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Beyond Elections: Ghana's Democracy from the Perspective of the Citizenry

Ransford Osafo-Danso
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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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2015

Abstract

Beyond Elections: Ghana's Democracy from the Perspective of the Citizenry

by

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MPA, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, 2009

BA, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

May 2015

Abstract

Ghana's democracy has been hailed by scholars, practitioners, and the international community in recent years as a shining example in the West African subregion as a result of the country's record of organizing successive elections with minimal or no violence. However, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy has predominantly focused on the elections and disproportionately captures the views of the political elite; conspicuously missing is the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian. This presents an incomplete picture of Ghana's democracy, given the relevance of citizens' participation in democratic societies. To address this gap in knowledge, this qualitative case study explored the practice of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic from the perspective of the citizenry. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with purposefully sampled ordinary Ghanaian citizens ($n = 15$), observation, and documents review. The data were then subjected to thematic and content analysis to reveal themes, categories, and patterns. The results revealed that the participating Ghanaians had dichotomous views, opinions, and experiences of democracy. Their experiences and opinions of the electoral system were generally positive, while their experiences and opinions of governance in the intervening years were generally negative. The study's results should inspire a paradigm shift in the responsiveness of government to citizens and how the government engages with citizens on policy formulation and implementation. This study's results can encourage positive social change with respect to the manner in which democratic performance is evaluated in Ghana by scholars, practitioners, and the international community.

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Dedication

To the real hero of my education journey, Mrs. Christiana Danso (my mother), for your selflessness and support. I could never have arrived here without the foundation you laid; this dissertation is dedicated to you. To my extended family for unconditional love and support. To my friends for the many times I bothered you with my frustrations. To Mrs. Rosemary Oppong and family. To my siblings, Mrs. Eunice Obeng, Mr. Kwame Nyarko, Mr. Tenkorang Danso, Mr. Dealus Daniel Danso (Shia ts3), and Mr. Owusu Agyeman Danso (Poki). To my beautiful wife Awurama and daughters Nana Adwoa and Maame Nhyira.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

On the 6th of March 1957, Ghana became the first black African nation south of the Sahara to gain political independence from British colonization (Oquaye, 2004). Upon achieving this feat, Ghana became the symbol of liberation for many African nations that were still under European colonization (Kwakye, 2011). The importance of Ghana's political freedom to the African continent was eloquently summed up by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, on the eve of independence in Accra; he said the independence of Ghana holds no meaning unless it leads to the total liberation of Africa.

Since independence, many scholars have chronicled Ghana's political journey including the many military takeovers that had characterized the country's body politics (Bratton, 2010; Miller, 2011; Svanikier, 2007). The country has alternated between democratic rule and military dictatorships, beginning with the first coup d'état that ousted the country's first democratically elected government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 (Appiagyei-Atua, 2008; Ayensu & Darkwa, 2006; CDD-Ghana, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009).

The 1966 coup d'état, the first of many, was viewed as a watershed moment in Ghana's politics, given the fact that it was the first of its kind. In this incident the military overthrew a democratically elected government by force and subsequently imposed its will on the sovereign people of Ghana (Skinner, 2011). Others viewed it as a liberating exercise due to what they viewed as the oppressive policies of the Nkrumah regime.

Supporters of the coup cited the institution of a one party state in Ghana by Nkrumah and the subsequent passage of the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) of 1958, which allowed the regime to imprison political opponents without trial (Fobih, 2011).

Three years after experiencing military rule, Ghana ushered in a democratic government under the second republican constitution of 1969. However, this transition was short-lived when on the 13th of January 1972, the military again overthrew the government and suspended the constitution. This pattern of alternation between civilian and military rule continued unabated until the dawn of the fourth republic, which began on the 7th of January 1993, under the 1992 republican constitution (Skinner, 2011). Scholars, practitioners, and the international community have hailed the post-1992 era of Ghana's democracy as the shining example of Africa's democratization (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; USAID, 2011). This international recognition of Ghana's democratic success has focused the attention of the world on the various indicators and ingredients of democracy in Ghana. As a result, a great deal has been written about Ghana's democratic exploits (Debrah, 2011; Fobih, 2011). The literature on Ghana discusses the history of six consecutive elections under the fourth republic, which were deemed free and fair by both local and international observers; this history has become the focal point of those evaluating Ghana's democracy since the inception of the fourth republic (Debrah, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Otchere-Darko, 2010). Similarly, the literature revealed an overreliance on the opinions of the political elite in the evaluation of Ghana's democracy (Ayittey, 2010; Taylor & Williams, 2008).

However, there was limited literature that actually detailed the perspectives of the ordinary Ghanaian concerning how Ghana has performed democratically under the fourth republic. Given the importance that democratic societies place on citizens' participation in the democratic process, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy is incomplete if it is devoid of the views and perspectives of the citizenry, the very people for whose benefit democracy is being practiced.

Incorporating the views, opinions, and feelings of the ordinary Ghanaian in the discussion on Ghana's democracy offers an empirical dimension to the evaluation of Ghana's democracy, given the fact that the citizens have a firsthand experience of democracy in Ghana. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical and conceptual foundations that guide an understanding of relying on elections to evaluate democracy and the participative importance of the citizenry in the democratic process.

Background of the Problem

The desirability of democracy as a system of governance has been soaring in many parts of the world, including Africa (Kingah, 2006). The Act that constituted the African Union (AU)—the body formed to champion the well-being of the African continent—expressly advances the intention of the AU to instill democratic governance into the very fabric of contemporary African societies, especially in the area of politics and security (Kingah, 2006). It is therefore not surprising to find among the primary goals of the AU the need to promote democracy and good governance (Kingah, 2006). Consequently, a large majority of Africans indicated their preference for democracy over other forms governance (AfroBarometer, 2008). The need for governments to engage

civil society in the political process to ensure accountability, the expectation of the citizenry to live in a safe and tranquil environment, equitable distribution of national resources, justice, and political equality are among the expectations of most citizens in African nations (AfroBarometer, 2008). Even though these are positive indicators that democracy could thrive in Africa, there are significant challenges, especially in West Africa.

In Ghana, and for that matter West Africa more broadly, an interesting picture emerges in current literature on democracy. There is a general consensus among scholars, practitioners, and international policy organizations that Ghana has made significant gains in the area of democratic governance relative to its neighbors (The Economist, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012). However, this democratic accolade that Ghana has been labeled with falls short of a wholesale scrutiny of what actually constitutes democracy in that much of the literature focused on electioneering campaign and the smooth transition of power from one government to another in Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). Similarly, sampled opinions of Ghanaians overwhelmingly captured those of the political elite (Tayo, 2008). Consciously or unconsciously, this disproportionate emphasis on national elections has perpetuated a situation where democracy is only viewed through the lenses of violence-free elections to the detriment of the other aspects that equally measure the well-being of the citizenry under democratic governments. This consistent pattern of not incorporating the views of the ordinary Ghanaian when evaluating democracy in Ghana is problematic and creates a knowledge gap.

The concept of democratic governance in contemporary politics transcends international boundaries (The Economist, 2011). Irrespective of the kind of regime in place in a nation-state, it is not uncommon to witness political leaders lay claim to democracy as the bedrock of their government. This has perpetuated the popularity of democracy as a system of governance around the world (Gilley, 2009). Even though scholars and practitioners alike have struggled to come to a consensus on a single definition for democracy, its tenets have never been a subject of controversy (Gilley, 2009). As a system of governance, democracy includes but is not limited to the rule of law, political equality, justice, liberty, citizen participation in political discourse, freedom of speech and association, a free and vibrant media, the right to elect representatives through free and fair elections, and political accountability to the electorates by the elected (Donnelly, 2006).

However, in Ghana, as is the case with most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, a different story has unfolded. The evaluation of democracy in Ghana disproportionately captures the perspectives of those who wield political power at the expense of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. Again, the practice of democracy has been somewhat equated with a nation's ability to organize and conduct peaceful elections with little or no violence to the detriment of all the other aspects of democracy (Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012). Given the fact that Ghana is being touted as the standard bearer of democracy in a subregion plagued with political instability, it was important to explore the opinion of Ghanaians on their country's democracy and also unravel the phenomenon of overconcentration on elections with respect to evaluating democracy in Ghana. This shift in attention provides

a more complete picture of Ghana's democracy based on firsthand experiences of people who live under the current democratic dispensation, and by so doing, corroborates or refutes empirically what the pundits have written about Ghana's democracy. Therefore, the focus of this qualitative case study was to explore the practice of democracy in Ghana from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian.

Statement of Problem

There is a problem of incomplete evaluation of democracy in Ghana. It is a truism that the popularity of democratic governance is rising across the world (Gilley, 2009), and Ghana is experiencing its fair share. Ghana's democracy has been hailed by scholars, practitioners, and the international community in recent years as a shining example in the West African subregion as a result of the country's record of organizing successive elections with minimal or no violence (Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012).

However, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy has predominantly focused on the nation's elections and disproportionately captured the views of the elite, defined here as those elected or appointed to political positions (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; UNDP, 2006). In the rare instances where scholars have evaluated Ghana's democracy beyond elections, the emphasis has been on political institutions and the electoral commission; conspicuously missing are the perspectives of the ordinary Ghanaians, defined here as Ghanaians who do not hold any political positions, for whose benefit democracy is being practiced. This presents only a partial and an incomplete picture of Ghana's democracy, given the relevance of citizen's participation in democratic societies. It was therefore important that this critical gap in knowledge was explored to bring a comprehensive

understanding of the practice of democracy in Ghana. The views of the ordinary Ghanaian are important in the evaluation of Ghana's democracy because they provide new and unique information from those who have experienced democracy firsthand in Ghana. Access to this information has provided an additional dimension to evaluating democracy in Ghana based on firsthand experiences of ordinary Ghanaians, which were previously unknown. Similarly, the absence of the views of the ordinary Ghanaian on Ghana's democracy presented a situation where Ghana's democracy may not have been in consonance with the aspirations of the ordinary Ghanaian. It was critical to explore this gap in knowledge to provide enriched and comprehensive information that culminated to solving the problem of incomplete evaluation of Ghana's democracy. I employed a qualitative case study to explore the practice of democracy in Ghana from the perspective of the citizenry.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?

RQ2: How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?

RQ3: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?

RQ4: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth analysis of Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the citizenry. Historically, Ghana's democracy has

been hailed by scholars, practitioners, and the international community as the standard bearer of democratic governance in the West Africa subregion; however, these evaluations are mostly based on the opinions of the political elite, and it is predominantly premised on Ghana's ability to organize political elections with little or no violence. This study sought to uncover the firsthand experiences of Ghanaian citizens in Ghana under the current democratic republic, which began in 1992. Gathering the perception of Ghanaian citizens provided a concrete way of measuring how democratic governance has progressed or otherwise in Ghana. As indicated earlier, the views of the international community and the political elite on Ghana's democracy abound in the extant literature; however, the views of a cross-section of the citizenry who have experienced firsthand the practice of democratic governance provides a more diverse and comprehensive picture of democracy in Ghana. Similarly, making known the views of the ordinary Ghanaian has the potential of strengthening Ghana's democracy by making governance more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the ordinary Ghanaian. By extension, political, social, and economic accountability would be enhanced. After all, democracy by definition is government by the people, a government in which the utmost authority is entrusted in the people and implemented by them directly or indirectly by means of a system of representation generally comprising occasionally held free and fair elections (Diamond, 2008). Therefore the citizenry's perceptions provide a more accurate picture of Ghana's democracy based on firsthand knowledge and experiences.

In line with the purpose of the study and the research questions, the study employed a relativistic and constructivist paradigm. This research paradigm frowns upon

the idea of objective reality; rather, reality is constructed from the perception of participants in a study (Creswell, 2009; Krauss, 2005). The choice of this paradigm for this study is consistent with qualitative research studies that seek to study a phenomenon from the views of participants. Therefore, in studying democracy in Ghana from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen, reality in this study was constructed from the views of the participants of this study, and that is a cardinal characteristic of the constructivist paradigm.

Similarly, the use of perception as an accurate measure of a phenomenon is well documented in the literature (Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013; Andersson & Heywood, 2009; Daignault, Soroka, & Giasson, 2013; Mendez & Osborn, 2010; Ogunbamila, 2013). There are a number of studies that have successfully utilized perceptions to gather detailed information about a phenomenon. Many social, economic, and political indicators are measured simply by gathering the opinions and perceptions of people who have knowledge or have experienced such phenomena. For instance, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, the World Governance Index by Transparency International (TI), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF), and the World Bank (WB) all rely on perceptions gathered from citizens around the world to formulate indexes that measure the level of each phenomenon indicated (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2014; Transparency International, 2014; The World Bank, 2014). Gathering perceptions therefore is a reliable method of data collection widely accepted in qualitative case studies such as this study, according to Creswell (2013).

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Regardless of a researcher's methodology, conceptual and theoretical frameworks play an essential part in the research process (Creswell, 2009). Theoretical framework aids a researcher to properly expound the phenomenon he/she is understudying to his/her target audience. In qualitative research, concepts and theories function as a lens through which events/phenomena may be clarified and understood (Creswell, 2009).

Inside the spheres of democracy, two central theories are advocated, and both seek to expound the landscape of democracy and the objective it seeks to serve or serves. These two schools of thought are the minimalist theory of democracy and deliberative theory of democracy (Berg-Schlosser, 2008; Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010; Diamond, 2008; Gagnon, 2011; Moller & Skaaning, 2013; Saunders, 2010). These theories of democracy which served as the lens for this study are described below.

The minimalist theorists of democracy postulate that democracy in itself is not an end; therefore, voting offers the best avenue towards attaining those ends. The supporters of this democratic theory affirm that the most important indicator of democracy is the right that citizens have to choose their representatives through free and fair elections. They argue that the goal of democracy as championed by deliberative theorists is elusive and not attainable (Baird, 2012). In the opinion of Przeworski (as cited in Baird, 2012), minimalist democracy is a system in which parties lose elections. This democratic theory perceives voting as both the procedure and the substance of democracy as a system of governance. I employed minimalist theory of democracy as one of the theoretical lenses

to explain the practice of democracy in Ghana, especially the strong emphasis on elections as tool for the evaluation of democracy.

Conversely, deliberative theorists of democracy suggest that democracy is a governance concept that provides equal opportunity to all citizens to contribute their view on national issues with the intent of achieving good governance through deliberation amongst the citizenry (Chambers, 2009). Advocates of this theory contend that well-versed decisions are arrived at when citizens, armed with information, easily participate in national dialogue (Chambers, 2009). This concept/theory states that the minimalist interpretation of democracy is narrow and inadequate, and only concentrates on the means, not the ends of democracy (Chambers, 2009). Supporters of deliberative theory argue that democracy goes beyond a situation where a citizen exercises his/her franchise sporadically, and culminates in the formulation of policies molded by a plethora of views and opinions (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). The theory posits that citizens are knowledgeable and are able to contribute to deliberations that focus on how they are governed (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). It accentuates the importance of communication between the governed and the governing, and emphasizes the equality of deliberation in political dialogue (Chambers, 2009). I employed these theories as lenses through which I explored democracy in Ghana within the context of elections and citizens' participation. I provide detailed discussions of these theories in Chapter 2.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Democracy: For the purposes of this research, democracy refers to both the minimalist and deliberative conceptions of democracy, where democracy includes but is

not limited to free and fair elections, citizens' participation in political discourse, the rule of law, political, social, and economic equality, freedom of religion and association, freedom of the press, independent judiciary, separation of powers, and the existence of checks and balances among the various branches of government (Baird, 2012; Gilley, 2009).

Sub-Saharan Africa: Sub-Saharan Africa refers all countries found in West Africa (USAID, 2011).

International community: The phrase refers to the United Nations, its allied organizations, and the various nongovernmental organizations (The Economist, 2011; The World Bank, 2014).

Ordinary Ghanaian: For the purposes of this study, ordinary Ghanaian refers to all Ghanaian citizens who are domiciled in Ghana and do not hold any political position or have never held any political position (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009).

Political elite: In this study, political elite connotes those who have held political positions or continue to hold political positions through elections or by appointments (Appiagyei-Atua, 2008).

Fourth republic: The fourth republic represents the inception of the 1992 constitution till date (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Constitution: For the purposes of this study, the word constitution refers to that of Ghana, unless otherwise stated within the text of the study (Constitution Review Commission, 2009).

Assumptions and Limitations

This study was premised on six basic assumptions. Firstly, the study assumed that Ghana is a democratic nation based on internationally recognized standards of democratic societies. Secondly, the study assumed that Ghanaian citizens prefer democracy to all other forms of governance. The third assumption of this study was Ghanaian citizens yearn to contribute to the discussion on Ghana's democracy. Fourthly, the study assumed that Ghana will remain a democracy for the period of this study and beyond. Fifthly, this study assumed that Ghana's democracy has been evaluated incompletely due to the absence of the perspective of the citizenry. Finally, this study assumed that citizen's participation in Ghana's democracy is crucial to good governance and political, social, and economic accountability.

As enumerated by Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002), in case study research, the emphasis is on providing an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon in progress. Case studies provide researchers an avenue to use specific cases, defined within certain parameters (bounding), to provide detailed analysis and an understanding of an ongoing phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In spite of these useful attributes of case study inquiry, I anticipated some inherent limitations which were addressed.

In a qualitative case study, the researcher serves as the instrument of the study in that, he/she collects, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the field. The propensity for the researcher to taint the data with his/her personal biases is real (Creswell, 2009; Goulding, 2002). This was one of the limitations of this study, given that I had preconceived opinions about the phenomenon under study.

I employed purposive sampling as the study's sampling strategy. With this sampling strategy, I purposefully sampled participants based on their firsthand experience and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. I was also familiar with the population from which I drew the sample; this helped me to sample information-rich participants to gather the needed data to answer the research questions, as indicated by Singleton and Straits (2005) and Trochim (2006).

Finally, the ability to generalize the conclusion of this study is greatly limited. The use of a single case (Ghana) impeded the generalizability of the study's results. According to Creswell (2013), the choice of multiple case studies is normally geared towards the ability to generalize (p. 101). Using a single case limited this study's generalizability.

Significance of Study

My enthusiasm to embark on this study revolved around the need for total social, political, and economic accountability to the people of Ghana, as championed by the doctrines of democratic values. Even though this research was principally envisioned to accomplish an academic necessity, the research had a larger objective of sparking social change within the framework of Ghanaian democracy. By focusing on exploring the opinions of Ghanaians on the practice of democracy in Ghana, I hope to shed light on the desires of the ordinary Ghanaian on how he/she is governed and also offer a stage for Ghanaian citizens to contribute to the deliberation on Ghana's democratic performance. By bringing to the forefront a comprehensive view of ordinary Ghanaian citizens and espousing their opinions and feelings on democracy in Ghana to practitioners, scholars,

and the international community, I hope that a significant shift in paradigm with respect to evaluations of democracy in Ghana will occur. Apart from the fact that the study incorporated the views of the ordinary Ghanaian into the discussion on Ghana's performance in democratic governance, the study helps to reverse the pattern of focusing excessively on elections when evaluating democratic performance in Ghana specifically, and the West African subregion generally. Overemphasizing elections as the ultimate determiner of a country's democratic status perpetuates a situation where autocrats are legitimized, as long as they win elections, whether by fair or foul means (Baird, 2008). Again, winning elections become the ultimate goal of governments instead of bettering the lots of the citizenry; there is a real potential of encouraging governments that are irresponsible to the needs and aspirations of the citizenry to perpetuate themselves in power through political machinations and election frauds. For instance, ignoring the abysmal human rights record of a country and labeling it democratic just because elections are held periodically is not consistent with democratic governance. In that situation, governments are not held accountable on their performance with respect to other equally important ingredients of democracy such as the rule of law, respect for human rights, freedom of speech and association, religious freedom, liberty, and the right of the citizenry to participate in the political process without fear of persecution. The research gives an empirical picture of Ghana's democracy based on the firsthand experiences of the citizenry and provides a gauge to determine thriving areas that needs to be sustained and at the same time highlights weak areas that must be bolstered in Ghana's democracy. It is vital to know that the view of Ghanaians on their country's

democracy functions as an instrument to policy makers to enable governance that is responsive to the needs of the citizenry.

