert and Nugent, 2009: 7-10).

One important phenomenon that is emerging is that there seems to be more politically biased CSOs and media houses infiltrating the system and the EC needs to check the background of observer groups, especially those at the local level, before accrediting them. Increasingly, there are many CSOs and media houses being set up by politicians and this proliferation of dubious

organisations is in order to pursue certain political agendas. Others have also just been formed because of the prospects of obtaining funding. The EC needs to revise its accreditation procedure because if care is not taken, some of these emerging CSOs can ruin the work of genuine observers in the country because they are often partisan in nature and do not conform to domestic and international standards for election observation.

Lastly, while foreign observer missions from the EU, United States, Canada and Britain especially have been involved in Ghanaian and African elections since the early 1990s, African observer groups have not participated in elections in these Western countries. Although it is true that election observation is used as a means to enhance the democratization process in Africa, it would be beneficial if African observer groups are also given the opportunity to observe Western countries' elections rather than it being a one-way affair. By this, local observers can learn certain best practices and lessons that they could bring to bear on their observation activities at home.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Certainly, the process of democratization in Ghana has improved considerably since the transition to multiparty democracy in 1992. Ghana has contributed extensively in enhancing and keeping the image of Africa afloat by holding five consecutive presidential and parliamentary elections under the Fourth Republic. The peaceful and largely transparent outcome of these elections could not have been possible without the strong commitment and vigorous engagement of foreign and domestic observer missions, which monitored and exposed some weakness in election

administration. Foreign observer missions from the Carter Centre, EU, COG, AU, and ECOWAS as well as domestic observer groups including CODEO, IEA, media houses and NCCE have all contributed immensely to the credibility and transparency of elections in Ghana. Their large presence and visibility during elections has enhanced the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and helped deter overt acts of electoral violence, fraud, chicanery, and corruption, thereby boosting public confidence in the electoral process. However, in spite of all these mammoth contributions, there remain several challenges that tend to undermine their efforts. These include: financial constraints, human resource capacity, non-professionalism of some observers, lack of collaborative efforts and intimidation by political party thugs.

As the way forward and in order to overcome these challenges, the following are recommended:

- Coordination and cooperation between and among external and local observers need to be strengthened. Both have comparative advantages that can be explored to ensure effective division of labour and the maximum use of limited resources. Cooperation in areas such as data gathering, and sharing of information, either formally or informally, can be considered. This will help observers to cover enough polling stations so as to have sufficient data to facilitate their analysis. It will also avoid duplication of effort and the adverse effects of inter-group competition.

- Donors and bilateral partners need to fulfill their financial commitments to local CSOs in a timely manner to enable

- domestic observer groups to carry out their planned activities in an effective and timely manner. Domestic observers groups also need to find innovative ways to generate income locally.

- The credibility and professionalism of election observers should be enhanced. Observers both domestic and external must be recruited very early and given intensive training. The KAIPTC for instance has a database of trained and very experienced election observers in Africa; ECOWAS and the AU in particular can recruit such people who already have the expertise for its observation missions.

- The EC needs to check the background of institutions, especially the new local CSOs and media houses, before giving them accreditation because some are politically affiliated institutions.

- Observer groups should also make efforts to follow up on the recommendations they make in their reports to assess the impact of their work.

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Chapter 9

Gender, Elections and Violence: Prising Women out of Democracy in Ghana

Linda Darkwa

Abstract

Women constitute 51 percent of the population in Ghana and yet, they make up a mere 8.2 percent of the country's legislature. The low number of women representatives in competitively elected positions is largely attributable to election-related violence fostered by socio-cultural and economic conditions. This chapter examines the experiences of women with election-related violence, using analysis of primary and secondary data as well as case studies. It argues that in spite of common, election-related challenges faced by political aspirants, there are specific gender-related challenges that disproportionately affect female aspirants. It also posits that to fully appreciate the implications of election-related violence against women, it is useful to examine the experience of women with election-related physical, structural and symbolic violence. The paper argues that the experiences of women with election-related violence are best analysed through gendered lens in order to effectively identify such violence within the different contexts in which they occur. Finally, it draws attention to the need to examine women's experiences of election-related violence in a wider perspective in order to encompass the role of women as vectors of such violence.

Key words

Gender, democracy, discrimination, elections, participation, violence

Introduction

The end of the Cold War was, among other things, indicative of the triumph of liberal democracy over communism, with a fresh wave of democratization engulfing the world at large and the developing world in particular. In Ghana, as in many parts of Africa, the return to constitutional, multiparty democracy after almost a decade of military rule ushered in a feeling of expectancy and optimism as people who hitherto were excluded from participation in the process of governance and politics were now able to play a role in the country's governance and decision-making processes. The advent of democracy also saw the rapid development of various legal structures and institutions,[124] which were necessary to foster and nurture the growth of the nascent democracies.

Ghana, as with many African states, is blessed with peoples of diverse culture, language and history. Accordingly, in order to guarantee every citizen the right to participate in the democratic process irrespective of their origin, it became necessary to develop and adopt universal standards to regulate participation. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, for instance, expressly prohibits discrimination on the basis of origin, circumstances of birth,

[124]The term is used within the context of Douglas North's definition as "humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction." For a fuller discussion on Institutions, see North, D. C., 1990. Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

ethnic origin, gender or religion, creed or other beliefs (Art.17:2, 35:5). The theme of universality has been the central rationale behind the crafting of legal frameworks and the development of democratic institutions in Ghana.

In practice, however, it has emerged that despite the best intentions underlying the development of democratic institutions in Ghana, there are still groups within Ghanaian society that continue to be disadvantaged within the democratic context. The main group affected is women. This is despite the fact that Ghana is a signatory to several international treaties that promote and protect women's rights – including their right to political participation.[125] Technically speaking, there are no political or legal barriers to women's political participation. However, despite the efforts of various civil society organisations to get women practically involved in the political process, female participation in politics and other decision-making contexts in Ghana has remained low, with abysmal performances in elections. Thus, the de jure protection of women's right of political participation has not translated into increased female participation in the political process.

This situation underlines the need for an interrogation of the issues underlying the poor participation of women in democratic processes in Ghana. Using participant observation and content analysis of newspaper articles on cases of election-related violence against women[126] as well as survey data obtained from a nationwide survey for a gender analysis of the 2008 elections

[125] Ghana is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), one of the six core human rights treaties that provide for equal participation directly or through freely chosen representatives in the conduct of public affairs. The country is also party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which addresses the multiple challenges confronting the promotion and protection of women's rights, which include women's participation in politics and decision making.

[126] The combination of participant observation and the case studies makes it possible to generalize, with a number of conclusions that would have been impossible with the case studies alone. The three women chosen have been engaged in competitive elections and have suffered election-related violence. Two of the women have also been vectors for election-related violence.

and a baseline survey of three regions of Ghana (Western, Central and Volta),[127] this chapter presents an analysis of women's experiences with elections.[128] The first section discusses the gendered nature of political competition and participation in Ghana; the second section examines the types of discriminatory practices (including election-related violence) perpetrated against women as well as the role of women in these contexts. The final section proffers some recommendations for remedying the current situation and optimising female political participation.

Locating Gender in the Institutional Pre-requisites of Ghana's Democracy

Aside from the post-Cold War shift in global relations and the attendant growth of democracy as the favoured model of governance across the world, Ghana's return to constitutional rule was also driven by economic considerations; principally, the need to halt and reverse the country's age-long economic decline and thereby reposition the country within the global community. As a result, the democratic institutions that developed were primarily geared towards enhancing the factors of production through the democratization of the political space and the liberalization of markets. These institutions were developed largely with a focus on the public sphere and without due consideration to the social relational contexts within which the roles, functions and character of the various constituents of the political sphere are defined. Put differently, the democratic institutions were evolved under an assumption that there was a homogenous constituency of human beings whose freedoms and liberties needed to be guaranteed for development and

127 The choice of sample populations was made solely in terms of the availability of the data collected during 2009-2011 for a different study but which contained information relevant for the chapter.

128 Although there had been some attempts at democracy, they were all truncated by the military. The 1992 transition, which has endured until now, is the longest continuous experience of constitutional democracy in Ghana.

growth. As a result, the structured rules of equality, non-discrimination and participation were couched in gender-neutral language that suggested an equal political playing field for all Ghanaians. However, if the various social, cultural and historical circumstances which define the power relations between groups were to be considered, the conclusion would easily be that the political landscape in Ghana is inherently gendered, especially since these relations affect societal perceptions as to who qualifies to participate in political processes and at what levels they may participate.

Interestingly, little or no attention was paid to the gendered nature of Ghanaian society in the ensuing dialogue that provided the signposts for structuring of democratic institutions.[129] The composition of the democratic institutions and frameworks (including the constitutional provisions, and the electoral rules) were framed within the context of the public sphere with little or no consideration to the private arena (family, religion and group) within which identities are framed and defined. For example, access to resources and the sociological constructs of the functions and place of groups and individuals which influence perceptions on who should and can participate and who deserves to represent a group are usually framed within the private sphere. Although democracy in Ghana is presented as neutered, the design of the democratic institutions was undertaken against the backdrop of a highly patriarchal system steeped in the general environment of neo-patrimonialism and patronage (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). The extant, socio-cultural perception

[129]Gyimah-Boadi suggests that the 260-member Consultative Assembly (CA) that was charged with the development of the 1992 Constitution was 'loaded with PNDC partisans'. Therefore, most of the members of the CA were interested in the consolidation of pro-government positions rather than a true alteration of socio-political structures and the status quo. It can thus be inferred that despite the presence of women in the CA, the discussions were not undertaken through a gender lens. For more on Ghana's transition to constitutional rule generally, see Gyimah-Boadi, E., 'Notes on Ghana's Transition to Constitutional Rule', Africa Today, Vol. 38, No. 4, pp. 5-17

of men as decision makers (with the attendant access to and control over resources) as well as the presence of men in the formal sector privileges men as the rightful persons to be entrusted with the duty of political decision making. On the other hand, women who were perceived as being mainly located in the informal sector of production, had to prove themselves worthy of the confidence of the electorate.[130]

Gender in Ghana's new democracy was consciously or unconsciously located within the sociologically constructed power structures. However, even though the framework of democracy was gendered, the rules of the game were neutered – all qualified adults had the right to vote and contest in elections so that there was no overt discrimination. This assumption that democratic institutions are gender neutral, however, glosses over the fact that sociological constructs of who qualifies to be elected or appointed to represent a heterogeneous group remain skewed towards males.

Following from the above, contextualizing the experience of female political participation in Ghana is useful for understanding the interplay between what have almost become clichéd reasons for women's minimal participation and the general political environment in Ghana. It can be argued that the freedom of women to participate in the political arena has been largely curtailed by the presence of various factors that restrict their ability to actively participate in political affairs. These include perceptions of the place of women within society – as supporters

[130] The gendered nature of politics in Ghana mainly privileges persons who are formally educated and have access to and control over resources such as strong networks, money and information. Those who fall within this category are therefore much more likely to engage actively in the political processes. Thus, generally formally educated and wealthy individuals with access to various networks and other resources dominate the political landscape. Some men also suffer exclusion because they are outside the privileged group of formally educated and wealthy persons. This notwithstanding, women are disproportionately affected because in addition to the challenges outlined, they are also constrained by other factors such as socio-cultural stereotypes. Participants of a Focus Group Discussion at the Komenda Eguafo Abirem Municipality felt that a member of the District Assembly who was not fluent in English could not articulate their needs effectively and therefore preferred to vote for a candidate who was formally educated. (Focus Group, 2010)

rather than leaders, access to various resources such as powerful networks, experience in the echelons of political decision making and money. These factors are inextricably intertwined with the various socio-economic processes at play within Ghana and the experiences of Ghanaian women in those spheres of life as well.

Broadly, these factors assume structural and non-structural forms. Structural factors refer to situations where certain groups within a society are disadvantaged by entrenched social norms, institutions and structures (Galtung, 1969). It includes the covert institutionalization of gender inequalities, patriarchal ideology that reinforces the subordinate status of women and other stereotypes stemming from the socio-cultural constructions of gender among the various groups in Ghana. While these types of violence may not result in direct physical violence against women, they nevertheless militate against women's participation and chances of success in competitive elections. Non-structural factors include access to and control over resources, the level of political knowledge and access to strategic information. Non-structural violence however tend to be highly visible and as such easier to notice.

Women, Elections and Violence: Framing the Context

Jeff Fischer defines election conflict and violence as '[a]ny random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or to otherwise influence an electoral process' (Fischer, 2002). Fischer's definition highlights the need to pay attention to election violence in a broader sense by locating it

within the larger framework of election conflict. This is because election conflicts provide antecedents to election-related violence. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), election-related violence can be defined as,

> …[a]cts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arise in the context of electoral competition. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections—such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll—and to influence the outcomes: the determining of winners in competitive races for political office or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions (United Nations Development Programme, 2009)

These definitions capture physical, social-psychological and economic violence that may be utilized at any stage of the electoral process by one or more groups against others. It also provides the space to examine women's experiences in relation to election-related violence within the different stages of the electoral cycle.[131] Both definitions indicate a certain level of undertaking a conscious action – threatening or actually perpetrating an act of violence against another. However, none of the definitions is broad enough to accommodate other forms of violence that may not fall within the spectrum of conscious acts but the existence of which may yet intimidate a person intending to contest for public office. For instance, the sociologically

[131] The electoral cycle can be broken down into three phases – the pre-electoral stage, the electoral period and the post-electoral phase. Planning, training, information dissemination and registration occur in the pre-electoral period. Nomination of candidates, campaigning, voting and the declaration of the voting results occur in the electoral phase while the post-electoral phase is usually used for review, reform and strategizing for future elections. This is taken from "Electoral Cycle" on ACE, The Electoral Knowledge Network available on http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-management/electoral%20cycle.JPG/view, accessed on 30 May 2012.

assigned functions and roles of groups within various societies mean that those located within subordinate groups may be deterred from contesting in the democratic presence because it would require interrogating established hierarchies of representation. Thus, whilst there are no politico-legal strictures debarring members of such groups from contesting, members of the group themselves may not want to present themselves as candidates.[132] Yet, these types of structural violence are not captured in the definitions above. It is pertinent to note, however, that election-related violence is symptomatic of other forms of latent violence. In other words, although some forms of election-related violence may be spontaneous, most are precipitated by a climate of intimidation and fear.

An expanded interpretation, therefore, allows for the capturing of structural forms of violence such as sociological constructs, which silently speak and, in a sense, facilitate the rationalization of the acts catalogued in the definitions above. As a result of the nuances above-mentioned, for the purposes of this chapter, election-related violence is interpreted broadly within the seemingly passive structures of subordination legitimized by the socio-economic and politico-cultural environment of the country. It analyses the issues of election-related violence within the socio-cultural norms that prescribe the rules of participation and through that, discriminate against and threaten to punish those

[132] During the Focus Group Discussions at Jomoro, most of the female participants opined that it was not their place to contest in elections because it was not their place to make decisions for their people. According to most of them, if the men required their inputs, they would nominate them to be part of the District Assembly. Interestingly, members of the District Assembly including the District Co-coordinating Director as well as the patron of the Convention Peoples Party lamented the fact that the female members of the District Assembly hardly contributes to discussions. According to them, the women were content to provide support services such as organizing refreshments rather than contributing in the meetings. At the time of the Discussions, no woman had won the District Assembly elections in Jomoro. In KEEAM, Muslim women indicated that they were wary of contesting in political elections because of the vices associated with it. However after their engagement with a women's rights civil society organization, a young Muslim woman contested and won the 2010 District Assembly elections.

who dare to go against the grain of acceptable norms. In the realm of politics these passive structures, which find expression within the milieu of structural violence, determine who is able to contest and have a fair chance at succeeding.[133]

On the face of it, gender does not seem to be the major rationale for physical election-related violence as such violence generally occurs as a result of disputes over issues and positions and not over the sociological construct of social relations between and among the sexes. Indeed, in the few instances when women have been victims of physical violence, it appears that they have suffered (like their male counterparts) as a result of their political party affiliation and not their gender.[134]

In the main, women are mostly victims of structural violence, which militates against their efforts to participate and compete in elections. Election-related violence against women and the low numbers of women in elected office are, therefore, attributable to the interaction of a number of factors which includes stereotypes, limited capabilities in terms of political leadership skills, political education, finance, insults, corruption and violence that characterise the

[133] According to Sulley Amadu, then Director of the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Electoral Commission, a female parliamentary aspirant who was competing against her brother-in-law was prevailed upon first by her family and later, by the entire town, to rescind her decision and support her brother-in-law instead. According to him, she was threatened that going against the advice would put her in trouble.