A democracy that is molded by vigorous civic engagement is a potent tool for driving social change (Kingah, 2006). Including the opinions of Ghanaians in the deliberation on how Ghana is performing democratically is a potent way of providing a platform and voice for ordinary citizens and kindle discourse between those governing and the governed. Remotely, citizens' empowerment that may occur in Ghana as a result of this study may have resonating effect in the West Africa subregion and change how scholars and practitioners evaluate democracy in the entire subregion. Furthermore, this study has the potential to influence the extent to which citizens' views, perspectives, and experiences are factored into policy formulation and implementation in Ghana, thereby ushering in greater political, social, and economic accountability to the citizenry.

Summary

After many unsuccessful attempts at democracy in Ghana in the past, democracy under the fourth republic has proven quite resolute and seems consolidated according to the opinions of scholars of democracy on the African continent. As Ghana continues to surprise the world with her democratic maturity, it has become increasingly critical that researchers and scholars broaden the scope of evaluating Ghana's democracy from the narrow focus on elections and the opinion of the political elite to incorporating the perspectives of the ordinary Ghanaian. Current literature on Ghana's democracy that espouses the opinion of Ghanaian citizens is scanty, if not nonexistent. This study explored the practice of democracy in Ghana from the perspective of the ordinary

Ghanaian under the fourth republic. Following this chapter will be the review of relevant literature in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Democracy as a system of governance has gained popularity around the world (Gilley, 2009). As a result of this popularity, countries that have experienced what has come to be known as the *third wave democratization* have been subjected to different reviews to ascertain whether democracy is thriving or failing. In Africa in general and Ghana specifically, scholars, practitioners, and the international community have written extensively about the practice of democracy in an attempt to shed light on how the continent is faring with respect to democratic governance. In Ghana, scholars of democracy, practitioners, and the international community have focused their attention on different aspects of Ghana's democracy. In the extant literature, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy is skewed towards the opinion of the political elites, the opinion of the international community, and occasionally focused on public institutions like the electoral commission and political parties. Similarly, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy by these scholars has focused on the country's ability to organize elections with minimal or no violence; conspicuously missing in these evaluations by scholars is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian. This anomaly perpetuates a situation where an incomplete evaluation of Ghana's democracy exists mainly due to the omission of the views of the citizenry on how their country is faring with respect to democratic governance.

The purpose of this literature review was to synthesize, analyze, and examine past work on democracy in Ghana. This review highlights the shortcomings of previous

literature in terms of democracy in Ghana and provide justification for the current study. This literature review took a critical look at how Ghana's democracy has been evaluated by scholars, practitioners, and the international community by making an all-round assessment—that is, politically, socially, economically, and culturally. Similarly, the review addressed the literature on Ghana's elections since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992.

Again, this chapter also provides both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided the study. In order to access the literature that is pertinent to democracy in Ghana and also build solid conceptual and theoretical frameworks that served as lenses for this study, I searched JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, AfroBarometer, ProQuest Dissertations Full Text, and Project MUSE in addition to other content in local libraries. I used a topic-specific method to search for information. Keywords included *Ghana*, *deliberative democracy*, *discursive democracy*, *citizens*, *governance*, *elections*, *minimalist democracy*, *voting*, *political discourse*, *participation*, and *rule of law*.

Conceptualizing and Defining Democracy

The term democracy contains several meanings depending on political or philosophical orientation (Gilley, 2009). The concept of democratic governance in contemporary politics transcends international boundaries (The Economist, 2011). Irrespective of the kind of regime in place in a nation-state, it is not uncommon to witness political leaders lay claim to democracy as the bedrock of their government; this has perpetuated the soaring of the popularity of democracy as a system of governance around

the world (Gilley, 2009). As a result, it is imperative to define democracy and conceptualize it, as it applies to the Ghanaian case, which is the subject of this study. It is a truism that scholars of democracy have not come to a complete consensus on a single definition for democracy as a system of governance (Diamond, 2008; Gilley, 2009). The argument over what constitutes a democracy has led to two schools of thought: the minimalist and the deliberative schools of thought (Diamond, 2008).

Minimalist Theory of Democracy

As already noted, the lack of consensus among scholars of democracy on a single definition of democracy has necessitated definitions from both the minimalist and deliberative schools of thought. In *The Spirit of Democracy*, Diamond (2008) provided definitions of democracy that capture the views of both minimalist and deliberative theorists. Regarding the minimalist sense, Diamond echoed the definition of Schumpeter (as cited in Diamond, 2008) who viewed democracy as a system “for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (p. 21). Similarly, Moller and Skaaning (2013) in an attempt to espouse the dichotomy that exist in the definition of democracy postulated the idea of *thin* and *thick* democracy, where thin refers to the minimalist conception of democracy where competitive elections among multiple political parties qualifies a nation as democratic (Moller & Skaaning, 2013). The analogy of thin and thick democracy draws on the fact that in the minimalist view, democracy exists when citizens can procure change in government through the ballot box in free and fair competitive elections (Moller & Skaaning, 2013).

In the same vein, Wright (2008) offered a definition that mimics that of Diamond (2008) and Moller and Skaaning (2013), defining democracy as *procedural* in that democracy focuses on the contest of elections where both the incumbent and the opposition have a chance of winning. This definition reinforces the idea of free and fair elections as the ultimate determinant of a country's democratic status (Diamond, 2008; Wright, 2008). In the minimalist conception of democracy, election is both the means and the ends of democratic governance. Scholars of this ideological persuasion observe that a nation-state qualifies as a democratic country so long as citizens have a legal right to exercise their franchise in free and fair elections (Baird, 2012; Crawford, 2009). These scholars assert that the ultimate purpose of democracy is to ensure that political leaders are made accountable to the electorate; therefore, elections present the most tangible avenue for citizens to hold their elected representatives accountable for their stewardship (Coppedge, Alvarez, & Maldonado, 2008). Minimalist theorists emphasize that as long as there is a genuine possibility for alternation of governments by the citizenry through free and fair elections, democracy is attained. Therefore, elections and the right to vote by the citizenry are the central premise of democratic governance for minimalist theorists (Przeworski, 2011). The minimalist theory of democracy conceives of democracy as a system of governance where both the incumbent and opposition have a fair chance of winning or losing an election, and citizens' right to vote is legally protected (Baird, 2012; Coppedge et al., 2008; Przeworski, 2011).

Many researchers have employed the minimalist theory of democracy as a framework for their studies. Rowell (2011), in an attempt, to provide a transnational

comparison of the development of democracy in Latin America, explored the practice of democracy in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile using minimalist theory as the guidepost of the study. Similarly, Norris (2011) utilized the same theory in an assessment of regime types in Zimbabwe and Venezuela. The study sought to evaluate regime types across countries and also measured how democratic regimes performed in practice using the Global Barometer Survey (GBS; Norris, 2011). Beaulieu and Hyde (2009) employed the minimalist conception of democracy as the framework for monitoring and providing an understanding of the relationship between opposition party boycotts and monitored elections in democracies. The study reported that elections that are monitored by international observers have a higher probability of being boycotted by opposition parties. This is due to the fact that autocrats intentionally invite observers to give credibility to manipulated elections, thereby guaranteeing the legitimacy of their regimes (Beaulieu & Hyde, 2009). Other studies that have utilized minimalist theory as a framework include but are not limited to Good and Taylor's (2008) exploration of democracy in Botswana, Birch's (2011) study of the dynamics of electoral malpractice, Urbinati's (2013) study of proceduralism in contemporary politics, and Pogrebinschi and Samuels's (2014) exploration of Brazil's public policy formulation within the context participatory governance. Finally, Robbins and Tessler (2012) used data gathered in Algeria to study how support for democracy changes overtime; Williams (2013) also explored citizenship from the perspective of teachers in Jamaica; and Magone (2014) examined Portugal's stalled democracy with minimalist theory of democracy as the theoretical framework.

Deliberative Theory of Democracy

Conversely, deliberative theorists assert that there is more to democracy than periodic change of governments through the ballot box (Berg-Schlosser, 2008). At its core, deliberative democracy theory centers on the free will of the masses to participate in national discourse that shapes policy decisions (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). The theory assumes that citizens are informed and can contribute to discussions that center on how they are governed (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). It taps into the power of communication between governors and the governed, and accentuates the fairness of deliberation in political discourse (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010).

Proponents argue that deliberative democracy provides tangible meaning to political equality, freedom, rule of law, justice, and participation of citizens in national discourse (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010). In its basic form, Gagnon (2010) posited that democracy simply connotes a situation where “sovereign citizenry and typically the formation of a government that operates by permission from the citizenry” (p. 4). Gagnon further explained, “basic democracy from which perhaps every style of democracy is derived can be explained as a citizenry exercising its sovereignty through the institutionalization of the citizenry’s conceptualization of equality, law, communication, and the selection of officials” (p. 5). To reiterate the deliberative definitions offered above, Saunders (2010) explained that democracy exists when decisions arrived at by a group caters to the expressed desires of the members of the group (Saunders, 2010). In a more comprehensive manner, Saunders posited, “democracy, so defined, is a matter of

citizen sovereignty or the responsiveness of decisions to the expressed wishes of the people” (p. 150).

Deliberative theory has been utilized extensively as the theoretical framework for research studies. List, Luskin, Fiskin, and McLean (2013) employed deliberative theory as a framework in their quest to explain the impact that deliberation has on majority cycles in the decision-making process in a democracy (List et al., 2013). Similarly, in a cross-national comparative study, Doerr (2007) employed deliberative theory as a lens to explore democracy in the European Social Forums (ESFs) for a period of 2 years (Doerr, 2007). Finally, in a study to explore how deliberative polls are utilized in the Zeguo Township of Wenling City in China, Fiskin et al. (2010) employed deliberative theory to ground the study.

From the foregoing discussion, democracy has been defined and conceptualized both as a means and an end; in the minimalist view, it is the reserved powers of the citizenry to choose their representatives through the ballot box in competitive, free, and fair elections (Baird, 2012; Moller & Skaaning, 2013; Wright, 2008); in contrast, deliberative theorists are of the opinion that democracy goes beyond the occasional exercise of a citizen’s right to vote but rather encompasses critical elements such as the rule of law, political equality, sovereign citizenship, the right to peaceably assemble, press freedom, freedom of association, gender equality, equality before the law, religious freedom, separation of powers, freedom of speech, political, social, and economic accountability to the citizenry, and the right of the citizenry to engage in discourse of national importance without fear of persecution (Berg-Schlusser, 2008; Bonafede & Lo

Piccolo, 2010; Gagnon, 2010; Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). For the purposes of this study, democracy encompasses all the distinctions that have been given by both schools of thought.

Appraising Impacts of Democratic Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa

The march to freedom and the right to self-rule for many African countries has been an inconsistent experience (Svanikier, 2007). This is due to the fact that the colonial struggles for freedom that culminated into the declaration of independence for many of these states did not produce the desired postcolonial governments (Frank & Ukpere, 2012). Many of the governments that took over the reign of governance were short lived due to the many military takeovers that swept across the subregion. By the year 1966, Ghana, the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain political independence in 1957 had experienced its first military coup d'état (Boafo-Arthur, 2007). Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria were in a similar political state. These incessant coups d'état were precipitated by the inability of the postcolonial governments in these nations to deliver the political, social, and economic goods expected by the citizenry (Ogude, 2012; Simcic, 2013). For instance, in Ghana, scholars have observed that the desire by Dr. Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, to institute a lifetime presidency led him to declare Ghana as a one-party state (Boafo-Arthur, 2007). Additionally, the institution of the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) in 1958, which gave the government the power to detain political opponents without trial, and the worsening economic and political conditions have been cited as the reasons for the military overthrow of the Nkrumah regime (Boafo-Arthur,

2007). Similar reasons have been given for the coups d'états in Nigeria, Mali, and Ivory Coast (Frank & Ukpere, 2012).

However, by the turn of the new century, West Africa's political landscape had changed (Bates et al., 2012). The rejection of autocratic rule and the push for democracy as the preferred system of governance had gained traction in the subregion; constitutional democracy and electoral politics had become the order of the day. Some countries had held multiple political elections by the turn of the century (Bates et al., 2012). In spite of these positive developments, many sub-Saharan Africa countries were still under dictatorial regimes clothed in the fabric of electoral democracy (Crawford & Lynch, 2012). The push to rid the subregion of these "autocratic democrats" plunged many West African states into interstate and intrastate conflicts which have undermined the democratization process in West Africa (Crawford & Lynch, 2012). Therefore, the democratization process in West Africa in particular, and the African continent in general, has been inundated with challenges that has made the process uneven and complex (Ndi, 2011).

Scholars of democracy have debated the initiation and trajectory of the democratization process in Africa since the inception of the third wave of democracy which swept across the continent in the late 1970s and the early 1980s (Edozie, 2009). The debate has mainly pivoted around four crucial points: (a) economic and political dimensions, (b) external and internal factors, (c) contingent and structural factors, and (d) contemporary and historical dynamics. Scholars who argue that democratic transition in sub-Saharan Africa is as a result of internal factors emphasize that prodemocracy

movements and political protest were fuelled by massive underdevelopment and economic hardships coupled with the disintegration of the postcolonial state's legitimacy and capacity (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). On the other hand, those who postulated the external forces argument posited that IMF conditionalities as part of the structural adjustment programs and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe made democracy an attractive option for these states. Political transition to democracy as a system of governance by sub-Saharan countries was one of the conditions emphasized by multilateral financial institutions in exchange for financial bailout (Austin, 2010; Olutayo, Olutayo, & Omobowale, 2008). It is important to note that some scholars have raised doubts about the international community's commitment towards Africa's democratization process; they have asserted that some of the conditionalities are tailored to serve the interest of donors as opposed to that of the recipient nations (Behrouzi, 2008; Weintstein, 2008).

Similarly, other scholars have viewed Africa's transition to democracy through two distinct lenses within the context of history. One school of thought holds the view that the demand for democracy in Africa was inspired by the global demand that swept the entire world (Gilley, 2009; Gylfason, 2013; Mattes & Bratton, 2007). In the opinion of these experts, even though each region of the world had peculiar factors that precipitated the push for democratic rule, the primary spark was the victory that democratic hegemonic powers had secured around the world (Gilley, 2009; Mattes & Bratton, 2007). On the contrary, other scholars posited that Africa's push for democracy was inspired by the region's historical struggle for freedom. Therefore, the agitation for

democratic governance was a continuation of the historical struggle to free Africans from all forms of oppression (Coleman, 2014; Elvy, 2013).

Another point of divergence among scholars is the extent to which Africa's democratization is a product of individual actions as opposed to structural factors. Supporters of the individual actions approach emphasize the roles that certain individual leaders played in Africa's democratic transitions. This school of thought focuses on human agency in tandem with contingent factors as the ultimate instigator of democratic rule in Africa (Ahlman, 2011; Azikiwe, 2009; Biney, 2008). Those who espouse the structuralist view, on the other hand, posit that structural conditions such as economic underdevelopment, rising levels of political awareness among citizens, and increasing rejection of colonial legacies facilitated Africa's democratization process (Pierce, 2009; Wittner, 2007).

Furthermore, there has been a debate on the question of whether the democratization process in Africa is attributable to political or economic factors. The school of thought that believes that the democratization process in Africa was ignited by political conditions points to the failure of postcolonial governments' inability to forge nationhood and prevent political disintegration of their respective countries on ethnic lines (Alemazung, 2010; Havlik, n.d.; Mann, 2012). The political crisis that ensued as a result of these failures did not only create disenchantment among the citizenry; it energized civil society to demand greater accountability, which culminated into the push for democracy in the various African countries (Boafo-Arthur, 2008; Porter, 2011).

Conversely, those who posited that the democratization process in Africa was precipitated by worsening economic factors argued that the dwindling economic fortunes of the ordinary African, coupled with the failed development agendas of postcolonial governments, was the primary stimulus for the push for democracy (Austin, 2010; Simensen, 2008). Analysts have asserted that economic programs spearheaded by the World Bank and the IMF exacerbated the already precarious economic situation of the African people (Harbeson, 2012; Jauch, 2012). Therefore, social groups and democratic movements seized the opportunity to press home their demand for political and economic accountability to the masses in the form of democratic governance.

Irrespective of the lenses through which one views the democratization process in Africa, the general consensus among scholars is that democracy as a system of governance has not been consolidated in Africa as expected, especially in West Africa where the political system has been marred by electoral violence and political machinations (Alabi, 2009; Alemika, 2007; Asamoah, Yeboah-Assiamah, & Osei-Kojo, 2013). With the exception of Ghana where elections have been held successfully six consecutive times without violence, most West African nations that experienced democratic transitions have been plunged into some form of political violence (African Union Election Observer Mission, 2012; Alabi, 2009; Alemika, 2007). Many scholars have documented cases of political violence precipitated by elections and fuelled by ethnic divisions (Alabi, 2009; Alemika, 2007; Anyangwe, 2013; Basedau & Stroh, 2012; Bates et al., 2012; Bofo-Arthur, 2007). For instance, Ivory Coast, which was one of West Africa's most stable democracies, plunged into political violence in 2010 when the

incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo refused to cede power to the opposition party that had won the elections in Ivory Coast (McCauley, 2013). It is important to note that election observers, both foreign and local, had declared the elections free and fair (African Union Election Observer Mission, 2012; Borzyskowski, 2013; The Carter Center, 2010).

Similar cases of electoral fraud and machinations have been reported in Nigeria, Mali, and Gambia (Nathan, 2013). In an era where most of these West African countries are deemed democratic, studies have reported biased electoral institutions and corruption at the highest level of government coupled with incidents of compromised judiciary (Alabi, 2009; Alemika, 2007; Nathan, 2013). In many of these countries, the freedom of the media to disseminate, educate, and inform the citizenry has been restricted by the coercive power of the state (The Economist, 2011; USAID, 2011). The competitiveness and fairness of the electoral systems have been called into question in many of these West African states, and many of the leaders who ascended to power by riding the tidal wave of democracy passed laws to perpetuate themselves in power (Mariam, 2010).

At best, the political environment in the subregion has stagnated, and the various governments have not created the enabling environment for citizens to participate freely in the political process (Alabi, 2009; Alemika, 2007). Political participation and citizens' engagement in the public sphere are critical ingredients of democratic societies (Ampofo, 2008; Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013); however, governments in the West Africa subregion either lack the political will to ensure free participation of the citizenry or restrict such engagements for political expediency (Alemika, 2007). Many West African

states have not fared well on the various democratic and governance indexes that are used to measure democratic performance (Transparency International, 2014; The World Bank, 2014). As already known, democracy as a system of governance encompasses elements such as liberty, rule of law, economic and social equality, free participation in the political process, free and fair elections, freedom religion and association, and freedom of the press (Alemika, 2007; Landa & Meiorowitz, 2009). Judging by these standards, it is important to state that with few exceptions, the West African subregion has not performed to the expectation of experts and citizens alike (Mwale, 2013).

Overview of Ghana's Socio-Political Landscape and Civil Society

Since the attainment of independence in 1957, Ghana's socio-political landscape has been shaped by a multiplicity of social and political factors. However, the frequent interference in governance between 1966 and 1992 by the military through coup d'état suppressed some of these social and political factors (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). Even though the prevailing socio-political conditions in Ghana at the time of independence provide some historical context to this study, the emphasis was on the socio-political landscape of Ghana under the new democratic dispensation since 1992. The transition from military rule to multiparty democracy in 1992, and the subsequent promulgation and ratification of the 1992 constitution, guaranteed the citizenry certain social, political, and economic rights and as a result created new levels of awareness amongst the citizenry (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). On the social front, religion, ethnicity, gender parity, and social and economic equality, amongst other things, dominate the socio-political landscape in Ghana. Political factors such as political affiliation, political pressure groups, and

demonstration as a tool for both social and political accountability also abound in modern Ghana. These factors and how they have shaped the Ghanaian public sphere have been explained in detail below within the broader context of civic engagement.