[134] For instance, Ghana recorded election-related violence during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections, as well as the Akwatia and Atiwa bye-elections. In all instances, the defining reason for the violence perpetrated by and against women was as a result of their political party affiliation and not necessarily as a result of their being female. For instance in Atiwa where Anita de Souza, National Women's Organiser of the National Democratic Congress was alleged to have run her vehicle into a mob, it was supposedly because the youth of the New Patriotic Party had set up roadblocks to regulate the entry into the town of non-residents. It must be noted that Atiwa is a predominantly pro-NPP constituency and so, the actions targeted the NDC. In the end, although there was violence, it was mainly as a result of differences in political party affiliation and not because of gender.

political environment.[135] It is however important to recognize that none of the above-mentioned factors can individually provide cogent explanations for women's experience(s) with election-related violence because the seemingly different contexts within which violence against women occur are related.

Following from the above, little attention has been paid to election-related violence against women. Such violence is often explained away as a consequence of women's behaviour, which stems from their nature.[136] In addition, the experiences of women are not properly disaggregated because there is an implicit assumption that all women face the same challenges. Yet, although women are a homogenous group for the purposes of gender classification, their varied positions and status in society provides them with different experiences. As such, while the homogenous classification is useful in certain contexts, it is less useful in other situations. For instance, although women have been known to be victims of election-related violence, they have also been vectors for it. The task of examining women's experiences with election-related violence is therefore best undertaken using a clustered approach that aggregates the experiences of women in their various circumstances within the society. It also allows an investigation into the type of violence experienced by women as voters and as contestants. Such an approach provides the different contexts within which election

[135] Although most women are unwilling to participate in competitive elections for the above reasons, a few women have also gained notoriety for being virulent. Elizabeth Sackey, Member of Parliament for Okaikoi North Constituency suggested that due to the polluted electoral environment, women who were aggressive and could engage in the unhealthy politics of insults and lies were preferred to those who were calm and preferred to play within the rules.

[136] A constant feature that emerged in the focus group discussions in the Western, Central and Volta regions was that women were too emotional and unable to accept constructive criticism. Some participants in the study working directly with women in politics and areas of decision making are of the opinion that women tend to be micro-managers and tend to trust less, which slows everything down. There were also assertions that women were 'too known' and poked their noses into the affairs of others.

-related violence occurs.

Profiling Election-Related Violence against Women in Ghana

The starting point for profiling women's experiences with election-related violence is an interrogation of the numbers of women in publicly elected office in the country. Tables 1 and 2 show the figures of women in Parliament and in the 164 District and Municipal Assemblies in the country.

Table 1: Parliamentary Elections 1992-2008

Year	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008
No. of Seats	200	200	200	230	230
Women who contested	23	57	95	104	101
Women who won	16	18	19	25	20
% of Total	8.0	9.0	9.5	10.9	8.2

One of the 20 women died and the bye-elections were won by a man. Thus, as of 2012, there are 19 women in Parliament

Source: Drawn from data obtained from the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Electoral Commission of Ghana

The first observation is that despite the increased efforts to educate and sensitize the general public and women themselves, the 2008 elections recorded a decline in the number of female parliamentary contestants. The low number of female candidates can be attributed to reasons that include: the non-transparent nomination processes of the political parties, especially the major political parties,[137] the high cost of filing fees, the commoditisation of political participation and the generally acrimonious political environment in the country. One of the fundamental challenges posed to women's participation in politics is being able to get in at the primaries, which is the entry level for competing (Jonah, 2009). According to the Final Report of the European Union's Election Observation Mission, 'the primaries for the parties to elect their candidates were also perceived to work against greater female participation in the elections as they lacked the financial resources to compete on a level playing field with their male counterparts' (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2008). Although the two main political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), decided to reduce the filing cost by half for female parliamentary and presidential aspirants for the 2012 elections, it was still too expensive for many women in a country where access to and control over resources is still largely male dominated. For instance, the NPP required aspirants to pay GHC 6,000 (USD4,000). Sitting MPs were required to pay an additional GHC10,000 (USD6,667). This means that a female MP who wanted to contest again had to pay GHC 8,000 (USD5,333). New female contestants had to pay GHC3,000 (USD2,000). Although the filing fees in the NDC were GHC2,000 (USD1,333) for men and GHC1,000 (USD667) for women, this was still high as many women still suffer significantly greater financial

[137] The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) Report on the Pre-Elections Scenario for June 2008, available at http://www.cddghana.org/document/CODEO/Pre-Election mentions the lack of transparent nomination processes.

challenges than their male counterparts. Therefore, for women who are not economically independent, the cost of contesting, albeit reduced, remains a significant obstacle to their political ambitions.

In addition to the high cost of filing fees, it is an open secret that at constituency level, each political party has gatekeepers who determine who gets on the party's ticket. Due to the high level of corruption among some of these gatekeepers (who are often the constituency chairmen), it is often the highest 'bidder' who gets their blessing.[138] Since a majority of women do not have the money to pay their way through, they are debarred from getting into the contest at all (Jonah, 2009).

The 2004 and 2008 parliamentary elections depicted that male and female candidates have almost equal chances of being elected. 24% of both men and women who competed in the 2004 parliamentary elections got elected. In 2008 there was a marginal difference as 21% of the male contestants were elected whilst 19% of female contestants got elected. Clearly, the electorates are willing to vote for women. The low number of elected female parliamentarians can be attributed to the fact that in 2008, most of the female candidates had been fielded by smaller political parties with almost no chance of putting anyone (male or female) in the parliament ofGhana at the time.

[138]Anecdotal evidence gathered from the focus group discussion at Shama indicated that some of the aspirants for the District Assembly elections were unable to contest because of their inability to pay the hidden fees. Emelia Arthur, then District Chief Executive (DCE) of Shama and now Deputy Regional Minister for the Western Region, confirmed the link between corruption and participation. According to her, the initial rejection of her nomination as DCE by the Members of the Shama District Assembly was because she refused to pay bribes of GHC1,000 to each of the 17 Members of the District Assembly. Nominees are expected to get 50 percent of the total votes cast by Members of the District Assembly. According to her, there was an unspoken tradition that government nominees had to pay Members of the Assembly before receiving their confirmation. Ms. Arthur was re-nominated by President Mills and was confirmed by the Assembly. She suggested that although the covert corrupt practices in the various political parties affected all aspirants, it affected women disproportionately because most women did not have access to and control over resources.

This is backed by the fact that political party affiliation was the dominant reason cited by those who had a chance to vote for a female candidate but did not do so in the 2008 election (Darkwa, 2009). Without a doubt, a woman's chances of succeeding at the elections is largely dependent on the political party within which she is situated. Thus, if high filing fees and corrupt practices prevent women from competing on the ticket of the major political parties, then women are inevitably being pushed out of politics.