Civic Engagement in Ghana

Democracy as a system of governance is identified by elements such as liberty, rule of law, constitutionalism, majority rule and minority rights, freedom of the media, and participation in the political process by the citizenry (Gilley, 2009; Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). In democratic societies, political participation by the masses can be measured by the extent to which the various sections of society engage with government to shape policy with the ultimate intent of seeking the public good (Berg-Schlosser, 2008). Therefore, civic engagement plays a critical role in democratic societies to help define and shape the relationship between the governed and the governors (Alidu & Ame, 2013). In Ghana, various factors promote or hinder the extent to which civic engagement occurs, and some of these factors have been detailed below

Religion and Civic Engagement in Ghana

Religion has always been part of Ghana's social history, dating back to the arrival of European missionaries and North African Muslims in the 15th century (Warren-Rothlin, 2009). Prior to the influx of Christian missionaries and Muslim merchants, traditional religion was the predominant religion of the Ghanaian people. In the colonial era, religious groups played an integral part in the struggle for independence by joining forces with other civil society organizations to embark on civil disobedience for the country's demands for self-governance (CDD-Ghana, 2008). Religion serves as one of

the unifying social platforms in Ghana since it is believed to transcend political affiliations and ethnic divides. Religion therefore provides a neutral platform for citizens to engage in discussions on matters of national importance without the usual political, ethnic, gender, and social class bias that come with such discourse. Scholars have interrogated the extent to which religion has served and continues to serve as an avenue and agent for civic engagement and have concluded that religion promotes civic engagement in democratic societies (Addai, Opoku-Agyeman, & Ghartey, 2012; Takyi, Opoku-Agyeman, & Mensah, 2010).

In advanced democracies, the role of religion in civic engagement has been heavily documented. Religious organizations have embarked on community outreach, provided funding, and volunteered in many national courses (Herbert, 2011). For instance, in the United States, religious organizations embark on political and social outreach programs to sensitize the community on civil rights, economic inequality, and political hot topics like voting rights. Religious leaders have used the power of the pulpit to create awareness on issues of national importance. A classic example is the role of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the U.S. civil rights movements in the 1960s. In contemporary U.S. politics, issues such as gun laws, gun violence, and abortion rights have highlighted the role that religious organizations play in shaping public discourse and the impact they have on civic engagement (Merritt, 2012; Watts, 2007). Similar examples of the role of religious leaders in civic engagement can be found in the Dalai Lama's role in the fight for autonomy by the Tibetan people and Dr. Desmond Tutu's role in bringing an end to racial discrimination in apartheid South Africa (Allais, 2011; Kurtz, 2010; Otero, 2010).

The extant literature clarifies that religion in Ghana has seen an upward surge, and its effects on civic engagement have been beneficial and detrimental at the same time (Addai et al., 2012; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Takyi et al., 2010). In a study that examined the role of religion in Ghana's national politics, Tusalem (2009) found that religion played a dual role of legitimization and protestation. According to the study, the church in particular utilizes protest as a tool for social change (Tusalem, 2009). Under both military and civilian governments, the church has championed the course of the poor and the silent majority whose plight has increasingly worsened under both regime types. Serving as the voice for the less privileged in Ghanaian society, the church in Ghana has spoken against the brutalities of military regimes in the past and also played an active role in matters concerning social justice under democratic dispensations (Addai et al., 2012; Takyi et al., 2010).

Additionally, educating the citizenry on civil liberties, economic equality, and human rights has been one of the prominent social responsibilities of the church in Ghana. Apart from the active role that religious organizations play in social and economic issues, religious premises serve as an important public sphere for the citizenry to participate in political, social, economic, and cultural discussions, and engage each other positively without fear of economic sabotage or political retribution (Herbert, 2011). In spite of the vibrant role of the church, Addai et al. (2012) revealed that direct political participation by religious organizations in Ghana is yet to occur due to the unwillingness of religious leaders to address purely political issues. Scholars, however, have documented many instances where the church has sought to protect values that are

central to the Christian faith such as outlawing abortions and denying gay and lesbian rights in Ghana (Addai et al., 2012; Takyi et al., 2010).

Again, the data on religion in Ghana revealed that citizens who identify themselves as practicing Christians have a higher propensity to engage in civic duties and activities compared those who identify with other faiths or those who are nonreligious (Takyi et al., 2010). Various reasons have been found to account for this phenomenon; and chief among them is the general doctrine of the Christian faith. Addai and Opoku-Agyeman (2012) asserted that Christians in particular and religious people in general in Ghana are more willing to actively engage in community activities. They further posited that religious organizations provide the necessary social support to the destitute in the form of food pantries and shelters. However, as was found in previous studies, Addai and Opoku-Agyeman (2012) stated that religious Ghanaians shy away from participating actively in politics, especially those who identified with the Christian faith.

Furthermore, researchers have established a strong link between religion and modernization in Ghana (Addai et al., 2012; Swidler, 2013). In Ghana, there is a general perception that modernization has been greatly enhanced by the presence of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) if not solely by them. The contribution of religion to Ghana's modernization efforts is not an area much explored by researchers. However, Swidler (2013) studied the relative impacts of NGOs, axial religion (Christianity and Islam), and traditional religion (Chieftancy and Kinship) on modernization in Ghana and found that the data did not support the long held perception of NGOs' dominance in modernization. The author wrote:

while NGOs have been the strongest advocates of a universalized modernity, focused on the autonomous individual seen as the bearer of ‘rights’ and a maker of free, rational choices, the Axial religion actually provide the strongest cultural and community support for such autonomous, rational individuality. (p. 682)

Swidler (2013) acknowledged the important role that NGOs and international organizations like the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have played in Ghana’s modernization efforts as espoused in many studies (Frank & Meyer, 2007; Frye, 2012; Meyer, 2010; Watkins, Swidler, & Hannan, 2012), however, the author stipulated that in the Ghanaian context, religion’s emphasis on community as opposed to individuality has augured well for the collective good of the society. Religious organizations, especially the church, have championed the abolishment of traditional rituals that were inimical to the girl child and women in general. Ethnic practices like female genital mutilation and child slavery have been denounced by the church and other religious denominations (Takyi et al., 2010). The various religious bodies have advocated for strong legal protections for vulnerable members of society such as women, children, and persons with disability (Heaton & Darkwah, 2011). That is not to say that religion has not contributed its fair share to many of the societal challenges facing the nation.

First and foremost, it is important to note that some scholars have questioned the extent of impact that religion has had on civic engagement and the role it has played in the public sphere (Kohrsen, 2012). In the same vein, other scholars have focused their attention on how religious harmony and discord have impacted civic engagement in

Ghana (Tusalem, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that mistrust among the various religions in Ghana due to differences in faith and values have not augured well for civic engagement. The mistrust does not only exist between religious; it can be found within religions. For instance, due to doctrinal differences, it is not uncommon to find that some church denominations discourage their members from interacting with others from different denominations.

Kallinen (2014) studied the relationship between Christianity and fetishism in Ghana, and how it has impacted the development of secular politics. The author found that there are unresolved tensions between Christianity and chieftaincy; Christians believe that their faith prevents them from engaging with practitioners of traditional religion. The author stated that “Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has been characterized as a ‘cult of discontinuity’, because the converts are expected to make a complete break with their pre-conversion lives, after which they are to distance themselves from the social world and its demonic influences” (Kallinen, 2014, p. 165). In a study that interrogated the “religiousness” of the public sphere, Kohrsen (2012) concluded that “the public presence and impact of religion is overstated” (p. 273). The author asserted that religious actors have stretched the definition of religion in order to inflate the impact that religion is having in the public sphere, and such phenomena are common in democratic societies. Religion is a strong social factor with mixed impact on the socio-political landscape of Ghana, and it needs further probing by researchers, especially the extent to which the fourth republic has benefitted or otherwise from religion in Ghana.

Ethnicity and Civic Engagement in Ghana

Ghana's ethnic composition makes it improbable to interrogate civic engagement without looking at the role that ethnic divides play in such engagements. In West Africa in general, ethnic and tribal affiliations have been found to dictate the actions and inactions of the citizenry, especially on social matters (Olaiya, 2014). In the political arena, it is not uncommon to observe voting trends that suggest that certain ethnic groups are more inclined to vote for a particular political party. Researchers have cited cases in South Africa where ethnic and tribal affiliations have for years dictated the political affiliations of the electorate; the majority of Zulus have historically supported the African National Congress (ANC) while the Afrikaners have backed Democratic Alliance (DA; Anyangwe, 2013).

In Ghana, ethnicity provides an important avenue for social identity. According to the 2010 Census of Ghana, there are a minimum of eight ethnic groups in Ghana: the Akans who form the majority of the population (47.50%), the Mole-Dagbon (16.6%), the Ewe (13.9%), the Ga-Dangme (7.4%), the Gurma (5.7%), the Guans (3.7%), the Grusi (2.5%), the Mande-Busanga (1.1%), and other (1.6%; Ghana Population Census, 2010). In contemporary Ghana, ethnic affiliations and interethnic engagements have contributed significantly to drawing up the contours of Ghana's social political landscape. Interethnic rivalry and cooperation has impacted civic engagement and its influence in the public sphere. On the economic front, studies have revealed that ethnic groupings have had positive impacts on economic development in Ghana (Jensen & Skaaning, 2014). The desire to see one's ethnic group develop economically has been a motivating factor in

spurring on communities of the same ethnic background to initiate economic activities in their localities (Jensen & Skaaning, 2014).

In Ghana, the government's ability to provide economic support to every community is greatly inhibited by the lack of resources; as a result, ethnic self-interest has driven ethnic based community economic development. These economic initiatives have also fostered deliberations on economic and social policies and their impacts on the various ethnic groups (Addai & Pokimica, 2012). In the same vein, the diversity in ethnicity in Ghana has been cited as a fertile ground for the generation of ideas from multiple perspectives shaped by different cultural experiences that strengthens democratic governance. The plurality of ideas that comes with diverse opinions enriches political and social discourse and culminates to enhancing civic engagement in Ghana (Chambers, 2009).

On the other hand, researchers have also reported of many instances where ethnicity has been an inhibitor of democratic governance and has been used as the basis for discrimination for or against a particular group. It is important to note that the 1992 constitution frowns on discrimination based on race and ethnicity. Article 35 of the constitution articulates the fact that Ghana shall be a democratic state; as a result, sovereignty resides in the people who shall be the source of governmental powers. In furtherance of this objective, Article 35(5) stipulates that "the state shall actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana and prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, creed or other belief" (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). There are many other provisions in the constitution of

Ghana that enforces the position of Article of 35 which are aimed at building national cohesion and foster national tranquility. However, in spite of these well-intentioned provisions of the constitution, research has found that ethnicity have also adversely affected civic engagement in Ghana; especially on the political front. The influences of ethnicity in Ghanaian politics have been eloquently expressed by Chazan (as cited in Posner, 2007):

Sometimes ethnic solidarity was expressed in cultural and linguistic terms. At other times ethnicity was presented in regional or geographic terms. At still other points, ethnicity was manifested in local-communal-traditional, political or kin-terms...All possible ethnic-political presentations, either separately or in conjunction, could be brought to bear on the political situation depending on particular conditions. (p. 1303)

Ghana has experienced major conflicts in the northern parts of the country which has been precipitated by ethnic tensions in the region (Jonsson, 2009). These conflicts have led to stagnation in the development efforts of the region which is the most impoverished of all the regions in Ghana. These inter-ethnic conflicts have posed significant challenges to the political stability of Ghana in recent years (Jonsson, 2009). As a result of these conflicts, researchers have revealed that the public sphere in the region has been poisoned and that has significantly impacted civil order and civic engagement (Jonsson, 2009). The tribal war between the Kokombas and the Dagombas in the northern region led to the loss of thousands of lives and property estimated to be millions of Cedis (Jonsson, 2009). Till

date, the ramifications of that unfortunate war linger on, and have created a sense of mistrust between the various ethnic groups in the region (Asante, 2011; Tonah, 2012).

Similarly, ethnically motivated tensions have risen in the Volta region which has stifled economic growth and development (Takyi et al., 2013). This is not surprising; given that researchers have found that positive ethnic engagement have a positive relationship with economic growth. In other words, evidence abound that shows that when the diversity in ethnicity is well courted, it can lead to economic empowerment, civic engagement, and the consolidation of democratic governance based on the diversity of opinions, experiences, and culture (Birbir & Waguespack, 2011). Multi-ethnic violence has led to displacement of many northerners especially women and children. McGadney-Douglas and Ahadzie (2008) studied peace building and conflict resolution in Ghana and cited ethnic tensions and mistrust as the underlying cause of what came to be known as the “Guinea Fowl War” (McGadney-Douglas & Ahadzie, 2008).

Again, ethnicity has, to a large extent, influenced democratic governance through voting. A critical analysis of voting patterns in Ghana since the inception of the new democratic dispensation in 1992 has revealed that the electorates in Ghana have voted on ethnic lines for particular political parties (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). Political rivalry with ethnic undertones has become a part of Ghana’s democratic process (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). For instance, it is an open secret that the two dominant political traditions in Ghana currently are rooted in ethnic affiliations (Adjei, 2012). The NPP which is the largest opposition party in Ghana is perceived to be aligned to the Akan ethnic group while the ruling NDC’s support base is found among the Ewe ethnic group (Adjei, 2012).

What is interesting is that the literature and the data on Ghana's elections gives credence to these perceptions; the NPP has received over 70% of its votes from the Akan ethnic group while the NDC gained similar numbers from the Ewes of the Volta region (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). However, other studies have rejected the wholesale notion of ethnic voting in Africa. Basedau and Stroh (2012) in a study to explore the influence of ethnicity in political parties in Africa concluded that there is little empirical evidence to buttress the notion of ethnic voting in African politics. The problem with this study is that the researchers drew their conclusions after studying four Francophone African countries which makes generalizing the results to Anglophone Africa quite difficult if not impossible. There are significant political, cultural, social, and economic disparities between Francophone and Anglophone Africa. The overwhelming evidence of the influence of ethnicity on Ghana's socio-political landscape cannot be ignored based on study that bears little resemblance of the conditions in Ghana. Ethnicity is an important social factor that has influenced and will continue to influence the social, political, and economic decisions of ordinary Ghanaians as evidenced by the studies cited.

Gender and Civic Engagement in Ghana

Traditionally, African societies have been associated with domination by the male gender (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010). This male domination phenomenon has existed since pre-colonial Africa and is rooted in cultural and tribal beliefs. Therefore, gender parity in pre-colonial Africa was never viewed as a social, political, and economic issue. However, in the wake of the third wave of democratization that swept through the African continent in

the 1980s, gender parity became a topical issue championed by the feminist movement during the transition to democracy in the various African countries. As a result, efforts have been made by various scholars to explore the issue of gender gaps in democratic Africa within the context of civic engagement (Ampofo, 2008; Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010; Sossou, 2011). This general situation in Africa reflects the situation in Ghana where women's issue has been at the forefront of the gender debate (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; Boakye, 2009; Sinha & Nayak, 2008). The recognition that the status quo of gender disparity on social, political, cultural, and economic issues prior to the new democratic dispensation had adversely impacted Ghana's socio-political landscape influenced the drafting of the current Ghanaian constitution. Therefore, constitution makes provisions against gender based discrimination. Article 12(2) of the constitution states that every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of birth, political opinion, color, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In addition, Article 17 of the constitution postulate the idea of equality before the law, and categorically state that no person shall be discriminated against on the grounds of gender (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). These provisions notwithstanding, many studies have documented cases of institutionalized discrimination against women; especially in the political and economic sectors of the Ghanaian society. Researchers have found disparities in access to education between men and women (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). Atuahene and Owusu-Ansah (2013) explored the issue of accessibility to higher

education between men and women in Ghana and found that in spite of the tremendous improvements in accessibility to education in general, higher education is not accessible to women, especially those from a low socio-economic background. This unequal access to higher education between males and females has created a situation where women are underrepresented in high earning careers in Ghana (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). Similarly, Sossou (2011) studied the political participation of women in Ghana and concluded that even though the constitution makes provision for equal participation of women in the governance, women are confronted with gender-based power inequality (2011). In the higher echelons of power within the Ghanaian government, women are woefully underrepresented. For instance, in the current parliament of Ghana, women hold only 29 of the 275 seats which signify that 79% of parliamentary seats are held by men (Sossou, 2011). This gender disparity in parliament becomes woefully inadequate when viewed through the prism of the latest population census that indicated that women make up 51% of the population of Ghana (Ghana Population Census, 2010). Sossou (2011) asserts that the gender disparity in parliament is a reflection of what happens in the wider Ghanaian society.

Furthermore, the literature revealed that the progression of women in public service in Ghana is stifled due to gender bias. Evidence exist to show that women's ability to bargain for better conditions of service is hampered by the disproportionate representation of women on bargaining committees in organizations. This is against the background that women form a larger proportion of the labor force in Ghana. The exclusion of women from the realm of organizational power has limited women's ability

to engage at the higher echelons of power; as a result, issues of gender inequality are largely discussed and decided by men (Ledwith, 2012). Researchers contend that even though women have made progress in career advancement, the number of women occupying decision-making positions in Ghana's civil service is nothing to write home about (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2014). The study reported that:

In the top tier of the civil service only six posts were occupied by women at the end of 2011. In early 2013 that number dropped to five, when one of the women retired. Women have always found it extremely difficult to reach this level. (p. 2)

Owusu-Afriyie and Nketiah-Amponsah (2014) studied the concept of "feminization of poverty" which postulates that women are prone to experiencing higher rates of poverty as opposed to their male counterparts in Ghana. An empirical test of this concept by the authors revealed that poverty rates among women headed households are disproportionately higher when compared to male headed households (Owusu-Afriyie & Nketiah-Amponsah, 2014). The study found that the gender gap in the poverty levels between men and women as heads of households are directly related to disparities in access to higher education in Ghana. In the opinion of the authors, a vicious cycle is created; in that, all other things being equal, women do not gain access to high earning jobs due to the fact that those jobs require higher education and women have higher poverty rates because they form the majority in low paying jobs which is a result of low education levels (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; Owusu-Afriyie & Nketiah-Amponsah, 2014). Ironically, researchers have found that women bear the greater part of

upbringing cost of children; this situation is more pervasive amongst single mothers in Ghana (Kpoor, 2013).

In the same vein, researchers have reported that women are more prone to experience violence in all forms (Oduro, Swartz, & Arnot, 2012). The data on gender-based violence revealed that women who are active in the political arena are likely to experience violence compared to those who are inactive. Male political opponents utilize violence as a tool of control to silence women who participate in political discourse and those who aspire to occupy political offices (Oduro et al., 2012). Violence as a political tool has adversely impacted the participation levels of women in the political arena. The culture of silence that is perpetuated through violence against women has negatively impacted women's engagement in the public sphere (Oduro et al., 2012). Similarly, Boakye (2009) reported that the incidence of sexual violence against women in Ghana have doubled since 2005; however, many of the participants who were victims failed to report to law enforcement due to the perception of bias against rape victims by the justice system (Boakye, 2009). Researchers have documented the psychological and financial toll of rape on victims coupled with the stigmatization of those who report their ordeal to law enforcement officers (Boakye, 2009). It is important to note that researchers have found that victims of sexual violence are less likely to engage actively in the public sphere compared to those who have not (Boakye, 2009; Oduro et al., 2012).