Table 2: District Assembly Elections, 2010

REGION	NUMBER OF CONTESTANTS				
	MALE		FEMALE		
	NO.	% OF TOTAL	NO.	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL
WESTERN	1,469	94	86	5.5	1,555
CENTRAL	1,544	93	120	7.2	1,664
G. ACCRA	1,136	90	120	9.6	1,256
VOLTA	1,646	90	188	10.3	1,834
EASTERN	2,110	91	198	8.6	2,308
ASHANTI	3,153	93	240	7.1	3,393
B. AHAFO	1,830	92	149	7.5	1,979
NORTHERN	1,604	92	145	8.3	1,749
U. EAST	826	92	70	7.8	896
U. WEST	621	93	48	7.2	669

Table 2: District Assembly Elections, 2010 cont'd

REGION	NUMBER ELECTED						
	MALE		FEMALE				
	ELECTED	% OF TOTAL	ELECTED	% OF TOTAL		Percentage of Males Elected*	Percentage of Females Elected*
WESTERN	515	94.8	28	5.2	543	35	33
CENTRAL	533	93.2	39	6.8	572	35	33
G. ACCRA	319	90.4	34	9.6	353	28	28
VOLTA	580	89.9	65	10.1	645	35	35
EASTERN	742	90.8	75	9.2	817	35	38
ASHANTI	988	93.8	65	6.2	1053	31	27
B. AHAFO	712	93.6	49	6.4	761	39	33
NORTHERN	684	97.3	19	2.7	703	43	13
U. EAST	329	93.2	24	6.8	353	40	34
U. WEST	279	95.2	14	4.8	293	45	29

* Percentage of total contestants elected.
Source: Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Electoral Commission of Ghana

The percentage of women elected in the contest of the non-partisan district assembly elections reinforce the fact that in the absence of the influence of political parties, women are really not far off in terms of success at the polls from their male counterparts. Overall, even though women made up an average

of 7.88% of the total contestants as against 92.12% for men, 30% of all female contestants for the district assembly elections were elected compared to 36% for men. Although the district assembly elections are non-partisan in theory, in practice, there are strong political party biases. Focus Group Discussions held in the three districts of Jomoro, KEEAM and Kpandu revealed that that one of the primary reasons why women were not voted into the respective District Assemblies in the 2006 local government elections was due to the fact that they were perceived to be affiliated to the wrong political party. Women's success in competitive political elections in Ghana is inextricably linked to political parties and as such, it is imperative to address the structural barriers in partisan politics that militates against women's effective participation.

Case Studies

In Ghana, election-related violence manifest as a result of clashes between political parties or positions rather than as a result of gender. However, the three cases below are useful for examining the extent to which election-related violence against women is not just a result of their political party affiliation but rather a combination of patriarchal ideology, gender and their political party affiliation.

On 23 December 2005, disagreements erupted at the congress of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in Koforidua between supporters of former President Rawlings and those of Dr. Obed Asamoah over the development of some structures

expected to enhance internal democracy in the party.

The disagreements resulted in violence and supporters of Dr. Asamoah were subjected to various forms of verbal abuse. However, of greater significance is the treatment meted out to Madam Frances Essiam, the then out-going Women's Organiser of the NDC.[139] A part from verbal abuse (directed at her and other members of the Obed Asamoah camp), she was also subjected to physical abuse as horsewhips were used to beat her (Modernghana, 2005). It is noteworthy that Asamoah and some of his other supporters were subjected to insults and heckled but Essiam was the only one beaten. The beating of Essiam was undoubtedly a manifestation of the consequence of gender and patriarchy. As a woman, Essiam's place was not within the public domain of a party congress and if she participated, there was a limit to which she could articulate her opinions[140] As mentioned earlier, the patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society dictated those eligible to participate in the democratic process, at what level and the extent to which they could participate. Thus, although she was the National Women's Organiser, her role was subject to the rules of the game that allowed her entry in the first place. By articulating her opposition to former President Rawlings and openly criticising him, she had crossed the lines. Comments made on the e-platform www.ghanaweb.com on the story of Madam

[139]She resigned from the NDC in 2005 and helped found the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) with Obed Asamoah, but left the DFP to join the NPP in 2008. She is the current parliamentary candidate for the Adentan constituency.
[140]Until recently (the 2000s), most female members of the various political parties played off-the scene roles, away from the public domain. Although they were active in mobilizing support for their parties, they played low-key roles in the public activities of the party. Most of those who participated at the strategic decision-making level were the Women's Organisers and those who were deputies to substantive office holders.

Essiam's attack suggested that as a woman who had dared challenge the patriarch, she needed to be corrected.[141]

In a different but related development, former First Lady of Ghana, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings was subjected to verbal attacks when she declared her intention to contest her party's flagbearership. While insults are not new on the Ghanaian political landscape, gender-specific insults have been hurled at the former First Lady for her decision to seek nomination as presidential candidate of her party. She has also been blamed for the rift between her husband, former President Rawlings, and current President John Atta Mills (George, 2012). The paramount chief of Gomoa Akyempim requested the former President 'to convince his wife, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, to discard her intention to contest the National Democratic Congress (NDC) presidential primaries in July this year' (myjoyonline, 2011). According to the report, the chief stated that the "first lady must abandon her intention to save the image of her husband, who has been a great critic

[141] The story 'Frances Essiam Comes Under Attack', had several comments. The most relevant to the analysis are reproduced here unedited. 'Frances Essiam's lashing was long overdue! While some are suggesting 24 lashes I think she should've been given 48 powerful lashes on her ass. That would have been the best way to recompense her for her services to the Kufour and his professional thugs!' 'THAT LADY SHOULD HAVE BEEN TRASHED LONG TIME AGO. THE BEATINGS WERE LONG OVERDUE.' 'His mother is sensible and will not behave like Essiam, that is why we haven't heard of Osei's mother being beaten by anyone. But Essiam deserves 24 lashes on her bare buttocks. It may even turn out to be sexy. You just don't know.' 'Essiam is devil who has been paid by NPP to infiltrate and destroy our Great party and founder. She need not to live on earth; she must be sent to her ancestors to do that politics for NPP. If she try to do anything that will spoil NDC, then she must prepare to face the music.' For more on this, see 'Frances Essiam comes under attack', General News of Friday, 23 December 2005, available at http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=96569&comment=1720272#com Accessed 17 July 2012. It is also interesting to note that some of the comments condoning the treatment of Madam Essiam suggested that she deserved to be beaten because she was a traitor who was working for the opposition New Patriotic Party. However, when the then General Secretary of the NDC was accused of trading NDC information for $3,000 to the NPP, he was suspended from the party. While there were angry comments to the story of his suspension, none suggested the need for physical discipline. For more on the story and the comments, see 'NDC suspends General Secretary" available at http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/ artikel.php?ID=72098&comment=0#com. Accessed on 3 June 2012.

of President Mills' administration". In a similar development, the editor of the Daily Dispatch, Ben Ephson, allegedly suggested that Mrs Rawlings was leading her husband into destruction (peacefmonline.com, 2012). Although former President Rawlings has given reasons for his displeasure with the NDC, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings is presented as the cause of the conflict. In May 2012, the chiefs and people of Aflao protested against the hosting of the 33rd anniversary of the June 4 celebration in Aflao. According to the chiefs, the unfulfilled promises of the NDC and the lack of development in the town made it inappropriate for the anniversary to be hosted there (Daily Guide, 2012). It was also suggested that the refusal stemmed from the fear that "allowing the June 4th celebration to take place in the area will be a hindrance to Aflao's development in that the government – which may be bashed at the event – may reverse its plans to provide the area with development projects promised them" (Ghanaweb.com, 2012). Despite the reasons given, the placards borne by demonstrators were replete with invectives against Mrs. Rawlings (Ghanaweb, 2012).[142]

The third case is the assault on Ms. Ursula Owusu, the NPP's parliamentary aspirant for the Ablekuma South constituency, during the biometric registration exercise for voters in the second quarter of 2012. There had been rumours of some challenges with the biometric registration exercise in the Odododiodio constituency, with people who were not Ga being prevented from registering. According to reports, Ms. Owusu had in the company of other party members had gone on a tour of the Odododiodio constituency during the biometric voter registration exercise to encourage eligible persons to register.

[142]Some of the placards read 'Volta Region Women Too Want To Be President'; 'So Nana Konadu Now Controls Jerry'; 'Konadu Stop Acting Like Lady Macbeth'; 'How Many Aflao Citizens Have You Employed At Nsawam Cannery?'

It was alleged that during her tour,[143] she used unsavoury language and castigated the Ga people. It was also alleged that during her broadcast for all persons to go out and register, she was attacked by some heavily built men (Gyasiwaa, 2012). Out of the 92 comments to the story on the e-platform http://politics.myjoyonline.com, 27 (29.3 percent) suggested that Ms. Owusu deserved to have been beaten up because she was not in her constituency, she was 'too known' and needed to behave like a woman. In addition, the Greater Accra Regional chairman of the NDC suggested that Ms. Owusu is a woman and should behave as such (PEACE FM online, 2012).

An analysis of the three cases through a gender lens reveals the undertones of the patriarchal ideology that privileges male dominance over females. The reactions to the three women and the criticism levelled against them by persons commenting on the stories can, therefore, be seen as a response to women who are attempting to move out of the socially constructed roles into the arena of power and prestige that patriarchy accords men. As a result, while the socio-cultural perceptions did not necessarily facilitate the violence on the three women, it becomes the rationalization for the actions carried out against them. Essiam and Owusu suffered straightforward election-related physical violence. By beating Essiam and slapping Owusu, the perpetrators of the acts either consciously or unconsciously were also sending out a subtle unspoken message to other women who would dare to go against the grain. On the one hand, the acts of beating and slapping the women served the purpose of disciplining them; on the other, it was an affirmation of the power relations between men and women; the whip and the slap were used symbolically to remind women

of their place in Ghanaian society.[143] Citing from feminist theory, Nagengast (1994) provides us an apt explanation of the utility of symbolic violence by suggesting that it is 'important in structuring and ordering of relations of domination and power'.

Women as vectors of election-related violence: The case of 'One Woman Thousand' and the 'Queen of the Street'

It would be erroneous to assume that women are simply victims of election-related violence. Although they are disproportionately affected by such violence, women are also vectors of election-related violence. Women as vectors of election-related violence have mainly operated within the larger structural framework of party politics in Ghana. As a result, most of those who have gained entry, acceptance and a voice have done so by playing according to the rules of the political party game. They have therefore failed to lead an agenda for the alteration of the rules of the game to improve the prospects of women within the political arena and those seeking to join. In short, they have failed to transform the institutions but have rather been co-opted to facilitate the established systems and structures. Generally, the activities of these women are not specifically directed at other women but are non-gendered, catching anyone that falls within range.

Frances Essiam is alleged to have admitted being used by President J.J. Rawlings and his cronies to undertake "verbal assassinations" of some NDC party members. According to The Chronicle, Essiam allegedly confessed that President Rawlings suggested that she was the only person who could stop Obed Asamoah in his tracks. She allegedly stated that "she obeyed and carried the assassination job, moving from one

[143]In Ghana, it is common for male family members to "discipline" adult female family members perceived to have erred. This is because men are perceived as the heads of their households with the authority to correct and discipline.

Frances Essiam refers to herself as 'One Woman Thousand' while Ursula Owusu calls herself 'Queen of the Street'. The two titles are used to connote sources of power.

station to the other, one meeting to the other, tormenting Obed out of blind loyalty" (Modern Ghana, 2005). In a recent development, Essiam and Anita de Souza (NDC National Women's Organiser) engaged in a verbal exchange on Metro Television during which de Souza called Essiam a traitor. In response, Essiam referred to de Souza as a prostitute (Ghanaweb.com, 2012). The name calling at the TV station was so virulent that the programme had to be truncated. According to statements attributed to her, Essiam had allowed herself to be used to transmit verbal violence against Obed Asamoah in 2005, and in 2012 she continued to facilitate violent verbal attacks – by calling another woman a prostitute, a term that has been used by men to denigrate women, including herself.

In a separate but related vein, on 14th February 2012, Ms. Ursula Owusu, the self-styled 'Queen of the Street' appeared on Metro TV's 'Good Morning Ghana' wearing a T-shirt with the inscription 'All-die-be-die', the controversial call to the party faithful by NPP flagbearer Nana Akufo-Addo (Modernghana.com, 2011). Again, she is alleged to have advised members of her party to 'arm themselves for 2012' (Daily Guide, 2011). Finally, after the alleged attack in the Odododiodio constituency, Owusu allegedly announced that she would return the following day to the constituency with armed bodyguards, and actually did (Citifmonline, 2012).

It is interesting to note that Ms. Essiam and Ms Owusu who have been victims of violence, have also become vectors for the transmission of violence. Could their posture as vectors of violence be a counter-reaction to the election-related violence they suffered? While answering this question would require

further research and analysis, it is sufficient to conclude that women are not mere victims of election-related violence because in some limited instances, some also become vectors of violence.

Conclusion

The analysis has been skewed to focus on the experiences of the urban elite woman without giving similar treatment to the experience of the rural woman with little or no formal education. This is not to say that those experiences are any less relevant. Indeed, given that socio-cultural norms are much more embedded in rural and peri-urban communities, there is no doubt that women in those communities face perhaps even more severe challenges. For instance, the 2010 District Assembly elections (Table 2) show that the Northern Region recorded the lowest percentage of women elected. This may be attributed to the strong patriarchal ideology in the north, which perpetuates the subordinate status of women and discourages them from participating in an arena that is traditionally male dominated. It is useful to note, therefore, that despite the specific characteristics of the women in the various clusters, there are some commonalities – such as name calling as well as the taunting of unmarried/divorced women.

This chapter has argued for the need to consider election-related violence against women through a gender lens and the need to broaden the interpretation of election-related violence against women to include symbolic and structural violence, which, though silent, may facilitate the perpetuation of election-related violence against women. In this way, it would be possible to identify the various contexts within which election-related

violence occurs and the various forms it takes. There is no gainsaying that election-related violence against women discourages women from participating in competitive elections and pushes them out of the arena of political participation.

Election-related violence against women is situated within the general environment of party politics in Ghana. It is, therefore, impossible to address it in isolation. Thus, election-related violence against women must be managed from the perspective of a strategic need rather than a practical need. As a result, it must be co-located within law reform, institutional re-engineering and a renegotiation of the rules of representation. Ghana needs to consider different electoral systems to identify one that allows broader representation, of the various groups within the country. It is equally imperative for Ghana to pass the affirmative action bill into law and back it with the necessary structures for implementation. Finally, there is the need to incorporate smart sanctions into the agreed upon political parties agreed code-of-conduct to ensure that violations are severely addressed to promote deterrence. Whilst these are not specific to women, their implementation will facilitate a more transparent, decent and representational process which in turn, would enhance women's chances of effectively participating in the political process.

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Chapter 10

Exploring the Involvement of the Youth in Contemporary Ghanaian Politics

Mustapha Abdallah and Rhoda Osei-Afful

Abstract

The youth have generally been part of the politics and political processes of the country. In contemporary Ghanaian politics, the youth constitute an important resource for the mobilization of votes as they play diverse roles in the electioneering activities of political parties and politicians. In the post-2000 political period in Ghana, and especially in the aftermath of the 2008 elections, however, the youth have also been often associated with a wave of political violence. This chapter looks at the youth as an active player not only in the political and electoral processes of the country but also in the perpetuation of political violence. We argue that given the vital role that they play in the electioneering activities of political parties and candidates, there is a certain expectation among the youth that they should be appropriately rewarded, including having a voice in appointments to public positions such as District Chief Executive (DCE) and having some control over the management of some public facilities. Where expectations are not met,

violent means have been employed by the youth to express disappointment. This does not augur well for the country's peace and stability. In view of the impending 2012 general elections, this chapter concludes with some recommendations to stakeholders on how to curb the phenomenon.

Key Words:
Exploring, Youth, Politics, Political Parties, Violence

Introduction

The involvement of the youth in Ghana's politics has long been a feature of the country's political development. In contemporary Ghanaian politics, the youth continue to play diverse roles in politics, and this makes them almost indispensable, especially to the activities of political parties. Youth involvement in politics is a positive element of national political life, especially since the 1992 Constitution promotes freedom of association and broader participation of citizens in national development. Apart from constituting a critical constituency for winning political power, the youth play vital roles in the mobilization of votes. This notwithstanding, their involvement in negative practices such as political and electoral violence, especially in the post-2000 election period indicates the need for a re-examination of the nature of their involvement in politics. To a very large extent, political and election-related violence have been perpetrated by youths and youth groups. This chapter attempts a broad examination of youth participation in contemporary Ghanaian politics as well as their involvement in political and election-related violence.

We argue that the aftermath of the 2008 elections in particular, has been characterized by a wave of violent agitation throughout the country, especially by politically aligned youth and youth groups, over issues of supposed non-fulfilment of electoral promises made to them, their marginalization in the appointment of local public office-holders, control of some public property, and high expectations about working towards party victory in elections.

The chapter situates the analysis of the problem within the theory of 'Youth Bulge' as an explanatory model for understanding the antecedents of youth involvement in political and electoral violence. It also provides an overview of youth involvement in contemporary Ghanaian politics and their contribution to the political development of the country. It concludes with recommendations for curbing the excesses of youth involvement in politics, including political and electoral violence.