In spite of the aforementioned documented evidence of gender issues in Ghana, there are glimpses of hope as found by other researchers (Abdul-Korah, 2011; Ampofo, 2008; Norwood, 2011). Even though a lot of the studies admitted the existence of major

challenges in terms of reducing and possibly eliminating gender bias, these researchers found improvements in the incidence of gender imbalance in my facets of the Ghanaian society. The commitment made under the fourth republican constitution to safeguard the rights of women and to prevent gender-based discrimination is unprecedented in Ghana. Various provisions have been made in the constitution that addresses head on the issue of gender inequality; however, enforcement remains a challenge (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Abdul-Korah (2011) conducted a phenomenological study on gender roles in northern Ghana and found that gender relations in the Dagaaba community has ceased to be static as previously believed. Women are actively participating in efforts to shape their communities. The economic statuses of women in the Dagaaba community have changed and women are emerging as bread-winners in their households; a situation that was virtually unimaginable a few decades ago due to cultural and religious beliefs. The author maintains that much as these improvements need celebrating, there remains a lot to be done in the efforts towards gender equality in Ghana (Abdul-Korah, 2011). Similarly, Norwood (2011) found that Ghanaian women who are empowered economically practiced healthy family planning. The author found that women are actively participating in the informal banking sector, especially in rural Ghana and this is a testament to the changing economic statuses of women in Ghana (Norwood, 2011). This is significant, given that “poverty in the third world is often believed to be the problem of “unchecked” and “unrestrained” reproductive behavior (Norwood, 2011, p. 169). Again, lack of access to capital have been cited as the primary reason for the migration of young female porters from the northern regions of Ghana to the south (Tufeyru, 2014); therefore,

an increase in the participation of women in informal banking, especially micro financing leads to a reduction in rural-urban migration (Tufeiru, 2014).

Furthermore, as part of the efforts to tackle gender bias and gender inequality in Ghana, a number of women centered organizations have been set up to deal exclusively with women issues. Organizations such as the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) have collaborated to champion the social, political, economic, and legal rights of women in Ghana. Again, Ghana remains a signatory to a number of international conventions; the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality and African Women's Protocol seeks to encourage women to participate actively in the public sphere and help to shape policy that affects women (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010).

Historical Overview of Ghana's Democratic Development

Ghana's democratic history dates back to the colonial era when nationalist agitation for political independence led to the first democratic elections in 1951 (Ahlman, 2011). It was the first time that elections were held under universal suffrage in a British colony in Africa (Ahlman, 2011). Prior to this important milestone, calls for self-rule and subsequent boycott and riots in Accra had led to the arrest of leaders of both the Convention Peoples' Party and the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC); the two most prominent indigenous political parties in the Gold Coast (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The 1948 disturbances led the British government to set up the Coussey Committee whose report recommended among other things, the drafting of the 1951 colonial constitution (Abdul-

Gafaru, 2009). As part of the plans to transfer power to the indigenes, the colonial government scheduled elections on the 8th of February, 1951 (Alidu & Ame, 2013). Three indigenous political parties contested the elections; the CPP, the UGCC, and National Democratic Party (NDP). The CPP headed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah won majority of the seats to the National Assembly, and Dr. Nkrumah himself who was in prison was elected to represent Accra Central. As a result of his election, Dr. Nkrumah was released from prison and was made the leader of government business in 1952. He subsequently became the first Prime Minister of the Gold Coast (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009).

The promulgation of the 1954 colonial constitution was accompanied by elections in the same year. The CPP won the elections, and in 1957 Ghana became the first black African nation south of the Sahara to gain political independence from British rule (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Alidu & Ame, 2013). Since the attainment of independence and the subsequent ushering in of democratic governance in 1957, Ghana has written and ratified five different constitutions; the 1957, 1960, 1969, 1979, and the 1992 constitution under which the current democratic dispensation is being practiced (Constitution.net.org, 2014; Constitution Review Commission 2009). All these constitutions have unique characteristics and represented different eras in the country's democratic journey. For instance, the 1957 constitution which was the first to be ratified after independence maintained a lot of the colonial traits of governance and was modeled after the Westminster system of Great Britain (Constitution Review Commission 2009). After the repeal of the 1957 constitution which was necessitated by the attainment of a republic status, the 1960 constitution was instituted. Unlike the 1957 version, the 1960

constitution reflected the system of government in the United States; in that, it was implicitly premised on the idea of balanced power between the various branches of government; the executive, legislature, and the judiciary (Asare & Prempeh, 2010). This constitution was suspended abruptly through a military takeover of the government in 1966; the first of many in post-independent Ghana (Asare & Prempeh, 2010).

The National Liberation Council (NLC), the military junta that overthrew the democratically elected government of Dr. Nkrumah promised immediate return to democratic rule (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Asare & Prempeh, 2010). The perpetrators of the coup cited the growing economic hardship and the dictatorial tendencies of Dr. Nkrumah who had declared Ghana a one party state and had instituted the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) as a tool to imprison his political opponents without trial, as a justification for the coup (Sarfo, 2014). The NLC led by General J.A. Ankrah released all political prisoners and lifted the ban on political parties in 1968 (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). A Representative Assembly was constituted and tasked with drafting a constitution for Ghana's second republic. Elections were scheduled for August of 1969. After 3 years of military rule in Ghana, the August 1969 elections paved the way for a return to multiparty democracy (Asare & Prempeh, 2010). The election was a straight race between Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia of the Progress Party (PP) and Komla A. Gbedemah of the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL). The PP won the elections by a landslide and also gained majority seats in the National Assembly. Consequently, Dr. Busia became the Prime Minister and the head of government in Ghana (Asare & Prempeh, 2010; Yidana, 2012). The 1969 constitution which was modeled after the British system split executive power of Ghana

between a head of government and a head of state (Asare & Prempeh, 2010). Therefore, Edward Akuffo Addo, a former Chief Justice was chosen by the Electoral College as president and head of state of the Republic of Ghana (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The second republican constitution of 1969 as part of its unique characteristics explicitly espoused the doctrine of separation of powers and reserved all legislative functions to a National Assembly while executive and judicial powers were left in the bosom of the executive and the judiciary respectively (Asare & Prempeh, 2010; Frempong, 2007).

After two years of democratic rule, the PP government was overthrown by the military on the 13th of January, 1972, bringing an end to the second republican constitution of 1969 (Keatley, 2011). The National Redemption Council (NRC) led by General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong capitalized on the dwindling economic fortunes of the average Ghanaian and the polarized political environment that persisted after the 1966 coup to suspend the constitution (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Asare & Prempeh, 2010; Keatley, 2011). The expectations of the ordinary Ghanaian had not been met with respect to the economy, and many had expressed outrage over the Busia administration's inability to turn the economic fortunes of Ghana around after two years in office (Langer, 2007). To the Ghanaian citizen, the return to democratic governance had not yielded the results it promised (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Langer, 2007). These conditions created the fertile grounds for the military to once again interfere in national politics (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The NRC unlike the NLC sought to establish a long term military government and as result implemented policies that appealed to the masses even though the long term effects were negative on both the economy and Ghana's reputation within the comity of nations

(Bonye, Thaddeus, & Owusu-Sekyere, 2013). The NRC refused to service Ghana's external debt incurred under previous governments. The most popular domestic policy under the NRC was "Operation Feed Yourself", where Ghanaians were encouraged to take up agriculture in order to propel the country to self-sufficiency in food production (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Bonye et al., 2013). The NRC reorganized and metamorphosed to Supreme Military Council (SMC) in 1975 after many of its policies failed to deliver the results they promised (Owusu, 2008). Therefore, the change from NRC to SMC was viewed by political analyst as a face saving measure (Offeh-Gyimah, 2010). However, the incessant demand by civil society organizations and tertiary students in particular forced the government to organize a referendum on a proposal to form a union government comprising civilian and military leaders (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The idea was rejected at the polls by the electorate. Sensing danger, the leadership of the SMC put pressure on General Acheampong to resign. General Frederick W.K. Akuffo replaced General Acheampong as the leader of SMC (Bonye et al., 2013). The political fortunes of the SMC did not change for the better with the change in the SMC's leadership. Under pressure from the Ghanaian populates, the SMC initiated the process to return the nation to democratic rule. The ban on political parties was lifted and plans were far advanced to return the country to democratic rule in July when, in June 1979, junior officers of the Ghana Armed Forces overthrew the SMC regime (Asare & Prempeh, 2010). The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings executed three former heads of states and other military officers in what they termed as a house cleaning exercise (Burke, 2012). The regime allowed elections to go forward as

planned under the SMC government (Burke, 2012). There were unlawful seizures and confiscation of properties belonging to private citizens whom the regime perceived as corrupt. The 1979 coup d'état is believed to be one of the bloodiest in the annals of military takeovers in West Africa (Alidu, 2014; USAID, 2011). Elections were held on the 18th of June, 1979 and a run off occurred on the 9th of July, 1979. Dr. Hilla Limann of the People's National Party (PNP) won the elections with 62% of the votes (African News Analysis, 2011; Alidu, 2014). The AFRC handed political power to the democratically elected government of Dr. Limann on the 24th of September, 1979. The promulgation of the 1979 constitution set in motion the third Republic of Ghana (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009).

For the first time in the constitutional history of Ghana, the 1979 constitution vested legislative powers in a parliament comprising 104 members who represented various constituencies in Ghana. As was the case with previous constitutions, the third republic was short lived courtesy a coup d'état in 1981 by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. The period between 1981 and 1992 marked the longest, uninterrupted period of military rule in the history of Ghana until the inception of the fourth republican constitution of 1992, which is the supreme law of the land under the current democratic dispensation (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Alidu, 2014).

Combing through the various constitutions since independence, it is clear that each constitution ushered in different systems and structures of government; however, what is common amongst all is the attempt made through each constitution to correct the

mistakes of the past while at the same time reaching for the promise of democratic governance in the future (Constitution Review Commission, 2009). Ghana's constitutional and democratic history is a checkered one fraught with alternation of power between civilian and military regimes (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Ahlman, 2011; Alidu, 2014; Asamoah et al., 2013). Different constitutional experiments have been attempted in an effort to secure the system of governance that caters to the needs and aspirations of the Ghanaian citizen. Even though the international community hails Ghana's renewed and latest attempt at democratic governance as the hope of democratization of the West Africa sub region, the dialectic nature of democracy itself demands constant discourse in the public sphere where all interested parties and entities are allowed to contribute their aspirations and expectations under the new dispensation (Constitution Review Commission, 2009).

Ghana's Government Structure and Functions

Ghana as a sovereign nation has made many attempts in the past to practice democratic governance (Awal, 2012; Bates et al., 2012; Bofo-Arthur, 2007). As a result, the various constitutions that have ushered in each of Ghana's four republics have been drafted to forestall the occurrence of political interferences (Asare & Prempeh, 2010; Burke, 2012; Constitution Review Commission, 2009). Ghana has experimented with the parliamentary/westminster system of the British and the American presidential system before settling on a hybrid of the two systems under the current democratic dispensation (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). The fourth republican constitution of 1992 that ushered in the current democratic dispensation makes provision for the structure of the Ghanaian

government based on the doctrine of separation of powers (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Under the 1992 constitution, power is distributed among three branches of government; the executive, legislature, and the judiciary. The 1992 constitution under Articles 57, 93, and 125 vest executive, legislative, and judicial powers in the president, the parliament, and the judiciary respectively (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). The doctrine of separation powers which is a hall mark of democracy was inspired by the desire not to concentrate power in the hands of one branch of government (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). By effectively distributing power among the three branches, checks and balances are inherently instituted in government (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). The constitution of Ghana details the powers and functions of each branch of government.

The Executive

The constitution of Ghana under Article 58 vest executive power in the president (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). As already indicated, under the doctrine of separation of powers, the constitution mandates the president to, among other things, maintain and execute the constitution and all laws that are in force due to the existence of the constitution (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In other words, Ghana's executive authority resides solely in the president; and for that reason, he/she is the head of state, head of government, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces (Asare & Prempeh, 2010). The president under constitutional provisions may exercise his/her executive authority directly or indirectly through delegation of authority (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Ghana's executive branch therefore is constituted of the President aided by the Council of State, the Vice President, Ministers of State, and their Deputies (Gyimah-

Boadi & Yakah, 2012). In order to run the affairs of the state in an efficient manner, the President exercises his/her authority under Article 78 of the 1992 constitution to appoint ministers. Article 78(1) state that:

Ministers of State shall be appointed by the President with prior approval of parliament from among Members of Parliament or persons qualified to be elected as Members of Parliament, except that majority of ministers of state shall be appointed from among Members of Parliament. (Constitution of Ghana, 1992)

Within the constitutional framework established under the fourth Republic of Ghana, the executive performs a myriad of functions towards the advancement of democratic governance in Ghana. These express or implied functions of the executive branch within Ghana's constitutional structure have been detailed below.

The President as the head of the executive branch has been given certain powers under the constitution to run the day-to-day affairs of the state. For example, the use of executive orders and the power to appoint personnel to critical positions in government are some of the ways the President exercises executive authority (Asare & Prempeh, 2010; Gyimah-Boadi & Yakah, 2012). An increase in the size of the administrative state has become a hallmark of modern governance especially in democratic societies where governments are responsive to the needs of the citizenry (Epstein, 2008; Harrington & Carter, 2009; Parrillo, 2013). In democratic states, citizens have the opportunity to change governments that are not responsive to their needs; it is therefore not an accident that governments in democratic states who are forced to be responsive to citizen's need due to elections tend to have large bureaucracies (Benson, n.d.; Bernauer & Koubi, 2009;

Lapsley, Pallot, & Levy, n.d.; Harrington & Carter, 2009; Ohemeng & Anebo, 2012).

Similarly, the executive implements the constitution and enforces all other laws passed by parliament (Abotsi, 2012; Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In a constitutional democracy, the rule of law is a critical ingredient; upholding the supreme law of the land from which all other laws emanate is crucial to the sustainment of democratic governance (Alemika, 2007). Article 2(4) makes it a crime punishable by impeachment if the president fails to uphold the constitution. This provision of the constitution highlights the importance of the rule of law as the fulcrum around which democracy pivots in Ghana (Deletant, 2013; Derouen & Goldfinch, 2012).

Finally, the executive branch is tasked with the business of international relations. The President appoints personnel to represent Ghana abroad and also receive diplomats of foreign countries appointed to Ghana. The President executes treaties, conventions, and agreements on behalf or in the name of Ghana; however, the constitution demands that such treaties, conventions, and agreements must be ratified by an Act of Parliament (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In modern governance, diplomacy and international relations play an important role in advancing a nation's interest abroad (D'Aspremont, 2010).

The aforementioned express and implied functions and the powers granted to the executive branch by the 1992 constitution has been a subject of debate in recent times. The enormous power given to the President by the constitution leads scholars of democracy to refer to the presidency of Ghana as imperial (Abotsi, 2012; Asare & Prempeh, 2010). They question the reality of the existence of separation of powers

among the various arms of government in Ghana by pointing to the relationship that exist between the executive and the legislature in the area of ministerial appointments and the constitution of cabinet by the executive (Abotsi, 2012; Asare & Prempeh, 2010). The Constitution mandates the president to choose majority of ministers from parliament. This, in the opinion of scholars is a constitutional defect and an affront to the doctrine of separation of powers in particular and democratic governance in general (Barkan & Matiangi, 2009; modernghana.com, 2008).

The Judiciary

An independent judiciary is one of the hallmarks of democratic societies (Center for Constitutional Transitions, 2013; Gibler & Randazzo, 2011; Staton, Reenock, & Radean, 2014). In constitutional democracies around the world, the only branch of the government whose independence is emphasized is the judiciary (Gibler & Randazzo, 2011). This is due to the critical role that the rule of law plays in sustaining democratic governance. In Ghana, the judiciary is the third arm of government that works with the executive and the legislature in the practice of democracy within the established constitutional framework. The 1992 constitution of Ghana under Article 125 vest judicial power in the judiciary (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Clause 1 of Article 125 posits that “Justice emanates from the people and shall be administered in the name of the Republic by the Judiciary which shall be independent and subject only to this constitution” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Similarly, to bolster the independence of the judiciary in the exercise of its constitutional obligations, the constitution makes it expressly clear under Clause 3 of Article 125 that judicial power lies solely with the judiciary and for that reason, neither the President

(executive) nor Parliament (legislature) shall possess or be endowed with final judicial power (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Furthermore, the constitution insulates the judiciary from the control of any person or authority when discharging its judicial and administrative functions as prescribed by the constitution under Article 127 (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Under the Ghanaian constitution, the structure of the judiciary has clearly been spelt out under Article 126. The judicial structure of Ghana is divided into two by the constitution; the Superior Courts of Judicature and the lower courts. The Superior Courts of Judicature comprises of the Supreme Court (SC), the Courts of Appeals, Regional Tribunals and High Courts while the lower courts are made of the Circuit, District, and Juvenile Courts in addition to the National and Regional House of Chiefs responsible for chieftaincy matters and other courts that Parliament may by law establish (The Institute for Democratic Governance, 2007). It is important to note that the Superior Courts are the direct creation of the constitution while the lower courts are the handiwork of the parliament of Ghana. The Courts Act (459) of 1993 as amended established the lower courts. The 1992 constitution makes the Chief Justice the head of the judiciary in Ghana (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

The SC of Ghana sits at the apex of the Ghanaian court structure and is responsible for the interpretation of the constitution in all matters; civil and criminal (The Institute for Democratic Governance, 2007). The SC at its full composition is made up of the Chief Justice and nine Justices or more of the SC. To protect judicial officers from the influence of the other branches of government, the constitution mandates under Article 127(5) that

“the salary, allowances, privileges and rights in respect of leave of absence, gratuity, pension and other conditions of service of a Justice of the Superior Court or any judicial officer or other person exercising judicial power shall not be varied to his disadvantage” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). The combine effects of Articles 127 and 129 of the 1992 constitution are aimed at ensuring that both the integrity and independence of the judiciary in Ghana is not compromised (Constitution of Ghana, 1992; Constitutional Review Commission, 2009). Interference in the administration of justice by the executive branch is common place in the West African sub region and Ghana has had its fair share in the past (Insaidoo, 2013; Ruppel, 2008; Niyonkuru, n.d.). Under military regimes and sometimes democratically elected ones, attempts have been made by the executive to meddle in the exercise of judicial power. In 1982, three Justices of the SC of Ghana were murdered by people who were identified as close associates of the military regime that exercised executive authority in Ghana; the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) (Quansah, 2011; GhanaWeb, 2007; GhanaWeb, 2014). With history as a guide, the constitution makes provisions to ensure that judicial officers can administer justice without fear or favor.

Again, due to the important role that the judiciary plays in Ghana’s democratic dispensation, the constitution sets modalities and guidelines on the qualification of officers appointed to the courts; especially the SC. Article 128(4) posits that “A person shall not be qualified for appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court unless he is of high moral character and proven integrity and is of not less than fifteen years’ standing as a lawyer” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In the same vein, to guard against packing of

the courts with Justices sympathetic to the agenda of the executive branch, the constitution mandates that Justices appointed by the President must be subjected to the scrutiny of Parliament who may confirm or reject the nominated candidate. Article 146 of the constitution addresses the grounds for removal of members of the superior courts from office (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Judicial officers cannot be relieved of their post arbitrarily; removal may be allowed on the grounds of misbehavior, inability of an officer to perform his/her duties due to infirmities of body and mind, and gross incompetence (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In any of these instances, the constitution details procedures to be followed judiciously to carry out such dismissal. The Ghanaian constitution goes to great lengths to protect the independence and integrity of the judiciary; given that the rule of law is the fulcrum around which democratic governance pivots (Tommasoli, 2012).

The Legislature

As a constitutional democracy, the importance of Ghana's Parliament cannot be over emphasized. The legislature as one of the branches of government in Ghana traces its roots to the colonial era (Gold Coast). In the revised edition of their book "The Evolution of Parliament in Ghana", Ayensu and Darkwa (2007) give a chronological account of Ghana's parliamentary system dating back to the colonial era (Ayensu & Darkwa, 2007). According to Ayensu and Darkwa (2007), legislative power has been exercised in Ghana, known then as Gold Coast, since the reign of Queen Victoria. In the colonial era, the Legislative Council which consisted of the Governor and two other appointees of the British Crown, were tasked with promulgating laws in the colony. The

Council, as asserted by the authors, was to make “all such laws, institutions and ordinances as may from time to time be necessary for the peace, order and good government of our subjects and others within the said present or future forts and settlements in the Gold Coast” (Ayensu & Darkwa, 2007, p. 16).

Under the current democratic dispensation, the 1992 constitution vest all legislative power in Parliament. Article 93(1) of the constitution gives legal existence to Parliament as one of the organs of government in Ghana. Similarly, the constitution in tandem with the doctrine of separation of power among the branches of government expressly vests legislative power in Parliament under Article 93(2). Under Ghana’s current constitutional framework, parliament performs five important functions; legislative, representational, financial, deliberative, and oversight functions. These parliamentary functions have been espoused below.

In spite of the multiple functions of the Parliament of Ghana, law making is recognized as the body’s foremost responsibility. Chapter ten of the 1992 Constitution stipulates that all legislative power of Ghana is vested in parliament and for that reason, other than parliament, no body or person shall have the power to pass any act with the force of law (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Again, parliament serves as a medium for citizens to make known their grievances on matters of national and sub-national importance. Parliament fulfils its representational obligations through its members who represent various constituencies based on population density and geographical demarcations of the ten regions of Ghana (The Parliament of Ghana, 2014). The representational function of parliament is closely linked to the body’s deliberative

functions; in that, parliament executes its deliberative function through debates, statements, questions, and motions on the floor of parliament. By engaging in rigorous debates on policy issues, parliamentarians shed light on matters of national and sub-national importance that impact negatively on their constituents (The Parliament of Ghana, 2014).

Furthermore, the 1992 constitution vests the power of the purse in parliament. Under Article 174, the constitution stipulates that taxes cannot be imposed on the citizenry without authorization from parliament. Similarly, Article 184 of the 1992 constitution empowers parliament to monitor the country's foreign exchange payments and receipts while Article 187 (15) touches on parliament's power to appoint an auditor to audit the Auditor-General's office (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Finally, as part of discharging its constitutional obligations, parliament is empowered under the constitution to exercise oversight of the executive branch. This is in tandem with the doctrine of separation of powers as enshrined in the 1992 constitution. As part of these oversight responsibilities, parliament scrutinizes actions of the executive with respect to policy formulation and implementation. Parliament also exercises these oversight responsibilities through the approval or otherwise of presidential nominations for positions sanctioned by law such as Supreme Court Justices, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers of State (The Parliament of Ghana, 2014).

In the aftermath of the third wave democracy that swept across the globe in general and the third world specifically in the late 1980s, scholars of democracy have written extensively about the democratization process in Africa and have identified strong and

well-structured legislatures as one of the critical ingredients of democratic success. As a result, many of these scholars have focused attention on Ghana's legislature and the role it has played in Ghana's democratic journey (Stapenhurst & Pelizzo, 2012). In a study that purported to examine the nature of, and the influence that parliamentary oversight has on good governance in Ghana, Stapenhurst and Pelizzo (2012) concluded that there is a positive relationship between increased parliamentary oversight tools and legitimacy of democracy (Stapenhurst & Pelizzo, 2012). Moehler and Lindberg (2009) assert that, "democratic consolidation depends on common perceptions of institutional legitimacy among citizens aligned with governing and opposition parties" (p. 1448). Frempong (2007) echoes the assertion of Moehler and Lindberg (2009) by positing that political institutions such as parliament play an integral role in consolidating democracy. He further posits that political institutionalization is critical, if democracy will be stable in Ghana (Frempong, 2007).

The Electoral Commission

The 1992 constitution that set forth the birth of the fourth republic of Ghana established a number of public institutions that would enhance and solidify the new democratic dispensation (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). One of such institutions that came alive as a consequence of the 1992 constitution is the Electoral Commission (EC). The primary goal of the EC as enshrined in the constitution is the organization of free and fair national and subnational elections in Ghana as part of the country's democratic practices (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). The 1992 constitution of Ghana under articles 43, 44, and 45 establishes the EC, provides modalities for constituting members

of the EC, and stipulates the constitutional functions of the EC respectively. Article 43(1) of the 1992 constitution states that “there shall be an Electoral Commission which shall consist of a chairman, two deputy chairmen, and four other members” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Similarly, under article 44, the constitution outlines the qualifications of persons to be appointed to the commission. Clause 1 of Article 44 stipulates that “a person is not qualified to be appointed a member of the Electoral Commission unless he is qualified to be elected Member of Parliament” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). The EC, guided by its constitutional obligations states that “the mission of the Electoral Commission is to advance the course of democracy and good governance for enhanced development of Ghana by institutionalizing free, fair and transparent elections to the acceptance of all stakeholders” (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). In the same vein, the EC as an institution has a vision of becoming a totally independent institution that is highly resourced and committed to the delivery of free, fair, and incontrovertible elections as a contribution to democracy in Ghana (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014).

As already noted, periodic elections are integral part of a democratic society; as a result, the EC has organized six consecutive national elections since the inception of the fourth republic of Ghana. Similarly, the EC has organized and supervised many local government elections as part of their constitutional mandate as stipulated under Article 45 of the constitution (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Many scholars point to the neutrality of the EC of Ghana as a critical ingredient in Ghana’s democratic success story (Alabi, 2009; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Mesfin, 2008). This assertion is premised upon the

experiences of various countries in West Africa where elections have led to violent political clashes between competing political parties due to perceived or real bias by the ECs of these nations (Ibrahim, 2007; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Ojo, 2007b; Omotola, 2009). Therefore, Ghana's EC is viewed as a sharp contrast to the norm in the sub-region; the organization of six consecutive elections that have been deemed free and fair by both local and international observers have cemented the ECs image as a neutral referee in Ghana's elections (Frempong, 2008; Kufogbe, Jayson-Quashigah, & Yiran, 2010; Zounmenou, 2009). The neutrality of a nation's electoral system plays an important role in the consolidation of democracy; especially in developing nations. Scholars of democracy assert that free and fair elections provide legitimate means for the electorate to participate in the democratic process (Diamond, 2008; Moller & Skaaning, 2013). Similarly, an EC with the institutional capacity to organize free, fair, and competitive elections sustains democratic governance by giving competing political parties an equal chance of winning an election; this provides a genuine possibility for alternation. In the opinion of minimalist theorist, election is both the means and the ends of democratic governance; therefore, a well-resourced and neutral electoral system makes genuine alternation between political parties possible (Diamond, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Moller & Skaaning, 2013; Whitfield, 2009).

Similarly, analysts of Ghana's democracy assert that the confidence of the citizenry in the democratic process largely stems from their positive perception about the EC of Ghana (Kerr, 2011). In a study to explore the relationship between quality elections, satisfaction with democracy, and political trust in Africa, Alemika (2007) found that

democratic consolidation is greatly impacted by citizens' appraisal of the worth of elections in their country; especially in transitional societies (Alemika, 2007). The EC of Ghana have been commended by the international community and domestic stakeholders for their exemplary commitment to free and fair elections and by extension, democratic governance in Ghana (CDD-Ghana, 2008; Debrah, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; USAID, 2011; The World Bank, 2014).

However, it is important to note that in spite of the positive image that the EC of Ghana has carved for itself as an institution, there are major challenges that need to be addressed. Even though generally election observers have deemed Ghana's elections free and fair, international observers have found certain aspects of election organization in Ghana unsatisfactory due to logistical and administrative inefficiencies (The Carter Center, 2008; CODEO, 2012). Similarly, political parties in Ghana have registered their displeasure with the manner in which the EC has handled the organization of certain elections in Ghana. The NPP after the 2012 elections in Ghana filed a petition at the Supreme Court of Ghana alleging serious electoral irregularities and called into question the certified results of the elections by the EC (Election Petition, 2013). Even though the Justices of the Supreme Court affirmed the election results, the Justices based on the evidence presented by the petitioners called for an overhaul in the electoral system. The court found some of the irregularities shocking; given the EC's record and experience in organizing national and subnational elections in Ghana (Election Petition, 2013).

Overview of Ghana's Elections and the Fourth Republic (1992 and Beyond)

It is a cardinal principle in democratic societies to provide a free and fair means for the citizenry to retain or change governments (Przeworski, 2011). Therefore, free and fair elections are constitutionally sanctioned means for the citizenry to hold elected officials accountable for their stewardship and governance (Przeworski, 2011). As a result, electioneering campaigns and voting have been an important aspect of Ghana's democracy since the transition to multiparty democracy 1992 (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010). The successful organization of elections in Ghana has projected the country's image as a beacon of democracy in Ghana (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Alemika, 2007; Awal, 2012; Boafo-Arthur, 2007; Burke, 2012). Therefore, it is impossible to discuss Ghana's democracy without a detailed account of Ghana's electoral history under the fourth republic.

Electioneering Campaigns in Ghana

Since the inception of the fourth republic in Ghana in 1992, Ghana has organized six consecutive elections with little or no violence. This rare feat in the democratic history of the West African sub-region has earned Ghana a lot of accolades as the shining example of democracy in West Africa (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Alemika, 2007; Awal, 2012; Boafo-Arthur, 2007; Burke, 2012). Tables 1 and 2 provide detailed history of all national elections held in Ghana, both presidential and parliamentary, since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992. Many scholars have written extensively on electioneering campaigns in Ghana within the broader context of democracy in Ghana (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Amponsah, 2012; Debrah, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Similarly, both local and

international monitoring teams have provided multiple views about Ghana's electioneering campaigns (African Union Election Observer Mission, 2012; CODEO, 2012). In the 1992 campaign, the various political parties employed different campaign strategies and slogans to sell their message to the electorates. The incumbent NDC party centered their message on continuity (Gyimah-Boadi, n.d.). The NDC took credit for the transition from military rule to democratic governance and subtly suggested that the main opposition party, the NPP, practiced politics of discrimination based on ethnicity (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Nkansah, n.d.). The NDC also laid claims to the gains made from the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which was undertaken in the 1980s in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as its handiwork (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The charismatic nature of Mr. Rawlings was a significant factor in drawing large crowds to the NDC's political rallies (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). The opposition parties in their attempt to unseat the incumbent strategized to tag the NDC to the atrocities that occurred during the military regime. After all, in their opinion, it is the same Rawlings who has metamorphosed from a military dictator to a civilian contestant (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The NPP mocked the continuity message of the NDC by referring to it as continuity of brutality and abysmal economic performance. The opposition focused on the personal record of Mr. Rawlings as a coup maker who had overthrown a democratically elected government in 1981 (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). Both internal and external observers reported that the campaign season was inundated with heated political rhetoric and skirmishes of political violence in isolated areas of the country (African Union Election Observer

Mission, 2012; Asunka, Brierley, Golden, Kramon, & Ofosu, 2013; Commonwealth Observer Group, 2012).

Again, a similar picture has been painted of the campaigns of 1996 and 2000. As was the case in the 1992 elections, the campaign season for the 1996 elections was characterized by acrimony, politics of insults, accusations and counter accusations amongst the contesting political parties; especially between the NPP and the NDC (Asamoah et al., 2013). The ruling NDC fashioned its campaign message around the personality of its candidate; Jerry John Rawlings. This strategy was adopted for two main reasons; the economy had not performed as expected during the first term of the NDC government as indicated by macroeconomic indicators; the fiscal balance of the country was in deficit coupled with rising cost of living and high inflation rate. Therefore, it was unpopular to run on these issues. Secondly, even though the NDC party was not popular with respect to economic issues, it emerged from opinion polls that Jerry Rawlings enjoyed high personal approval ratings among the electorate due to his charisma (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Amponsah, 2012; Asamoah et al., 2013). Therefore, the NDC made the 1996 elections a referendum on the 'likability' of President Rawlings against the flag bearers of the opposition parties (Amponsah, 2012). The admiration of Rawlings was particularly true amongst rural voters (Amponsah, 2012). On the contrary, the opposition parties highlighted the economic record of the ruling government and constantly referenced the human rights record of Rawlings during the military regime (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009; Amponsah, 2012). Observers of the campaign period reported of heightened political tensions in the country due to the resolve of all the political parties to

remain vigilant and prevent any attempts at rigging on the side of the incumbent and the opposition parties (CODEO, 2012). The presidential candidates as part of the campaign strategy toured the length and breadth of the country to meet religious and traditional leaders to gather and sustain momentum for their campaigns. The parties organized political rallies at the various regional capitals to consolidate support for the elections (CODEO, 2012).

The campaign period was lengthy and fierce, and was occasionally marred by confrontations between supporters of the NDC and the NPP (CODEO, 2012). As the election date drew closer, it became clear that the race was between the NDC and the NPP. On the day of election, it emerged that the experiences of the 1992 elections had been improved upon by both the EC and the voting public (African Union Election Observer Mission, 2012; CODEO, 2012).

Again, the 2004 and 2008 elections marked the fourth and fifth consecutive times that elections were held in Ghana. Ghana, after successfully organizing three previous elections was being acclaimed by the international community as a shining example of democratic governance on the African continent (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009). The 2004 elections provided another opportunity for Ghana to prove to skeptics that democracy as a system of governance had actually taken roots in the country. There is a general consensus among scholars that Ghana's reputation within the comity of nations had improved tremendously largely owing to the country's exemplary elections and smooth transfer of power between different governments in previous elections (Amponsah, 2012; Awal, 2012). The organization of elections at specified intervals is a cardinal principle in

democratic societies (Przeworski, 2011); as a result, Ghana's constitution makes provisions for elections to be held every four years to allow citizens to elect a president and members of the legislature (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In accordance with these constitutional obligations, the EC declared December 7th 2004 as the date for the 2004 elections. The elections were preceded by a voter's registration exercise by the EC to allow new voters to register and also to purge the register of ghost names (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). In the run up to the preparation for the elections, two debates arose; the idea of allowing Ghanaian citizens living abroad to vote and public funding of political parties in Ghana (Amponsah, 2012; Annan, 2012; Nam-Katoti, Doku, Abor, & Quartey, 2011). However, none of these debates culminated into the passage of laws or state policy. Proponents of public funding of political parties during the 2004 elections contended that it will create fairness in the electoral process; given that incumbents rely heavily on public resources to their advantage during campaign seasons (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014; Nam-Katoti et al., 2011). The campaign season revealed a straight race between the NDC and the NPP; the other opposition parties did not command enough support and enthusiasm among the electorate (Amponsah, 2012). The peaceful environment within which the campaign was carried out was repeated on the day of elections. Unlike previous elections where political tensions were critically high, the 2004 elections proved to be a campaign of peace devoid of the personal attacks that engulfed previous ones (CODEO, 2012). Voting went on smoothly with a high voter turnout. Per the rules of elections in Ghana and the constitutional requirement under Article 63(3) which demands that a candidate for presidential elections obtain more than

fifty percent of the votes cast to be declared winner of the said elections, the 2008 presidential elections failed to produce an outright winner and a run-off was organized.

Democracy as a system of governance demands that elections are held periodically in a free and fair manner to give citizens an avenue to elect people to represent their interest in government (Przeworski, 2011). Since the inception of the new democratic dispensation in Ghana in 1992, elections have been held at intervals prescribed by the Ghanaian constitution to elect a president and members of parliament. In 2012, four years after President Mills took office in 2008, elections were held in Ghana. The EC of Ghana after declaring 7th December 2012 as the date for elections in Ghana proceeded to embark on a voter's registration exercise. For the first time Ghana's electoral history the EC announced plans to utilize biometric technology to capture the personal data of voters during the registration exercise and voting (Otchere-Darko, 2010). The decision to utilize biometric technology as means of capturing unique physical features of voters was inspired by the EC's desire to prevent voter fraud, multiple registrations, and multiple voting (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). However, the decision generated a lot of debate on how the policy should be implemented in the elections. The ruling NDC contended that due to the fact that the EC had no experience in using biometric machines, and the possibility of technology failure, the EC should not make biometric verification of voters the only means to verify voter's identity; they advocated for a manual alternative for verifying voter's identity in case they cannot be verified biometrically (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2012). The party further argued that the constitutional right of Ghanaian citizens to vote should not be determined by the

ability of an unreliable machine to identify them. The opposition parties on the other hand argued that biometric technology should be the only method for verifying the identity of voters (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2012). The NPP posited that impersonation, multiple voting, and multiple registrations will be eliminated completely if voters verified biometrically prior to casting their vote (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2012). After extensive consultation with the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) and other stakeholders, the EC announced that both the registration and the voting processes will be conducted solely through biometric technology. The chairman of the EC Kwadjo Afari Gyan declared emphatically that ‘no biometric, no vote’ (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014).

Again, the EC announced a decision to increase the number of constituencies in Ghana from 230 to 275 for the 2012 elections; an upward adjustment of 45 new constituencies (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). Under Articles 45(b) and 47(5), the 1992 constitution of Ghana gives authority to the EC “to demarcate the electoral boundaries for both national and local government elections” and also review and alter constituencies at intervals not less than seven years or within twelve months of the enumeration of census results in Ghana (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). This upward review of the number of constituencies in Ghana by the EC was a subject of fierce debate among the various political parties. The ruling NDC agreed with the EC’s decision while the opposition, mainly the NPP, vehemently opposed the idea (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2012). The EC cited the constitution as the basis for its decision and argued that it is only carrying out its constitutional duties under Articles 45 and 47 (Constitution of

Ghana, 1992). Both proponents and critics agreed that the EC has the constitutional authority to undertake such an exercise; however, critics of the decision opined that the timing was wrong and the decision could hinder the preparation of the political parties for the 2012 elections due to logistical challenges (Kuruk, 2012). The decision by the EC to proceed with the creation of the 45 new constituencies led Ransford France, a private citizen, to file a petition at the Supreme Court of Ghana to compel the EC to stop the implementation of Constitutional Instrument 78 (C.I. 78) in the elections (Intsiful, 2012). However, the court quashed the petition and C.I. 78 became law in Ghana (Ghana News Agency, 2012; Intsiful, 2012).

As the various parties made preparations towards the elections, the nation was hit with the demise of President Mills on the 24th of July 2012 (Hirsch, 2012; Nossiter, 2012). The president's health had been a subject of discussion in the months leading to his death. The sudden death of the president presented a major challenge to the NDC due to the limited time left before elections. In terms of the presidency, the constitution makes provisions for succession in the event of the death of a sitting president. Article 60(6) states that whenever the president dies, resigns or is removed from office, the vice-president shall assume office as president for the unexpired term of the office of the president with effect from the date of the death, resignation or removal of the president (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). As a result, the Vice-president John Mahama was sworn in as the fourth president under the fourth republic of Ghana. When the campaign resumed after the burial of President Mills, the NDC endorsed President Mahama as the flag bearer of the party to contest the 2012 elections and he eventually won the elections.

The results were rejected by the opposition parties and as a result they filed a petition at the Supreme Court to challenge the election results.

The 2012 Election Petition (Supreme Court Case)

The main opposition party (NPP) in the 2012 elections alleged that the results declared by the EC did not reflect the true will of the people of Ghana due to widespread electoral irregularities that characterized the elections (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012). As a result, the NPP sought amongst other things to get the EC to delay the declaration and swearing in of Mr. Mahama as the president elect of Ghana. This in the opinion of the party would have allowed the EC and other stakeholders to investigate the allegations being made. However, after a brief consultation between the NPP and the EC, the EC was of the opinion that the NPP did not have any credible and conclusive evidence to warrant the EC to delay the declaration of the election results (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2014). To that effect, the EC declared Mr. Mahama the winner of the 2012 elections and he was sworn in on the 7th of January 2013 by the Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana. The NPP party petitioned the Supreme Court of Ghana to challenge the validity of the election of Mr. Mahama as president of Ghana (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012). Article 64 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana allows any Ghanaian citizen to petition the Supreme Court to challenge the election of a president. Article 64 (1) states “ the validity of the election of the president may be challenged only by a citizen of Ghana who may present a petition for the purpose to the Supreme Court within twenty-one days after the declaration of the result of the election in respect of which the petition is presented” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). There were three

petitioners; Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, the presidential candidate of the NPP was the 1st petitioner; Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the vice presidential candidate of the NPP was the 2nd petitioner; and the 3rd petitioner was Mr. Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lampsey, the national chairperson of the NPP. There were three respondents to the petition filed by the NPP; the 1st respondent was Mr. John Dramani Mahama, the president elect; the Electoral Commission of Ghana was the 2nd respondent; and the NDC, the party on whose ticket Mr. Mahama contested was the 3rd respondent (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012).