The State of the Youth in Ghana

The United Nations defines youth as persons falling between the ages 15 and 24. This group of people, according to the United Nations Programme on Youth, constitutes about 18 percent of the world's population (close to 1.8 billion people). About 17 percent of this world youth population also live in Africa, out of the about 87 percent who live in developing countries. It is significant that the definition of who constitutes 'youth' varies across countries and organizations (Hilker and Fraser, 2009:9). In Ghana, the 2010 National Youth Policy defines 'youth' as persons falling within the age bracket of 15 and 35. This definition is the

one adopted in this chapter.

With Ghana's population amounting to 18.9 million in 2000 and an annual growth rate of 2.7 percent, the 2000 Population and Housing Census[145] provides the following age categories of the youth, who constitute about 33 percent of Ghana's total population:

15-19 years – 10 percent
20-24 years – 8.5 percent
25-29 years – 7.9 percent
30-34 years – 6.4 percent

Worldwide, it is recognized that the youth face various socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and underemployment, peer pressure, delinquency, parental neglect, and illiteracy. Some of these challenges have been worsened by global developments. According to the 2011 UN World Youth Report, youth unemployment has been worsened by the global economic crisis (UNDESA, 2011:11). The International Labour Organization (2012:13) also reports that gains that had been made in the period 2002 to 2007 in terms of a decline in global youth unemployment suddenly came to a halt with the global economic crises. The global youth unemployment rate thus reached its highest point between 2008 and 2009.

In Ghana, the 2010 National Youth Policy document which is 'intended to provide guidelines and direction for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies, programmes and projects for the development of the youth' (Ministry of Youth and

[145]The 2000 Population and Housing Census has been used in this chapter because the summary report of the 2010 Population and Housing Census Final Report which was released on 31 May 2012 did not include a detailed breakdown of the youth population of Ghana

Sports, 2010:1) identifies a number of challenges that face the youth. These include: access to quality education; unemployment and underemployment as a result of inadequate and inappropriate training for the job market; a 'get-rich-quick' attitude; high vulnerability to hunger, high incidence of drug and substance abuse; and erosion of traditional support systems for young persons, combined with the weakened role of the family, leading to deviance (Ibid: 9).

In addition, the Policy document identifies the growing incidence of youth involvement in violent conflicts – be they political, social or ethnic – as one of the major challenges facing Ghanaian youth. In light of this, it is important to note that a considerable number of the incidents of political and election-related violence that are reported in the media, particularly in the post-2000 period, make some reference to the involvement of youth or youth groups as the perpetrators (and sometimes victims) of political and election-related violence.

Violent political engagements by the youth take place at various stages of the political and electoral cycle, and range from intimidation and harassment of perceived opponents, to violent disruption of political rallies, bloody clashes between youth groups from opposing political groups, to stealing and destruction of state and public property such as ballot boxes, biometric voter registration kits and office equipment. This is a disturbing phenomenon given that the country's democratic consolidation implicates the youth and depends on what they make of it. It is important that the youth assimilate democratic culture and norms, including using non-violent means to resolve political disputes or other incompatibilities. It is, however, also

important to indicate that there may be various 'push' and 'pull' factors (OECD, 2011:18) that may account for this worrying situation, and these may include psychological, socio-economic and political reasons. The next section looks at the relationship between a youth bulge in population and the incidence of political and electoral violence.

The Youth Bulge Theory and Political and Electoral Violence

Studies on political violence and internal instabilities have established linkages between a surging youth population and political violence. Hilker and Fraser (2009:3) acknowledge that the discourse on children and younger persons as victims of violence has shifted to one in which the youth are seen as a threat to security and stability. In particular, young males have been observed as key protagonists of criminal and political violence (Urdal, 2012: 1). It has been pointed out that recent studies on conflicts in Africa recognize some form of youth dimension in the instigation and perpetuation of violence (Hilker and Fraser, 2009:3). The 'youth bulge' theory employs demographic dynamics to explain the incidence of violent conflicts within states. The theory is linked to the German social scientist Gunnar Heinsohn who wrote about the theory in the mid-1990s. Subsequently, other scholars such as US political scientists Gary Fuller and Jack A. Goldstone have contributed to popularizing the theory.

The theory states that countries with an increasingly large population of youth are more likely to be at risk of political violence. This is because such countries are likely to run into socio-economic problems such as resource scarcity, poverty, unemployment and under-employment, and rapid urbanization. These factors often predispose the youthful population to violence. Countries with weak political systems have also been noted as particularly vulnerable to such youth-related violence. The theory, which describes young people, especially those within the age bracket of 15 to 24,[146] as a historically volatile population, analyses historical data to establish a relationship between young adults and historical socio-political unrest. The presence of a large youth population in a context of poor socio-economic conditions has thus been identified as having played a key role in some historical revolutions and socio-political unrest.

Recent studies on youth bulges and conflicts point out that countries (mainly developing ones) that have young people making up more than 35 percent of the adult population have a 150 percent higher risk of armed conflict (Urdal, 2012:7). A country's risk of conflict also increases by more than 4 percent with every percentage point increase in the youth population, relative to the adult population. This means the higher the youth population (as a proportion of the total adult population) of a country, the higher its risk of political violence.

Following the theory, concerns about population growth should rather focus on the nature of demographic characteristics instead of the sheer total popualtion size and rate of increase. One viewpoint about the theory is that youth bulges do not necessarily always mean negative consequences. It has been argued that continued investments

[146] Other writers also use the age bracket 15-29 in their discussion of the youth bulge.

in the youth can actually have a positive impact on economic developement, with the youth driving it (Beehner, 2007).
The theory has been used particularly to explain developments in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and the Middle East, among others (Ibid.). Quite recently, the theory has been applied in explaining the 'Arab Spring' which saw the youth play key roles in socio-econonmic and political upheavals in the Arab world. In sub-Saharan Africa, the youth bulge theory has been identified with armed conflicts and political unrest in countries such as Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya where young people took an active part in the conflicts in those countries. In Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire for example, young people are believed to have constituted about 95 percent of the fighting forces (Mastiny, 2004, cited in Aning and Atta-Asamoah, 2011).

In Ghana, even though there is a significant youth population (i.e. 33 percent of the total population according to the 2000 Population and Housing Census), the country has not yet witnessed protracted and/or armed conflicts of the nature of those that took place elsewhere on the continent. It must, however, be noted that there have been several small-scale conflicts and violent outbreaks in Ghana, many of them communal in nature. To a great extent, the youth have been active participants in many of these violent conflicts and have sometimes become the main protagonists. The underlying factors for some of these conflicts may include, but also transcend, socio-economic and political factors such as poverty, unemployment and or regime type. There are other factors such as ethnic undercurrents, political enmity and an obsession with electoral victory that trigger and motivate many of these violent conflicts in the country.

Elections in particular have acquired such high stakes for many Ghanaians that the electoral process has become characterized by incidents of violence. At the heart of much of this politically motivated violence is the involvement of the youth who do so for various reasons, including protecting and defending the interests of their political parties and politicians.

History of Youth Participation in Ghanaian Politics

Historically, the participation of the youth in the political life of the Gold Coast and subsequently Ghana was largely through the formation of youth organizations and their activities. To some extent, Ghana was a product of youth movement revolutions (Fisherman and Solomon, 1964). Consequently, the participation of youth organizations has typically been part and parcel of politics in Ghana (Asante, 2006:214). In his study on 'The Youth and Politics in Ghana: Reflections on the 2004 General Elections', Asante writes about Chazan's 1974 work which outlines the history of youth organizations in Ghana and categorizes their growth into four different phases.[147] For the purposes of this chapter, however, we adopt and focus on the period from the attainment of independence (1957) up to 1992, and the post-1992 period to the present.

The 1957-1992 period in Ghana's politics saw various political regimes and transitions, both civilian and military. Throughout this period, some form of youth involvement in the political processes could be identified. In 1957, Kwame Nkrumah, who became the country's first post-independence leader, had at a very youthful age played a lead role in the nationalist struggle that shaped the country's political life afterwards.