The petitioners in their application sought from the court a relief of voiding the election of Mr. Mahama as president of the Republic of Ghana (Presidential Election Petition, 2012). The petitioners cited over-voting, voting without biometric verification and absence of the signature of presiding officers on results collation forms (pink sheets) as some of the basis for their petition (Presidential Election Petition, 2012). Furthermore, the petitioners relied on duplicate serial numbers i.e. occurrence of the same serial numbers on pink sheets for two different polling stations, duplicate polling station codes i.e. occurrence of different results/pink sheets for polling stations with same polling codes, and unknown polling stations i.e. results recorded for polling stations which are not part of the 26,002 polling stations provided by the 2nd respondent for the election as further basis for the petition (Presidential Election Petition, 2012; Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). The petitioners alleged that the combined effect of these irregularities swayed the election results in favor of President Mahama (Presidential Election Petition, 2012); therefore, when votes from constituencies that were affected by these irregularities are annulled by the Supreme Court, it emerges that the results indicated that Mr. Akuffo-

Addo rather than Mr. Mahama secured the 50% plus 1 vote required by the constitution to elect a president in Ghana (Presidential Election Petition, 2012). Therefore, the case for determination by the Supreme Court was to ascertain the validity of the allegations being made by the petitioners and to establish the extent to which those irregularities affected the presidential election results, if indeed those irregularities occurred.

The Chief Justice in accordance with the constitution empanelled 9 Justices of the Supreme Court to hear the case with Justice Atuguba presiding (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). The rest of the justices on the panel were Justices Ansah, Adinyira, Owusu, Dotse, Anin-Yeboah, Baffoe-Bonnie, Gbadegbe, and Akoto-Bamfo. The hearing of the case commenced on the 16th of April 2013 and ended on the 29th of August 2013 when the court gave its final judgment (Presidential Election Petition, 2012). Attorneys for both the petitioners and respondents called witnesses to bolster their case. Dr. Bawumia, the vice presidential candidate of the NPP was the lead witness of the petitioners while Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketiah, the general secretary of the NDC gave testimony on behalf of the 1st and 3rd respondents. Dr. Kwadwo Afari Gyan, the chairman of the E C testified on behalf of the 2nd respondent. After many months of witnesses and testimony coupled with the presentation and examination of material evidence, the Supreme Court gave their final judgment of the case on the 29th of August 2013 (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012).

The Court delivering its final judgment through Justice Atuguba held that even though there were some cases of irregularities, such irregularities were administrative errors that did not impact the overall results of the elections as alleged by the petitioners (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). The Justices were of the opinion that in a monumental case of this nature where the results of the elections had been officially declared and published, the burden of proof was on the petitioners to establish that such a declaration and subsequent publication of the results by the EC was erroneous (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). It is critical to note that the petitioners in their pleadings did not allege any fraud or criminality on the part of any of the respondents; however, they contended inter alia that the 1st respondent was the beneficiary of electoral irregularities (Presidential Election Petition, 2012). In civil cases of this nature, the standard of proof is by preponderance of probabilities not beyond reasonable doubt as required in criminal cases. The justices were convinced based on the statements of expert witnesses and material evidence that the petitioners failed to establish that the electoral irregularities that occurred during the 2012 elections benefitted the 1st respondent in any way (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). It is worthy of note that the Justices in each of their written judgments expressed worry about the kind of electoral irregularities that occurred in the 2012 elections; given that the 2nd respondent had organized elections for so long and the expectation was that administrative lapses such as presiding officers not signing results collation forms to give authentication to the results could occur (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). The Justices recommended reforms in the electoral process in Ghana and tasked the EC to hire highly qualified personnel to handle such an important national

exercise of election organization (Supreme Court of Ghana, 2012). The Justices dismissed the petition and upheld the election of Mr. Mahama as the fourth president under the fourth Republic of Ghana. The next election in Ghana is not due until 7th December 2016.

Table 1

Electoral History of Ghana From 1992 to 2012

Year	Political Party	Candidate	Votes Secured	Percentage of Votes	Run-off Candidates	President-Elect	Parliamentary Seats Won
1992	NDC	Jerry	2,323,1	58.4	N/A	Rawlings	189
	NPP	Rawlings	35	30.3			Boycotted
	PNC	Albert	1,204,7	6.7			0
	NIP	Adu	64	2.9			0
	PHP	Boahen	266,710	1.8			0
	NCP	Hilla	133,629	N/A			8
	EGLE	Limann	69,827	N/A			1
	Independent	Kwabena	N/A	N/A			2
		Darko	N/A				
		Emmanuel	N/A				
		Erskine					
		N/A					
		N/A					
1996	NDC	Jerry	4,094,7	57.4	N/A	Rawlings	133
	NPP	Rawlings	58	39.7			61
	PNC	John	2,834,8	3.0			1
	PCP	Kufuor	78				5
		Edward	211,136				
		Mahama					

2000	NPP	John Kufuor	3,131,739	48.17	Kufuor	Kufuor	100
	NDC	John Mills	2,895,575	44.45	Mills		89
	PNC	Edward Mahama	189,659	2.92			3
	CPP	George Hagan	115,641	1.78			1
	NRP	Augustus Tanoh	78,629	1.21			0
	GCPP	Daniel Lartey	67,504	1.04			0
	UGM	Charles Brobbey	22,123	0.34			0
	Independent	N/A	N/A	N/A			4
2004	NPP	John Kufuor	4,524,047	52.45	N/A	Kufuor	129
	NDC	John Mills	3,850,268	44.64			91
	GC	Edward Mahama	165,375	1.92			0
	CPP	George Aggudey	85,968	1.0			3
	PNC	N/A	N/A	N/A			4
	Independent	N/A	N/A	N/A			1
2008	NPP	Nana Akuffo-	4,159,439	49.13	Akuffo-		108
	NDC	Addo	4,056,634	47.13	Addo	Mills	113
	CPP	John Mills	113,494	1.34	Mills		1
	PNC	Kwesi Nduom	73,494	0.87			2
	DFP	Edward Mahama	27,889	0.33			0
	DPP	Emmanuel Antwi	8,653	0.10			0
	RPD	Thomas Ward-	6889	0.08			0
	Independent	Brew	19342	0.23			4
		Kwabena Adjei					
		Kwesi Yeboah					

(table continued on next page)

Year	Political Party	Candidates	Votes Secured	Percentage of Votes	Run-off Candidates	President-Elect	Parliamentary Seats Won
2012	NDC	John Mahama	5,574,761	50.70	N/A	Mahama	148
	NPP	Nana Akuffo-Addo	5,248,898	47.74			123
	PPP	Kwesi Nduom	64,362	0.59			0
	GCPP	Henry Lartey	38,223	0.35			0
	PNC	Hassan Ayariga	24,617	0.22			1
	CPP	Michael Foster	20,323	0.18			0
	UFP	Kwasi Odike	8,877	0.08			0
	Independent	Jacob Yeboah	15,201	0.14			3

Note. Compiled from the website of the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

Conclusion

This chapter of the dissertation reviewed the extant literature on Ghana's democracy since independence with emphasis on the fourth republic which commenced in 1992. A critical review of the literature depicts an incomplete evaluation of Ghana's democracy; in that, scholars and researchers have focused predominantly on Ghana's ability to organize elections with little or no political violence. Similarly, researchers and scholars have focused extensively on the views of the political elite at the expense of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. There is little to no literature on the views of the ordinary Ghanaian on Ghana's democracy. It is an undeniable fact that researchers have written extensively about democracy in Ghana; however, the limitation of the various studies has been that it is less representative of the opinions, feelings, and experiences of ordinary Ghanaians. This has perpetuated a situation where the discussion on Ghana's democratic journey is devoid of the perspectives of the ordinary Ghanaian to whose benefit

democracy is being practiced. This study gathered the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen on Ghana's democracy since the inception of the fourth republic. This literature review has highlighted this critical gap in knowledge with respect to democracy in Ghana, and has provided a solid foundation for this study.

The next chapter addresses the methodology of the study in detail. As earlier indicated, the researcher selected qualitative case study as the appropriate research method capable of answering the overarching research question and sub questions. In order to provide an in-depth analysis of an on-going phenomenon under study, Creswell (2013) recommended the use of qualitative case study; in that, qualitative case studies allowed the researcher to explore critically and in a detailed fashioned, a real-life, and an on-going phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

There is a problem of incomplete evaluation of democracy in Ghana. Ghana's democracy has been hailed by scholars, practitioners, and the international community in recent years as the shining example in the West African Sub-region, as a result of the country's record of organizing successive elections with minimal or no violence (Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012). However, the evaluation of Ghana's democracy has predominantly focused on the nation's elections prowess and disproportionately captures the views of the elite, defined here as those elected or appointed to political positions (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; UNDP, 2006). In the rare instances where scholars have evaluated Ghana's democracy beyond elections, the emphasis has been on political institutions and the electoral commission; conspicuously missing, is the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian, defined here as Ghanaians who do not hold any political positions, to whose benefit democracy is being practiced. This presented only a partial and an incomplete picture of Ghana's democracy, given the relevance of citizen's participation in democratic societies.

This chapter of the study focused on the research design; theoretical tradition of inquiry, research population and sample, data collection methods, procedures for data management, data analysis methods, and issues pertaining to ethical considerations. In order to explain better the rationale behind the choice of methodology for this study, the research questions that guided this study have been restated below:

RQ1: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?

RQ2: How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?

RQ3: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?

RQ4: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?

This study promotes further understanding of Ghana's democracy by shedding light on the opinions, experiences, feelings, and perspectives of the ordinary Ghanaian. Similarly, the study leads to highlighting the aspirations of Ghanaian citizens under this democratic dispensation, and also reveals the degree of political, social, and economic responsiveness of government to the needs of its citizens. Furthermore, the study provides an empirical basis for the role that citizens play in ensuring political, social, and economic accountability in democratic societies. Finally, the study reveals the relative importance that ordinary Ghanaian citizens place on both the means (elections) and the substance (good governance) of democracy, and highlight the effectiveness or otherwise of current procedures for evaluating democratic governance in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

Design of Study

This section explains the research design which was employed for the study. As a result, it is dedicated to explaining the philosophical and theoretical method of research that served as the foundation of the study's methodology. In the same vein, this section

addresses the study's sample size, sampling strategies, and the population of the study. Furthermore, this section discusses data collection methods, strategies for data analysis, issues surrounding ethics, the researcher's role in the study, issues of privacy and confidentiality in the broader context of participant's protection, quality, and bias.

Theoretical Method of Inquiry

This research employed a qualitative case study approach to explore Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the citizenry. The study followed the relativistic and constructivist tradition of research; in that, the phenomenon under study was explained from the subjective opinions of the participants. This qualitative case study was premised upon exploring and procuring deeper understanding of democratic governance in Ghana by gathering and analyzing the experiences, feelings, opinions, and the perspectives of ordinary Ghanaians who have had a firsthand experience of Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic.

Within the realm of research, qualitative method of inquiry is deemed suited for studies that seek to explore phenomena that are not easily explained by already established theories and concepts. In other words, qualitative approach to research is recommended when variables cannot be easily identified and explained. A qualitative approach is best suited when the focus of the study is not to ascertain the relationship that exist between two variables, or when the focus is not to measure the impact of one variable (independent) on another variable (dependent). Qualitative method of inquiry best applies when the study seeks to uncover and explore the multifaceted and complex relationships that exist among variables that exist within an ongoing phenomenon;

usually in real-life situations (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Singleton & Straits, 2005; Trochim, 2006). Qualitative case studies are primarily fashioned to provide in-depth knowledge on ongoing real-life situations. It was therefore no accident that case study was the preferred method of inquiry for this research; given that the phenomenon the study sought to explore was an ongoing phenomenon in Ghana where the evaluation of democracy did not incorporate the views of the ordinary Ghanaian and focused extremely on elections and the views of the political elite (Ayittey, 2010; Basedau & Stroh, 2012; Berg-Schlosser, 2008).

Justification for Qualitative Case Study

Generally, there were other approaches of inquiry that could have been utilized in this research. Methods of inquiry such as phenomenology, ethnography, survey questionnaire and grounded theory were ideal methods depending on the purpose of the study and the questions that the study sought to answer. However, based on this study's intent, case study provided the most appropriate avenue towards answering the overarching research question and sub questions. For instance, phenomenological study primarily concerns itself with describing participant's lived experiences, and the commonality that exist in terms of the meaning that participants ascribe to the phenomenon they encountered (Creswell, 2013). In the same vein, ethnographic study is concerned with how a group of people live; the emphasis is on shared culture amongst groups. As clearly espoused in the introduction section of this study, the focus of this research was neither on shared culture amongst groups as is the case in ethnography nor was it exploring the meaning that individuals give to phenomena they encounter as is the

case of phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, grounded theory focuses on building theories from data gathered as a result of a study (Singleton & Straits, 2005); however, the focus of this research was not the promulgation of theory, but rather to provide an in-depth analysis of Ghana's democracy with emphasis on the perspectives, experiences, feelings, and opinions of the ordinary Ghanaian under Ghana's fourth republic. Again, the possibility of using survey questionnaire as the method of collecting data for this study was contemplated; however, it became clear that survey questionnaire was not suitable. Even though survey questionnaire is known to be cost effective and reduces the incidence of researcher bias, the method was not chosen due to its reliance on variables resulting from pre-determined theory to test hypothesis. This research is not focused on testing hypothesis and variables that have been pre-determined as required by survey questionnaire. This made survey questionnaire unsuitable for this research. Soliciting the perspectives of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy required that the researcher selected information-rich participants who had firsthand experience of Ghana's democracy and could provide detailed information on the phenomenon under study. Also, the method of data collection for this study afforded the researcher the opportunity to clarify ambiguous statements of participants and also allowed him/her to probe for essential information that were not gathered initially; these qualities were not embedded in survey questionnaires, since the researcher have to accept responses provided by participants on the face of it (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This, the researcher determined, impacted his ability to gather quality data to answer the research questions.

In the opinion of Yin (2009), a case study is an experiential scrutiny that explores an existing occurrence within its real life setting, especially when the confines between phenomenon and setting are not clearly evident (as cited in Woodside, 2010). Primarily, case study concerns itself with uncovering an ongoing occurrence by subjecting it to critical and in-depth analysis aided by rigorous data collection mechanisms such as interviews, review of documents, and observation (Creswell, 2013). The main objective of qualitative case study is to critically scrutinize a phenomenon in order to paint a comprehensive and vivid picture of the phenomenon; and in the process provide a better understanding of the phenomenon to the outside world (Creswell, 2013).

Case study engrosses theory/concepts to foresee and inform an 'emic view' of the phenomenon under study (Woodside, 2010, p. 1). It is important to state that, under certain instances; theory has not only served as a framework, but has been the creation of case study. It has been possible for researchers to generalize from sample to population, if the sample size employed in a case study is large enough (Creswell, 2013). The prospect of deducing theory from observed facts occur, if case study researchers employ diverse sources of data gathering and utilize the study of several cases (Woodside, 2010). Traditionally, theory propagation has been the domain of grounded theory; one of the main approaches to qualitative research that highlights theory promulgation to explain action (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Stemming from the aforementioned reasons, this researcher found qualitative case study most suited for this study that emphasized depth over breadth compared to phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and survey questionnaire.

Population and Sample

This section explains the sampling size, strategies, and procedures for this study. It outlines the mechanisms and procedures that were utilized to gain access to the study's participants. The target population for this study was Ghanaian citizens who have lived in Ghana for a minimum of four years since the inception of the fourth republic which began in 1992. With respect to this study, participants were selected based on their firsthand experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This author was of the belief that Ghanaian citizens who have lived in Ghana for a minimum of four years possess the requisite knowledge and experience that allowed him paint an accurate picture of Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian. This is in consonance with qualitative case study research as espoused by Creswell (2013). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative case study research required information-rich participants who possessed in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, sampling Ghanaian citizens who had experienced the practice of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic allowed this researcher the opportunity to collect quality data on democracy in Ghana. Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002) posited that the sample for a qualitative case study should have firsthand knowledge and experience of the phenomenon; given that in qualitative case study emphasis is placed on depth as opposed to breadth (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The sample for this study satisfied all the aforementioned criteria for a sample in qualitative case study.

Sampling Procedures

Within the arena of qualitative research, sampling connotes selecting participants who are representative of the target population being studied (Polkinghorne, 2005). In order for research to accomplish its intended objective, it is critical for researchers to choose participants based on their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under study. Information-rich participants are especially critical to the success of qualitative case study; in that, case study focuses on exploring and providing an in-depth understanding of participants in relations to the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Unlike quantitative approach to research where so much emphasis is placed on the extent to which the sample represents the population due to the necessity of making inferences from the sample to the population, qualitative case study emphasizes on the experience and knowledge that the participants bring with regards to the phenomenon the researcher is understudying. In other words, the product of qualitative case study should explore and provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied as opposed to ensuring that the characteristics of the sample mimic that of the population (Creswell, 2013). The ability to generalize research results from sample to population is not paramount in qualitative case study as opposed to the knowledge and experience that each participant contributes to the researcher's ability to explore, unravel, and explain the phenomenon understudy (Polkinghorne, 2005). These and many other critical factors have significantly impacted the choice of sampling method for this research.

In this research, the researcher employed purposive sampling to choose participants who served as vital informants. According to Creswell (2009), vital informants are critical to a qualitative researcher's ability to gain access to useful information; in that, they provide critical information about the phenomenon being studied based on firsthand experiences and knowledgeable insight of people who have encountered the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). For the purpose of this study, vital informants that were interviewed included members of academia whose interest is democracy and governance, women's groups and gender advocates, members of law enforcement, students of tertiary institutions in Ghana, traders in Ghana, constitutional lawyers in Ghana, employees of policy think tanks in Ghana, rural dwellers in Ghana, and members of Ghana's civil service. The rationale behind selecting this target population was to enable the researcher to create a pool of knowledgeable informants who represented a cross-section of the Ghanaian populace who had experienced firsthand the practice of democracy in Ghana since the dawn of the fourth republic. The researcher then purposefully selected participants from this pool based on their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied. It is crucial to bear in mind that the study sought to solicit the perspectives of ordinary Ghanaians on the practice of democracy in Ghana beyond the periodic exercise of one's franchise. Therefore, diversity in perspectives was as critical as the experiences of participants, in order to report impartial, all-round, and comprehensive opinions of ordinary Ghanaians from all walks of life on their country's democracy.

Once the researcher created the pool of key informants, purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants for interview. Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to select participants with detailed knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. Patton (2002) posited that “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling” (2002, p. 230). In using purposeful sampling, the mindset of the researcher was to safeguard that, those selected for the research of this phenomenon were willing and able to give detailed information towards answering the pertinent research questions (Creswell, 2013). Within the context of purposeful sampling, there were a myriad of strategies that could be employed. These included; deviant and extreme cases, criterion sampling, theory-based sampling, homogenous sampling, critical sampling, confirmatory sampling, and maximum variation.

In this research, maximum variation, criterion, and theory-based samplings were utilized. The researcher was of the conviction that maximum variation sampling ensured that the participants selected were of diverse opinions, experiences, and perspectives. Admittedly, depth was of essence to this study; however, the purpose of this study was better served if the study captured diverse opinions and experiences of participants. In the opinion of Creswell (2013), accounting for differences in perspectives is a cardinal principle of qualitative case study (Creswell, 2013). Using maximum variation ensured that participants represented all the different perspectives about Ghana’s democracy, and this helped to achieve balance in the final results. Again, criterion sampling was also employed in this study. Through criterion sampling, clear criteria was established as to

who qualified to participate in the study. Participants had lived in Ghana from the inception of the fourth republic which began in 1992; were Ghanaian citizens by birth or naturalization; have lived in Ghana for a minimum of four years; and did not hold or held any political position through election or by means of appointment. These criteria enabled the researcher to gain access to participants who had firsthand and prolonged experiences of Ghana's democracy, and also ensured that those defined as the political elite by the standards of this study were excluded. Also, it ensured that the opinions, experiences, and the perspectives captured by the study were those of Ghanaian alone. Finally, theory-based sampling was also utilized in this research. Theory-based sampling enabled the researcher to capture expert knowledge on pertinent issues that arose from the data that was collected. Through theory-based sampling, experts in democracy in Ghana were called upon to enrich the data with their expertise on Ghana's democracy.