[147] According to Chazan, phase one is described as 'prior to the encounter' and this period was marked by the formation of indigenous youth organizations, especially in the coastal and forest areas of West Africa. Phase two brought about the establishment of voluntary, trans-ethnic youth groups and became part of the decolonization process of the time. Chazan's third phase of the growth of youth organizations was the early years of independence where youth groups were government-controlled and they sought to participate in the country's new national life. The fourth and final phase was the post-Nkrumah overthrow where attempts were made by subsequent governments to normalize the roles of youth groups in the country. See Asante, R., (2006) 'The Youth and politics in Ghana: Reflections on the 2004 General Elections' in Voting for Democracy in Ghana; the 2004 elections in perspective, Thematic Studies Vol. 1.

The Convention People's Party (CPP), which he formed and led, was a mass political movement with young people playing key roles in the mobilization of grassroots support. After independence, and in view of the critical role the youth played in the anti-colonial struggle, attempts were made by the Nkrumah government to channel the potential of the youth into national development (Asante, 2004:216). This involved the establishment of youth organizations that differed considerably from the youth organizations of the colonial era in terms of orientation and purpose. A new organization for young people called the Builders' Brigade was established in 1957 while the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement (YPM) was established in 1960. These virtually replaced the Boy and Girl Scout Movements that were formed by the British administration.

Nkrumah placed some importance on the need to involve the youth in his national development agenda but this, at some point, was also partly due to the fact he did not enjoy support from the chiefs and educated elites of the time (Ibid; 217). Young people and the YPM in particular also became critical in the national and continental integration plan of Nkrumah. Basically, the YPM was to inculcate in the youth a feeling of national pride, hard work, discipline, a sense of duty and responsibility, and commitment to serve the country (Addo, 1997). The YPM came to play an instrumental role in the ideological orientation of the youth.

The YPM soon become the foremost youth organization, with branches all over the country and a total membership of about 500,000. Not much could be seen of other youth organizations of the time that became submerged by the activities of the Young Pioneers (Asante, 2004:217). The dominance of the YPM was backed by a decree in 1961 that gave it the official recognition of being the only youth organization

in the country. The status of the officially recognized youth movement did not sit well with other groups like the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS),[148] which felt that other youth groups had been weakened by the Nkrumah government through its actions. After the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime in 1966, the YPM was seen as a movement that could undermine the state, hence its dissolution. Some policies were also put in place with a view to harnessing the potential of the youth. A National Service Corps was founded in 1970 by the Busia-led Progress Party (PP) government to channel the efforts of the youth towards community and national development.

In the ensuing years, NUGS became the most visible embodiment of youth involvement in the country's politics. The student body made its voice heard on critical matters of national importance, especially those that directly or indirectly affected its members. In 1971, for example, when the Busia government abolished the provision of free meals and allowances, and instead introduced a Student Loans Scheme Act, NUGS publicly voiced its opposition. A series of student demonstrations hit various campuses in the country in protest against the policy. The student body, which had welcomed Ghana's return to civilian rule in 1969 under the Busia government, was soon to welcome Busia's overthrow in 1972 in a military coup led by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong. The new military government of Acheampong reversed the Busia policies that students had protested against. It also enjoyed considerable support from NUGS for some of its revolutionary policies, including the popular yentua government posture by which the country was to repudiate its external debts.

[148] NUGs was formed in 1959 (Whyte Kpessa, 2007) as a student group but this had been preceded by some form of students activism in the late 1940s and the 1950s.

However, the relationship between the student movement and the Acheampong government grew cold and became sour in the face of worsening socio-economic conditions in the country, amidst perceived corrupt practices by government and its cronies. Various protests marches were organized by NUGS against the government and political tension in the country grew high. Amid these developments, university campuses were repeatedly closed down by the government. In July 1978, however, Acheampong was removed from office in a palace coup and Lieutenant-General F.W.K. Akuffo took over.

The relationships between student movements and subsequent governments in Ghana have been quite similar to that of earlier ones. A government would usually enjoy some moments of support, especially at the initial stages of their regime, from the student movement. This would, however, wane, sooner or later, and the relationship would degenerate afterwards. This degeneration was often triggered or informed by the introduction of unpopular policies that directly affected students, as well as by the general socio-economic and political developments in the country.

In the post-1992 period of multi-party politics in Ghana, the youth are increasingly becoming a vibrant element of the political process with their enthusiasm and dedication to political party activities. Most political parties that have come into existence under the Fourth Republic have created youth wings that promote the involvement and integration of young people in their political party activities. There are also other youth groups and organizations that exist outside the formal structures of the political parties to which they are affiliated, and work towards the

increased visibility of political youth groups. Some of these are, however, not solidly established and are formed on an ad-hoc basis.

It must be noted that young people do not just operate on the sidelines of political parties or work to support electioneering activities. They have become an integral part of government and political party activities. Soon after winning the 2008 elections, President John Evans Atta Mills appointed a number of relatively young people into his government, with some getting deputy ministerial positions. Some were individuals who played active roles in the election campaign activities of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and of the then candidate Mills during the 2008 elections. The role of young people in the Mills government has, however, been criticized by some Ghanaians who believe that such young persons are inexperienced and incompetent. In a society where older people are typically associated with wisdom, knowledge and experience, and the young with exuberance and adventure, appointing young people into government may be hard to accept for some people. Much, however, may depend on the performance of the few young persons who have already been given the opportunity to serve in government. It is significant to note that many of these young persons have survived the various reshuffles made by President Mills since their appointment some three years ago. It is also significant that the 2012 campaign team of the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) and its flagbearer Nana Akufo-Addo have taken on some relatively young adults who are serving in various positions in the campaign team.

The Youth and Elections in Contemporary Ghana

As indicated earlier in this chapter, young persons in Ghana are actively involved in the political development and electoral processes. It is important to indicate that the youth are involved in politics at various levels of national life. In terms of public policy-making, youth groups such as the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) continue to make efforts aimed at influencing certain policies and decisions by government and state or non-state agencies. Essentially, they do so because such policies and decisions directly or indirectly affect their members and communities. NUGS and other student groups have on various occasions protested over issues such as fee increments and strike actions by lecturers. Again, it is important to note that much of the discussion in this section focuses on youth involvement in politics and especially in relation to the activities of the electoral cycle.

Subject to the above context of the discussion, it is worth noting that much of what the youth offer in politics largely revolves around elections and the electoral cycle, both at the national and local levels, as they demonstrate commitment, enthusiasm and support for the cause of politicians and the political parties that they identify with. The importance of the role of the youth in political party activities cannot be over-emphasized as they provide an invaluable and vibrant resource for the parties. Almost every stage of the electoral cycle is characterized by some form of youth involvement, both at party and inter-party levels. They play critical roles spanning the organization, conduct and outcome of elections, including serving as party agents for polling and

registration centres, to making inputs into party manifestoes and running errands for campaign activities. In the course of making some of these efforts, some youth defy unfavourable conditions and various risks including working on unfamiliar terrain and travelling long distances to serve, for example, as party agents in very remote areas of the country. The organization of political rallies and party congresses depend on valuable contributions from the youth, whether in terms of putting up notices, hoisting party flags, or the creatively displaying and distributing party paraphernalia to create the necessary publicity.

In Ghana, the youth constitute a significant proportion of the 'footsoldiers' who undertake much of the labour-intensive, election-related campaign activities of political parties such as door-to-door campaigning. This is because the youth have the energy and time required for such tasks. In recognition of the efforts they make towards the achievement of political objectives, most political parties in Ghana have created special organs often called 'youth wings' to help mobilize the youth in the parties. The youth are also represented at almost all levels of party leadership, from polling station executives to national executives. There are also well established student groups such as the Tertiary Education Students Confederation (TESCON) of the NPP and the Tertiary Education Institutions Network (TEIN) of the NDC, which operate on various campuses of tertiary institutions to organize and mobilize support among students and to enhance the electoral fortunes of their political parties.

To enable youth activists carry out tasks smoothly, parties and politicians often provide the youth activists with the needed logistics, such as means of transportation, meals or meal

allowances, and party paraphernalia. These may sometimes be the only reward that these youth get for all that they offer. However, youth involvement in political activities is not entirely a selfless venture as young persons may also have their personal interest and objectives for playing an active role in politics. They may nurture future political aspirations, seek societal recognition, and look for ways of getting access to scarce state resources. Some students, while on university campuses, prepare themselves for future political positions such as Member of Parliament (MP) by taking an active part in the activities of party youth wings and special groups such as TESCON and TEIN. For some of them, this is where their political career begins.