Sample Size

Qualitative researchers as part of selecting a sampling strategy must take into account the issue of sample size (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), sample size is one of the crucial decisions that confront researchers in the research process. For this study, the researcher used a minimum of 15 participants even though saturation was attained by the time the 13th participant was interviewed. In a qualitative case study such as this one, the emphasis is usually not on the ability to generalize results, and for that reason large sample sizes are usually not employed (Patton, 2002). The general consensus among experts in qualitative research is that, qualitative case study emphasizes depth as opposed to breadth (Creswell, 2013; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Patton,

2002; Woodside, 2010). In qualitative case studies, the ability to provide an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon based on detailed knowledge and experience that participants bring is given precedence over the need to generalize results from sample to population (Creswell, 2009). The justification of a sample size of 15 for this study was premised on the belief that the sample size is big enough to make room for the accommodation of diverse views and experiences of participants. At the same time it was not too large to impede the researcher's ability to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon being studied. Experts in qualitative research opine that in order for qualitative case study researcher to be able to provide comprehensive accounts of the phenomenon being studied, an information-rich small sample size should be utilized, as opposed to large ones (Creswell, 2013; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Goulding, 2002). A sample size of 15 participants was ideal for this because it allowed the researcher the latitude to incorporate participants with diverse views and experiences without compromising the depth that is required of qualitative case study. Creswell (2009, 2012) advocated a small sample size for qualitative case study research that sought to explore a phenomenon comprehensively. It is critical to note that while a large sample size may rob a qualitative study of its depth, a sample size too small may not augur well for painting a diverse and a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, in a study that explored deeply and provided diverse and comprehensive analysis of democracy in Ghana from the perspective of the citizenry, a sample size that stroke a balance between these two important ingredients was utilized. Therefore a sample size of

15 participants conformed to the expert opinions of both Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002) and was ideal for the purpose and objective of this study.

Gaining Access to Participants

Apart from the legal and ethical issues that a researcher must address prior to recruiting participants for a study, gaining access to quality data is intrinsically bound to a researcher's ability to build trust and rapport with potential participants (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). According to Creswell (2013), researchers must identify the people he termed as "gate-keepers" who may be the "gateway" to gaining access to knowledgeable and information-rich participants. Prior to dispatching official documents such as recruitment letters and statements of informed consent to participants, the researcher intended to reach out to heads of institutions whose members the researcher intended to sample. However, it became apparent during sampling that the researcher did not need to recruit participants through organizations or institutions. Therefore, the researcher only maintained contacts with individuals identified to be potential participants due to their knowledge and experience. Maintaining a professional bearing in all communications and being sensitive to the culture of participants fostered trust and respect between the researcher and the participants. The researcher explained in detail the purpose of the study and the potential benefits that may accrue to participants as a result of partaking in the study. Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002) recommended that the researcher be candid and truthful with participants. In the opinion of Creswell (2013), "gate-keepers" must be treated with respect and that enhanced the chances of the researcher gaining access to participants. Apart from the benefits of the study to the

participants and the larger society, potential risk were also made known to participants and their right to redraw from the study without prior notice was articulated to them clearly by the researcher (Patton, 2002). These were conscious efforts made by the researcher to gain access to participants of the study.

Data Collection

Data collection is one of the crucial phases of qualitative case study research; in that, it is the link between the theoretical framework and the real-life phenomenon being studied. Collecting data is the practical attempt by the inquirer to paint an empirical picture of the phenomenon under study. Data collection for this study took the form of interviews, observational field notes, and documentary sources. The data forms and the procedures that were used in gathering the data have been described below.

Interviews

Interviews are a potent tool for data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2005). Janesick (2011) enumerated the important role that interviews play in qualitative research as a data collection tool. Janesick (2011) posited that interviews are “a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic” (2011, p. 100). In this study, a face-to-face interview style was employed, albeit through Skype, to gather the opinions, views, perspectives, and the experiences of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana’s democracy since the inception of the fourth republic. According to Frank-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), face-to-face interviews gives the researcher enough latitude and flexibility to utilized both non-

structured and structured questioning when interviewing participants. Using face-to-face interview style afforded the researcher an avenue to instantly clarify ambiguous statements and further probe participants on specific issues that arose in the course of the interview (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Again, face-to-face interviews have a higher response rate from participants compared to other forms of interview styles (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Employing face-to-face interview in this research did not only enable the researcher to capture verbal communication of participants, but also non-verbal communication such as body language and physical expressions. Similarly, the use of technology such as Skype to conduct the interviews with information-rich participants enabled the researcher to circumvent hindrances such as physical availability of participants due to geographical distance. In this study, the researcher interviewed Ghanaian citizens who have experienced the practice of democracy in Ghana for a minimum of four years since the beginning of the fourth republic in 1992.

Observational Field Notes

As the data collection phase commenced, the researcher kept records of observations spanning the period of data collection. These observational notes were analyzed and incorporated in the study's results. Many qualitative scholars have written about the evidential value of observation as a tool for data collection and for purposes of triangulation of results (Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Patton, 2002). Matching data gathered from interviews against what researchers have observed in the natural settings of participants is a crucial way of corroborating results (Frankfort-

Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Interviewing participants in their natural settings for this study afforded the researcher an opportunity to simultaneously observe participants through the prism of the phenomenon being studied. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias posited that field notes augment the data collected from interviews and documentary sources (2008). Throughout the three months period of the study, the researcher kept records of observations made, especially during the various interview sessions.

Documents

In addition to interviews and observational field notes, the researcher relied on review of documents as one of the data collection mechanisms. As earlier noted, it has been twenty two years since the inception of the fourth republic in Ghana, and the researcher anticipated that there were a lot of documents produced during this period. There were documents in the form of publications, online sources, official documents from government and non-governmental institutions, the news media, and documents from the three branches of government that pertained to the practice of democracy in Ghana. Similarly, international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Transparency International, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have written extensively about Ghana's democracy since 1992, and such documents were relied upon to paint a comprehensive picture of Ghana's democracy by measuring such documents against the opinion of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. The researchers applied content analysis to these documentary sources by looking for themes and patterns from the various reports and

compared them to the data gathered through interviews. By triangulating the data, results may be refuted or corroborated. Creswell (2013) and Singleton and Straits (2005) catalogued four crucial sources of data for qualitative case study researchers; archival sources, mass media, public documents, and private or personal documents (Creswell, 2013; Singleton & Straits, 2005). The researcher reviewed such documents to gather data that were relevant to Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the citizenry. The sources for such documents were reports by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD), country reports on Ghana from organizations such as Transparency International (TI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), APRM, and Ghana Integrity Initiative in Ghana.

Method of Data Analysis

This section is dedicated to discussing the method that the researcher used to analyze the data collected from the field work. Data in its raw form is chaotic and disorderly; therefore data analysis is the process whereby raw data is examined for meaning and understanding (Creswell, 2013). It involves making sense out of the raw data collected from the field in relations to the phenomenon being studied.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Representation

In qualitative research study, it is not uncommon to witness researchers combine data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2013). This is largely due to the fact that data analysis begins immediately data collection commences. In this qualitative study, the researcher employed data management strategies, memoing, establishment of themes and patterns, interpretations and representation to organize, examine, and analyze the data

that were gathered from all field exercises. Data management is critical to qualitative research mainly due to the volume of data that is normally gathered during the data collection phase (Creswell, 2009). As part of the plans to manage data in an effective manner, the researcher organized data under clearly defined subject themes and then place them into named files for easy access, retrieval, and analysis. With respect to data analysis, the researcher utilized thematic analysis by applying reading and memoing to gain an intimate understanding of the data gathered and then proceeded to codify the data into broad themes, categories, and establish patterns. Constant review of the data for different meanings and perspectives ensured that the researcher attained saturation; that is, it ensured that the data has been reviewed for all probable insight (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The researcher applied “detailed description” and what Creswell (2013) referred to as “categorical aggregation” to the data to paint a comprehensive picture of the study’s phenomenon based on multiple perspectives. Similarly, the researcher utilized “direct interpretation” to bolster any interpretation based on the researcher’s intuitions. This augured well for “naturalistic generalization”; in that, the researcher’s conclusions and assertions were premised upon his encounter with the data (Creswell, 2013).

Ethical Issues

As a study that involved human subjects, issues of privacy and confidentiality came into play. Also, the use of data collected from participants through interviews, observation, and review of documents triggered unintended ethical challenges. To prevent these challenges, I coordinated with Walden University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB approval number 01-14-15-0333397) to ensure that all ethical issues had

been considered and taken care of prior to beginning the study. As Creswell (2013) recommended, ethical issues must be anticipated prior to beginning the research, and efforts must be made to identify them at each stage of the research process (Creswell, 2013). In this study, participants were made aware of their rights to redraw from the study at any given time, and the fact that their continuous participation in the study was voluntary was re-echoed (Creswell, 2013). A letter written in clear and unambiguous language and signed by the researcher stating the purpose of the study and how the data collected will be utilized was sent to each participant prior to commencement of interview to secure informed consent.

During the data collection phase of the study, similar protocols were followed. Prior to interviewing participants, this researcher reiterated the fact that participation in the study is completely voluntary, and for that matter, participants reserved the right to redraw at any time during the process. The intent of the study was made known once more, and permission was sought to use tape recorders to record the interview (Creswell, 2013). The researcher clearly stated to the interviewee how the data collected will be used and any benefits that may accrue to participants for partaking in the study was explained (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Similarly, during observation the researcher sought permission to observe participants in their natural habitat and also document his observation during the interview. Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002) advocated the use of gate keepers to gain entrance to the observation site (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). In this study, the researcher did not need to use gate-keepers since institution and organizations were not

used as partners. However, protocol that were expected to be accorded gate-keepers were used by the researcher in his dealings with participants. It was easier to earn the trust of participants when the researcher showed respect and took time to build the needed rapport with participants.

Furthermore, to curtail ethical issues that could mar the research process, this researcher revealed all biases held prior to the study. Conscious efforts were made to use gender neutral language and also to ensure that there was mutual respect between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2013). It was important to ensure that any doubts of political motivations, and political affiliations were totally nonexistent in the minds of participants in this study. This was critical because given the nature of the study; any real or perceived political inclination could jeopardize the quality of the data that the researcher could gather from participants.

Finally, when the report is ready, this researcher intends to share his findings with participants by distributing summaries of the report to the participants. Complete dissertations will be provided upon request. Similarly, it is imperative to refrain from using the data for other purposes other than that of which informed consent was given. Using the data in other publications without consent from participants is tantamount to a breach of trust (Creswell, 2013). This researcher used the data only for the purpose for which consent was secured. According to Creswell (2013), it is important to disclose entities that provided financial help towards the study. This will ensure that issues of conflict of interest do not arise (Creswell, 2013). Shrouding funders of one's study in secrecy raises questions about a researcher's conclusion, since it may be construed as

doing the bidding of those from whom you receive funding. Transparency ensures that misconceptions on reports are eradicated (Creswell, 2013). This study was wholly funded by the researcher.

Issues of Quality

Ethics and issues concerning quality permeate all research traditions. However, there are striking differences in the procedures and mechanisms researchers in each research tradition employ to ensure that quality standards are adhered to, and that results procured from research studies are of impeccable quality. Within the realm of qualitative research, issues concerning quality are described under different terms such as trustworthiness, confirmability, dependability, transferability, credibility, and authenticity, as opposed to reliability and validity in quantitative research. As a result of the qualitative nature of this study, it was important for the researcher to ensure that issues that had the potential to taint the study's quality with respect to both the procedures used and the results obtained were keenly addressed.

In this qualitative case study, the researcher identified credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability as potential quality issues and tackled it head-on. In qualitative case study, credibility issues may arise if conclusions and assertions made by the researcher are not based on the perspectives or viewpoints of the research participants (Creswell, 2009). Emphasis has always been placed on the researcher exploring and explaining a phenomenon from the perspective of participants in qualitative case study (Creswell, 2013). The researcher bolstered the credibility of this study by basing all

assertions and conclusions strictly on the viewpoint of participants who had experienced firsthand the practice of democracy in Ghana since the inception of the fourth republic.

Again, confirmability was another quality issue that the researcher contended with. Confirmability dictates that the researcher corroborates the results of one data source with that of another (Woodside, 2010). There is a real potential for skewed reporting by the researcher if conclusions are based on a single data source (Creswell, 2013). It was therefore imperative that this researcher employed triangulation to ensure that conclusions drawn were based on multiple data sources to satisfy the confirmability test. Triangulation was the mechanism that allowed this researcher to find points of convergence in the different data sources to confirm or refute drawn conclusions from a given data source. The researcher employed multiple data sources; interviews, documents, and observation to achieve triangulation and ultimately confirmability. Furthermore, the researcher bore the ultimate responsibility to ensure that both the methodology he employed and the results he procured could stand the dependability test. It is a cardinal principle in qualitative case study for the researcher to make known to the study's audience changes in the context of the study and the extent to which such changes affects the study's final report (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Polkinghorne, 2005).

The Role of the Researcher

In consonance with the traditions of qualitative research, the primary role of the researcher was to serve as the instrument of the study. As the instrument of the study, the researcher spearheaded the collection and analysis of data, and the writing of the study's

report. The researcher after securing all the relevant permission to collect data from the IRB recruited all the participants for the study and subsequently obtained the necessary informed consent from participants. As required by studies where observation and face-to-face interviews were some of the data collection tools, the researcher was supposed to embark on a data collection trip to Ghana for the purpose of interviewing and observing participants in their natural settings. However, an alternative plan of using Skype for the interviews was activated due to challenges in schedule of participants that arose as results of the Christmas holidays of 2014. In the opinion of Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002), in qualitative case study the researcher is the embodiment of the study; he/she serves as the instrument of data collection and coordinates the study in a harmonious manner from the beginning to the end (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). This is contrary to the practice in quantitative research studies where researchers construct new instruments for data collection or rely on pre-constructed instruments to collect data (Creswell, 2009).

The Researcher's Bias

One of the potential risks to qualitative research is the bias that the researcher may bring to the study. Unlike quantitative research where emphasis is placed on objectivity, qualitative research allows for the researcher to incorporate his/her experiences, intuition, and beliefs into the study if he has intimate knowledge and experience of the phenomenon he/she is understudying. Similarly, in qualitative research the researcher immerses himself/herself into the data, and in instances where observation is utilized as a data collection mechanism, the researcher spends a lot of time in the field engaging and observing participants. These long periods of engagement with participants may lead to a

situation where the researcher develops affection or otherwise and form subjective opinions about the participants, their culture, and their environment. Creswell (2009) refers to such as a situation as “the researcher has gone native” (Creswell, 2009). When such situations occur, there is a real chance that the researcher may taint the process and the results with his/her bias for or against the participants. As a result, the researcher must make conscious effort to check all pre-conceived notions and biases that may impact the study adversely and bring the results into disrepute. There are different procedures available to qualitative researchers to deal with their biases when conducting a research. The researcher in this study adopted the following measures to mitigate the effects that personal biases may have on this study;

First and foremost, researcher revealed his bias and framed it as part of the research. According to Creswell (2013), a researcher’s prior experience of a phenomenon he/she is understudying when revealed and framed within the context of the study becomes an asset instead of the liability it is when concealed from the study’s audience (Creswell, 2013). As an American of Ghanaian descent who lived most of his formative years in Ghana, the researcher has prior firsthand experience of the practice of democracy in Ghana. The researcher was born and raised in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, and he has witnessed different regimes including dictatorial and democratic ones. The researcher drew on this experience to help him better explain the phenomenon he is understudying. Again, the researcher’s knowledge of the Ghanaian culture helped him to explain and interpret the actions and inactions of participants correctly during the observation phase of data collection. Similarly, drawing on his Ghanaian heritage, the researcher was able to

gain the trust of participants by being respectful of their culture and beliefs. The researcher made known to the participants the benefits of the study to them and to society in general. The researcher re-echoed to the participants the fact that the study is not motivated by any political ambitions, and neither was it to the benefit of any political organization in and outside of Ghana. The researcher employed gender neutral language that was sensitive to the culture of the participants and was also mindful not to further marginalize any group that are in the minority in Ghana.

Summary

The focus of this chapter has been the discussion of the study's methodology. After critical consideration of the strengths and limitations of the various approaches to qualitative research, the researcher settled on qualitative case study as the most suited methodology for this study. The choice of qualitative case study was premised upon the fact that it provided the best avenue for the researcher to provide an in-depth analysis of Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the country's ordinary citizens. As noted earlier in this chapter, case study research emphasizes depth as opposed to breadth, and that is one of the hallmarks of case study that made it most suited for this research. The primary purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive analysis of Ghana's democracy since the inception of the country's fourth republic in 1992. Since Ghana's transition to multiparty democracy in 1992, there have been many attempts by scholars to evaluate the country's performance under its democratic dispensation (Debrah, 2011; Otchere-Darko, 2010; Mo Ibrahim Index, 2008). However, all the attempts predominantly focused on the views of the political elite and Ghana's success at

organizing national elections (Ainuson & Tandoh-Offin, 2010; Appiagyei-Atua, 2008). Little attempt has been made to gather the perspectives and experiences of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen concerning democracy in Ghana. It was this gap in knowledge that necessitated the researcher to embark on this study to provide a platform for ordinary Ghanaians to make known their views and experiences under Ghana's democratic dispensation. This has also helped to plug the existing knowledge gap.

The participants that were selected for this study were ordinary Ghanaian citizens who are 18 years and older who had resided in Ghana for a minimum of four years since 1992. As earlier indicated in this chapter, participants did not hold political position either by election or through appointment. The researcher utilized three data collection mechanisms; interviews, observation, and review of documentary sources. A sample size of 15 participants was used for this study. The researcher utilized purposeful sampling to select qualified participants for the study. The researcher's bias and the measures he instituted to ensure that it had no adverse effect on the study have also been discussed; peer review, member checking, and revealing the researcher's bias and conceptualizing it as part of the study were some of the mitigating measures employed. Data collection, data analysis, and representation strategies have been postulated by the researcher.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. For the purpose of this study, ordinary Ghanaian citizens had been defined as Ghanaian citizens, who had lived in Ghana for a minimum of four years since 1992; who had not held or do not hold any political position either by appointment or election; and are at least 18 years of age. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?
- RQ2: How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?
- RQ3: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?
- RQ4: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?

This chapter begins by shedding light on how data generation, collection, and recording occurred. The chapter also provides insight into how themes and meanings emerged. Finally, the chapter presents the results of the study.

Context of the Study

As dictated by the overarching research questions the study sought to answer, the qualitative case study approach to research was selected. This decision was based on the

fact that qualitative case study provided the best avenue for the researcher to provide an in-depth analysis of Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian. Even though other approaches such as phenomenology and grounded theory could have been used, the purpose of the study and the questions being answered made case study the most suited method. The purpose of the study was not to explore the commonality that existed amongst participants who had experienced a given phenomenon and neither was it to propound any theory based on the data collected from participants. As results, both grounded theory and phenomenology were found to be unsuitable for appropriately providing answers to the research questions. The findings in this study consisted of analysis of three data sets; interviews, documents, and observations of participants during interviews. Upon receiving approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to start collecting data, the researcher posted a research recruitment flyer on his Facebook and Instagram accounts detailing the purpose of the study and the inclusion criteria for prospective participants. The flyer contained instructions on who qualifies to participate in the study and how to contact the researcher for participation. As indicated in chapter 3, the first option was to conduct face-to-face interviews with participants who had consented to participate in the study. Again, for practical purposes, an alternative plan for using technology such as Skype to conduct interviews was added due to the fact that it was possible that some information-rich participants may not be geographically accessible and for that reason Skype will provide the researcher an avenue to interview such participants for their views, opinions, and experiences. When it came time to schedule appointments for interviews with

participants, it became quite apparent that all of them preferred Skype to the face-to-face interview. Some of them said they travelled to distant places for the holidays and had not returned to Ghana. As a result, the researcher's backup plan of relying on technology to conduct the interviews was activated. Therefore, all interviews for the study were conducted through Skype. Interviews were conducted with 15 participants who satisfied all the inclusion criteria. A minimum of 15 interviews was proposed with the option of conducting more interviews until saturation was attained. However, after 12 interviews saturation was attained and no new information was emerging. Regardless, 15 interviews were still completed because that was the minimum initially proposed.