The Youth and Political Violence

Apart from playing diverse roles towards the achievement of political objectives, the youth are also often involved in violent political behaviour that does not augur well for the democratic stability of the country. Some of this violent behaviour takes place at both the intra- and inter-party levels. At the intra-party level, contests over the selection of parliamentary and presidential candidates have sometimes been characterized by fierce competition, with some of them being potentially self-destructive. In several instances, youth activists have pitched camp for and against contending candidates, sometimes using violent means to either canvass support for their candidate or show disapproval if their candidate loses. On 14 May 2008, for example, total mayhem broke out in the Bekwai constituency in the Ashanti Region when hundreds of irate youth reportedly protested against the results of the NPP's local parliamentary primaries (Daily

Graphic, 2008:16). Reports in the media about the incident indicated that socio-economic activities in Bekwai town came to a halt in addition to destruction of property, including smashing the windscreen of a police vehicle. Essentially, these young persons could not accept the supposed circumstances in which their candidate lost the primary election. Again, a group of angry NDC youth in Bulenge in the Wa East constituency of the Upper West Region also reportedly caused destruction to some property, mainly belonging to their party, on 14 November 2011 over the disqualification of their preferred parliamentary candidate (citifmonline.com, November 14, 2011). Similar developments took place in different parts of the country and had some impact on the organization of party primaries for the 2012 elections in some of those areas. The NPP, for example, is yet to organize its primaries in the Bekwai constituency, arguably because in view of past incidents, it does not want to jeopardise party cohesion if issues are not tactfully handled.

At the inter-party level, mobilization activities by youth activists have often turned into violent and bloody clashes between footsoldiers of opposing political parties, sometimes leading to loss of life and destruction of property.

An aspect of this worrying violent behaviour by the youth, which has intensified in the aftermath of the 2008 elections, is the wave of violent agitation over supposed non-fulfilment of electoral promises, non-involvement in and/or disappointment about political appointments and control over some public facilities, among other issues. Largely young party footsoldiers have resorted to violent means of expressing their dismay about such issues. Some have, in the process, destroyed government property,

burnt down party offices and equipment, locked up government offices and officials, and seized public facilities such as toilets and lorry parks. In April 2009 for example, just four months into the administration of the newly-elected NDC administration, a group of dissatisfied NDC supporters reportedly ran amok and seized the Ashaiman lorry park amid claims that the party had failed to fulfil promises about providing them with jobs in return for engaging them in highly risky campaign assignments (Myjoyonline.com cited by modernghana.com, April 26 2009). The youth also seized some payment receipt books from the managers of the lorry park. Within that same month, in the Nalerigu/Bambaga constituency in the Northern Region, a violent protest by some youth over the President's nominee for District Chief Executive led to an invasion of the local NDC office, the burning of a shed and the removal of NDC billboards in the area (Ghana News Agency, cited by Ghanaweb.com, April 18, 2009).

In the Eastern Region, an NDC youth activist in the Abuakwa South constituency, Shakespeare Ofori Atta, on 13 July 2010 led a group of agitated party footsoldiers to chase out workers of the District National Health Insurance Scheme and locked up the office over claims that their party had failed to live up to its campaign promise of providing them with employment after nearly two years in power (Gyampoh, 2011). Similar incidents took place in various parts of the country and were reported in the media. The seriousness of these violent incidents prompted President Mills to instruct all local government officials to grant audience to angry footsoldiers towards finding a solution to their concerns (Myjoyonline.com, cited by modernghana.com, November 25, 2009. While taking politicians and political parties on for their decisions and electoral promises may in itself be a

good idea, it is the violent manner in which this is sometimes done that gives cause for concern.

An element of this violent behaviour the youth is the idea of an exploitative relationship between party activists, including youth and youth groups on one hand, and political parties and politicians on the other hand. There is often a certain expectation on the part of these party activists that their efforts to mobilize support for political parties and candidates will be rewarded or compensated in the event of an electoral victory (CDD-Ghana, 2007:5). In other circumstances, explicit promises about award of contracts, employment opportunities, educational opportunities, development projects, and cash rewards are made to these activists in soliciting their support. People therefore become expectant and may go the extra mile to help achieve electoral victory. In the event that these expectations are not met and promises not fulfilled, there is the likely feeling on the part of the activists of having been taken for granted or exploited. Subsequently, anything contrary to what they expect in the event of electoral victory leads to tension and raised tempers, and even violent outbursts and actions.

It is also important to emphasize that exploitative relationships are not unidirectional. Politicians who seek certain public positions such as MP usually rely on footsoldiers for mobilization of grassroots support. In doing so, some politicians dispense a considerable amount of resources to the footsoldiers in part to enable them to carry out their campaign tasks effectively. This may come in various forms including cash, provision of household appliances such as television sets, or a car. For power

-hungry politicians, footsoldiers may have a field day making endless material demands. After all, until the battle is over, the politician may find it difficult to reject their demands and may need to play along. There is, however, a blurred line between what appears to be an inherently contractual relationship and an exploitative one between politicians and political parties on one hand, and footsoldiers on the other.

Conclusion

Youth involvement in Ghana's political processes is significant because it provides an opportunity to address the phenomenon of political exclusion. It is, however, important that this does not undermine the country's democratic stability, mainly because of the manner in which it is done. The youth must be positively engaged in a much more meaningful manner that demonstrates trust, respect, and prudent use of human resources. Political parties especially, and other democratic stakeholders can help shape the expectations, ideals, and nature of political involvement of the country's youth. In line with the main objective of this book and to help address the issue of election-related violence in Ghana, particularly in view of the upcoming 2012 general elections, the following recommendations have been made;

- ? National policies targeted at youth development should be vigorously pursued and in a fair and equitable manner. The content of the National Youth Policy document, which seeks to address

challenges facing the youth, including socio-economic, political and environmental challenges, should be addressed. This will help reduce the vulnerabilities that predispose young people to engage in political violence.

- Political parties should desist from turning the youth into vehicles for perpetrating any form of political violence. Peace messages should be strongly emphasized at political rallies and events to help send a clear message to stakeholders, including the youth, about the need to have peace for the country's development. After all, political parties can hardly thrive in a violent country. All political parties, whether in government or opposition, must refrain from covering for activists who are found engaging in violent activities. The 2008 Political Parties Code of Conduct should check political parties against inflammatory language as this has the potential to lure young persons into engaging in electoral violence. In this regard, the National Enforcement Body for this Code of Conduct should name and shame all parties who flout the code.

- The youth should adopt and use non-violent means to track the implementation of electoral promises made to them in the course of campaigning activities and assess their performance on that basis.

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- The security agencies should, without fear or favour, discharge their duties, arrest and prosecute all those who engage in acts of violence irrespective of their party affiliation. This will help deter other prospective troublemakers.

- Civil society groups including community-based organizations should intensify efforts at organizing peace education to raise awareness among youth groups, particularly their leaders, of the consequences of violence.

- The National Peace Council[148] should also be proactive and come out with peace campaigns and programmes targeted at the youth and their participation in politics.

[148] The National Peace Council is a body set up to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts in Ghana

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Ghana is noted for its peaceful, and yet competitive democratic transition since the return to constitutional rule in 1992. It has conducted five successive elections and managed two democratic transitions after power changed hands from the NDC in 2000 and from the NPP in 2008. All this has not been without challenges. Each of the elections was characterized by pockets of violence, often resulting from group clashes between the main political opponents and sometimes with the security agencies.

The 2008 elections, for instance, has been described severally as "the narrow escape", "democracy on a knife's edge" and the one typifying "an African election". But whichever ways the description, the intense competition was never devoid of intra-party and inter-party violence, escalated by mistrust of state security and lack of prosecution of offences involving electoral violence. Noting that the level of violence can mar the electoral process and outcome, this book attempts to examine Ghanaian elections in the context of close competition ahead of the 2012 elections.

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The Kofi Annam International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) is an internationally preferred Centre of Excellence for research into and training for conflict prevention, management, resolution, research and innovative thinking in integrated Peace Support Operations and sustainable delivery of enhanced regional capacity building for Peace Support Operations.

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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a political not-for-profit organisation with offices worldwide. It has been operating in Ghana for over 40 years now. Some of the topics FES works on are: political participation, economic development and social justice, security policy, gender and youth.

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