Table 3

Demographic of Participants

N =15	Tally	Percentage
Gender		
Female	7	47
Male	8	53
Age category		
25-35	13	87
36-45	2	13
Marital Status		
Married	5	33
Single	10	67
Sector of employment		
Public	10	67
Private	5	33

Note. Data gathered directly from participants.

Table 3 provides demographic information about participants who were interviewed for the study. Sampling was done with recourse to the sampling strategies that were outlined in chapter 3; maximum variation, criterion, and theory based sampling. The use of maximum variation ensured that a broad section of Ghanaian citizens with diverse background and experiences were sampled for the study. This allowed the researcher to collect data from different views and perspectives based on unique experiences of participants. Similarly, criterion sampling allowed the researcher to strictly sample Ghanaian citizens who had experienced democracy under the fourth republic for at least four years, which was equal to a full term of an elected regime. The criterion sampling strategy also ensured that the researcher was only recording the views, opinions, and experiences of only Ghanaian citizens. The theory based sampling employed allowed for the sampling of knowledgeable participants who were able to give theoretical explanations to some of the information that the researcher realized from the data set.

The names of the participants were coded using the initials of participants combined with a number to distinguish between participants who bear the same name. For instance, if a participant's name was Jane Doe, it was coded JD1 to distinguish it from JD2 in case people with the same name participated. This was done to conceal the real identities of participants of the study.

After purposefully selecting the participants who responded to the recruitment flyer, the researcher proceeded to introduce the study and sought for the express consent of participants for interview. The consent forms were sent to participants through the

emails they provided and consent was received through the same media. Participants were asked by the researcher to send an email response that contained, amongst other things, the words “I consent to participate in this study voluntary” if they decided to participate in the study. This email response formed the basis for initial consent from participants to participate in the study. The researcher proceeded to schedule interviews with participants based on the sequence in which consent was received and also based on the availability of individual participants. It is worthy of note that since all the participants had opted for Skype interview, availability was not a major issue. Most participants were okay with the very first arrangement that was made. A few wanted to reconcile the proposed schedule with their personal calendars to ensure that there were no conflicting schedules. Even though the researcher had emailed all the necessary documentation to participants, a few of them demanded to speak with the researcher on phone to assure themselves of the nature of the study and what was required of them. After speaking with the researcher, the participants agreed to participate in the study. Generally, the participants cooperated well with the researcher and they were enthused to share their views, opinions, and experiences.

The interview sessions also provided an avenue for the researcher to observe participant’s reactions to the questions. Their body gestures, facial expressions, and the inflections in their voices provided a trough of data for the researcher, and that was useful for triangulation of the data. Some participants exhibited strong emotions on the subject matter; especially those employed by the public sector. Some of the participants went to the extent of trying to waive their right to confidentiality in order to allow the researcher

to attribute direct quotations to their real identities. Others spoke with little or no emotions and all the participants were knowledgeable with respect to the phenomenon under study.

The interview protocol consisted of semi-structured and open-ended questions. The researcher began the interview with predetermined questions and followed up with questions that were unique to the individual being interviewed. Some follow up questions were tailored based on the answers participants provided to the predetermined questions. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for coding and analysis. Similarly, the researcher kept a journal of his thoughts and observations during the interview process.

In addition to the data gathered through interviews, the researcher reviewed and analyzed official documents of UN, TI and its local affiliates in Ghana, Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), USAID, and APRM. As indicated earlier, observational field notes were also kept to record observations made during interviews for the purpose of triangulation.

With respect to data analysis, the researcher utilized thematic analysis by applying reading and memoing to gain an intimate understanding of the data gathered and then proceeded to codify the data into broad themes, categories, and establish patterns. He subjected the data to constant review for different meanings and perspectives until saturation was attained; that is, the data was reviewed for all probable insight (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The researcher applied “detailed description” and what Creswell (2013) referred to as “categorical aggregation” to the data to paint a comprehensive picture of the study’s phenomenon based on multiple perspectives. Similarly, the

researcher utilized “direct interpretation” to bolster any interpretation based on the researcher’s intuitions. This allowed the researcher to apply “naturalistic generalization”, which in turn ensured that the researcher’s conclusions and assertions were premised upon his encounter with the data (Creswell, 2013).

The findings of the study were validated through member checking and peer review. Similarly, the use of multiple data sources and rich thick description ensured that the findings were valid. All agreements made with participants in respect of their privacy and confidentiality in this study was strictly adhered to. There were no significant occurrences during the period of the study that changed the context of the study.

Coding

The researcher subjected the interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents to thematic analysis by applying reading and memoing to gain an intimate understanding of the data gathered and then proceeded to codify the data into broad themes, categories, and establish patterns. He subjected the data to constant review for different meanings and perspectives until saturation was attained; that is, the data were reviewed for all probable insight (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The researcher applied “detailed description” and what Creswell (2013) refers to as “categorical aggregation” to the data to paint a comprehensive picture of the study’s phenomenon based on multiple perspectives. Similarly, the researcher utilized “direct interpretation” to reinforce any interpretation based on the researcher’s intuitions. This allowed the researcher to apply “naturalistic generalization”, which in turn ensured that the researcher’s conclusions and

assertions were premised upon his encounter with the data. Table 4 depicts the initial codes that emerged from the three data sources utilized.

Table 4

Initial Codes Generated from the Three Data Sources

Initial Codes Generated from the Three Data Sources		
Interviews	Documents	Observation
Ia. Unresponsive governance	Da. Smooth political transitions	Oa. Citizen's frustrated with status quo
Ib. Lack of accountability	Db. Weak governance structures	Ob. Excitement with electoral achievements
Ic. Solid electoral system	Dc. Concentration of power at the executive branch	Oc. Loss of hope in future of democracy
Id. Unmet expectations	Dd. Public corruption	Od. Broad acceptance of democracy
Ie. Cautious optimism with democratic future	De. Strong electoral system	Oe. Apathy amongst citizens
If. Election based democracy	Df. Optimistic democratic future	Of. Individual voice makes no difference
Ig. Political impunity	Dg. Elite satisfaction with political status quo	Og. Widespread agreement on unresponsive governance
Ih. Politics of personalities and tribalism	Dh. Political freedoms	Oh. Apportioning of blame
Ii. Polarized public sphere	Di. High civil liberties	Oi. Political polarization
Ij. Weak civic engagement	Dj. Good human rights record	
Ik. Citizen's apathy	Dk. Weak checks and balances in government	
Il. Lack of economic opportunity	Dl. Selective prosecution	
Im. Unrealized democratic dividends		
In. Freedom of expression		

Table 4 Continued

Interviews	Documents	Observation
Io. Lack of consultation in decision making	Dm. winner takes all political system	
Ip. Disengaged political leadership	Dn. Vibrant democracy	
Iq. Political stability and peace	Do. Freedom of speech and association	
Ir. Citizens only legitimate voice is elections	Dp. Oasis of peace and tranquility	
Is. Accessible ballot	Dq. Unrealized socio-economic development	
It. Informed citizens enhance democracy	Dr. Democracy of Ghanaians own making	
Iu. Lack of trust in political leadership	Ds. Citizens apathy	
Iv. Unequal access to ballot	Dt. Economic Inequality	
Iw. Unequal application of law	Du. Improved democratic process	
Ix. Political zero sum game		
Iy. External influence in political process		
Iz. Expensive political campaigns		

Note. Initial coding from all three data sources

After the initial iteration and coding, the researcher proceeded to do a second iteration where the initial codes were combined into categories. Codes that were similar in nature and conveyed similar meanings were combined into a single category. Tables 4 and 5 depict how the initial codes were combined into categories and also show how those categories were applied to each research question.

Table 5

Second Iteration for Creation of Categories

Second Iteration: Categorization of Initial Codes	
Data Sources: Interviews, Documents, and Observations	
2a. Solid electoral system	2h. Political Impunity
2b. Political stability	2i. Loss of hope in future of democracy
2c. Unresponsive governance	2j. Plurality of ideas and information
2d. Lack of accountability	sharing
2e. Unrealized dividends of democracy	2k. Better decision making
2f. Civic disengagement	2l. Inclusive governance
2g. Public corruption	2m. An avenue for political accountability
	2n. Political equality
	2o. Foundation of vibrant democracy

Note. Generated categories from all three data sources.

Table 6

Third Iteration: Application of Themes to Research Questions

Application of Themes to Research Questions
<p>RQ1: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?</p> <p>Themes: 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e.</p>
<p>RQ2: How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?</p> <p>Themes: 2g, 2i.</p>
<p>RQ3: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?</p> <p>Themes: 2j, 2k.</p>
<p>RQ4: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?</p> <p>Themes: 2d, 2m, 2n, 2o</p>

Research Question 1

What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?

Introduction

This question was intended to elicit the views and opinions of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy in general since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992. The question was to enable the researcher paint a general picture of Ghana's democratic landscape from the experiences, views, and opinions of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. Analysis of the data revealed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens have experienced and believed the following: Ghana has a solid electoral system; the country enjoys stable political environment; government is not responsive to the needs of the citizenry; there were other unrealized dividends of democracy; and lack of accountability permeates Ghana's entire political system.

Solid Electoral System

In democratic societies, periodic free and fair elections are an integral part of the democratic process (Gilley, 2009). Upon returning to multiparty democracy in 1992, the Ghanaian constitution that ushered in the fourth republic made provisions for an independent Electoral Commission that plays a refereeing role in electioneering campaigns to ensure that citizens and political actors participate in a free and fair electoral process. The purpose was to enable genuine alternation of power between political actors premised upon the will of the citizenry. Chapter Seven of the 1992 constitution, Article 42, guarantees every Ghanaian citizen who has attained the minimum voting age of 18 years, and is of sound mind, the right to vote in public

elections (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In pursuance of this provision, Article 43 of the constitution states amongst other things that an Electoral Commission shall be established for the purpose of conducting public elections and referenda. Since the 1992 elections, which were marred by boycott by opposition parties in Ghana, Ghana's electoral system has seen tremendous improvements (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). The electoral system has become the image of Ghana's democratic success story. Under the fourth republic, there have been six consecutive elections in Ghana that has led to the transition of political power from one political party to another; the NDC handing over power in 2000 to the NPP and the reverse of power transition between the two political parties in 2008. Participant KA1 was of the opinion that the electoral system has gotten better over time, even though it is far from perfect. KA1 further explained that Ghana has always had relatively peaceful and transparent elections leading to changes in regimes in a peaceful manner. His admiration for Ghana's electoral system was revealed when he stated the following:

Actually I will say that our electioneering structure or system has to be one of the best in the world. It is very transparent, very down to earth, and it has gone under systematic and progressive changes from 1992. I can tell you that I don't know the story elsewhere or everywhere but it is difficult to find any nation where political parties are allowed to be involved in the printing.....actually when the ballot are being printed during elections, political parties are present and actually record the serial numbers of the ballot, and are allowed to escort the ballot to the

polling stations and some of them actually sleep with the ballot and election materials on the night before elections.

BA1, EM1, and OF1 all echoed the views of KA1 on Ghana's electoral system.

Participants across board praised Ghana's electoral system and actually indicated that it was one, if not the only means that allowed the citizenry genuine participation in the democratic process. Participants described the electoral system as transparent, accessible, and fair. It is important to note that two participants indicated that some areas in the electoral process need modernization. EM1 for instance indicated that transferring one's vote from one geographical location to another was a process fraught with challenges. In spite of these challenges, she was full of praise for the electoral process and the role it has played in solidifying Ghana's democracy. She pointed out that "but for elections, I don't know how this country would have been". BA1 summed his view and experience of the electoral process in the following words:

When it comes to the conduct of elections itself, and let us remind ourselves that in any democratic dispensation periodic conduct of elections is a vital part of the democratic process. So when it comes to elections, the conduct of elections, I think Ghana has covered itself in glory.

Similarly, a final report on the assessment of democracy and governance in Ghana by USAID in 2011 gave credence to the assertions of the participants on Ghana's electoral prowess and solid electoral system. The report highlighted the centrality of the Electoral Commission in Ghana's democracy and it accentuated the critical role that the

Commission has played and continues to play in deepening democratic governance in Ghana (USAID, 2011).

Political Stability

Given the fact that both documentary sources and interview data analyzed pointed to a solid electoral system in Ghana, it wasn't surprising that one of the common themes that followed was political stability. As already demonstrated in the literature review section in chapter 2 of this study, Ghana has had a 'roller-coaster' history with respect to multiparty democracy and military dictatorships (Oquaye, 2004). However, upon the inception of the fourth republic in 1992, Ghana has experienced unprecedented political stability in its history (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). For instance, the last time Ghana experienced any political interference that led to political instability was in 1981 when Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings seized power from the democratically elected government of Dr. Limann and suspended the third republican constitution (Oquaye, 2004). Even though it took 11 years to restore democratic governance, the fourth republic, in the opinion of participants has not only survived, it has thrived in terms of stability. Documentary evidence analyzed for this study has corroborated the assertions of the study's participants. An APRM report issued in 2005, the first of its kind in Africa, stated that "Ghana could rightly be described as an oasis of peace and tranquility in a sub region perpetually in turmoil" (APRM, 2005, p. xviii). The report also stated that Ghana has progressed towards consolidating and strengthening liberal democratic principles, structures, and processes. It emerged from the analysis of the interview data that participants attributed the political stability being enjoyed by Ghana directly to the solid

electoral system in Ghana. BA1, when asked to give his general thoughts on Ghana's democracy said, "We have had six largely peaceful democratic elections since we returned to democratic rule in 1992. And that is something for which we need to pat ourselves on the back". VG1, JG1, HQ1, and EG1 expressed similar views, opinions, and experiences. Another interesting pattern emerged with respect to Ghana's political stability. All of the participants but three did not only believe that Ghana's solid electoral system accounted for the nation's political stability, they also attributed Ghana's political stability to the 'peaceful nature of Ghanaians'. When the researcher inquired of them their views on the assertion that Ghana is the beacon of democracy in West Africa, both NP1 and EG1 concluded that Ghana's political stability was a function of both the electoral system and the 'peaceful nature of the citizenry'. EG1 stated the following in his answer:

To a large extent, Ghanaians are generally peaceful people. It will take a lot for a Ghanaian to resolve any type of difference with violence. Most people would have to be leisurely provoked to embark on that line of action. So, on the whole, Ghanaians are generally peaceful so this type of system of governance helps. It feeds into the nature of most Ghanaians.

Expressing similar views, NP1 asserted that "the world's perspective of our democracy and the fact that we are the epitome of democracy in West Africa is just based on the fact that Ghanaians like to shut up about their grievances to allow peace to prevail". Ghana remains one of the politically stable countries in Sub Sahara Africa and on the Continent of Africa. Since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992, Ghana has

held six elections and none have resulted in any form of violence. Neither has any attempt been made to subvert the will of the people. There was a general consensus amongst participants that Ghana enjoys extensive political stability in a sub region known for its political volatility.

Unresponsive Governance

Unresponsive governance was one of the central themes that emerged from analyzing interview data. Participants unanimously expressed dissatisfaction with the level of responsiveness that has occurred under Ghana's democratic dispensation. They indicated that, at all levels of government, citizens have not experienced the kind of responsiveness that one would expect in democratic governance. Participants cited a myriad of reasons for the lack of responsiveness to the citizenry and, chiefly amongst them were tribal and entrenched political affiliations. Participants indicated that political leaders over the years have come to realize that their continuous stay in power is not dependent on their responsiveness to the citizenry but rather their ability to market themselves in a tribal fashion and playing to one's political base. These, in the unanimous opinion of participants have shrunk nonpartisan demand for acceptable levels of responsiveness. Others also blamed the development on the skewed power distribution structure in favor of the executive branch, which enables the president to do as he pleases without any political consequences. Responsiveness to the citizenry is apportioned on a quid pro quo basis; development in exchange for vote. Therefore, the little responsiveness that citizens received was usually geared towards the political stronghold of the party in power. KO1 expressed his opinions and experiences in the following manner:

Government does not care about anybody. The only time you see government doing something, it's because government wants to take credit to win an election. They don't care about anybody. And it is not one government, every government that has been in power in this country, they don't care about anybody. Anytime they do something, it is because they anticipate a direct political gain. Even those occasions are just few, so I don't even count those to their credit...like the school feeding, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), those are even not working today, it is not working. The system does not work, it simply does not work. And so the only time you find government going to the need of the people, or trying to solve people's needs, it is because they want to make political capital out of that. They are not passionate about the people's problems, the people's issues. They are not there to solve the issues of the people. They don't love doing that.

All 15 participants believed that subsequent governments under the fourth republic have mastered the act of employing lib service and utilizing symbolic gestures to bandage the needs of the citizenry instead of applying substantive means to respond to the needs of the citizenry. Some participants recounted issues involving perennial flooding in Accra and its environs and some other parts of the country that has claimed lives, yet, politicians take trips to the homes of victims and use those occasions as photo shoots while making their usual promises to fix the issue when the flood subsides. Then the cycle repeats itself year in and year out without any substantive solution to the root cause of these needless deaths. These perennial flooding is due to lack of drainage

systems or poorly constructed ones. Participants indicated that this inept attitude of their government towards its citizens have prompted demonstrations and civic disobedience in times past and in recent times but that has done little to change the generally unresponsive posture of the government of Ghana to the needs of its citizens.

Unrealized Dividends of Democracy

In an attempt to provide the general impressions, opinions, views, and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic, the study's participants were asked to give their general impressions and experiences under Ghana's democracy since the inception of the fourth republic. Analysis of Participants' responses revealed a dual but contradictory impressions and experiences; positive experiences with regards to political stability and the electoral process and overwhelmingly negative impressions of equality before the law and equal access to economic opportunities.

On the electoral front, 14 out of the 15 participants indicated that their experiences have been positive. Since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992, Ghanaians have been able to freely choose their representatives without any form of interference or intimidation. The participants described the electoral process with words such as transparent, well-oiled machine, accessible, and peaceful. However, the narrative completely changed when they started describing their experiences with respect equality before the law, equal access to economic opportunity, and other critical ingredients of democratic governance. The majority of the participants painted a gloomy picture with respect to equality before the law, rising incidence of corruption, and deprivation in terms

of economic opportunities. For instance, KO1 shared his thoughts and experiences in the following words:

My thoughts on Ghana's democracy are that it has its good and it has its bad. I strongly believe that Ghana's democracy has increased corruption, where a few people who understand the law use the loopholes in the law to embezzle state funds and then enrich themselves. The laws in Ghana turn out to serve the rich and the powerful who understand it. There is corruption in the system which the executive overlook, there is still abuse of power; the executive take all the power and they do so many things that you don't expect people to do in a democracy.

All 15 participants emphasized the point that democratic practice is not just about the conduct of elections. In their view, the conduct of election indisputably is a vital part of it, but there is more to democracy than the conduct of elections. For all of them, what happened in the intervening years was equally important if not more important than the conduct of elections. In their unanimous view, in that area Ghana hasn't fared well. Even though most of the participants agreed that Ghana has made tremendous progress in the conduct of elections, they believed that that achievement has been over generalized to fuel the perception that Ghana is doing well in all aspects of democratic governance. This assertion was corroborated by documentary sources analyzed for this study. A 2012 Country Development Cooperation Strategy by the USAID indicated that "Ghana is a vibrant democracy with active political parties, a history of peaceful political transitions, and freedom of speech and association. However, governance systems at both the national and local levels are weak and, often insufficiently accountable to citizens

(USAID, 2012, p.14). Similar conclusions were drawn in the APRM report of 2007. The report indicated the government's failure to include the views of entities outside government, especially in the design of economic programs in Ghana. The APRM explicitly stated that "too often, suggestions offered to the government are ignored in its decision making and some of the political elites are simply insensitive to feelings at grassroots level (APRM, 2007, p.58). To the participants, these critical ingredients, equality before the law and equal economic opportunity, until realized, will render any attempt to generally assert that Ghana is the beacon of democracy in West Africa hollow. The general observation of participants was that election-wise, tremendous gains have been made by Ghana under the fourth republic; however, same cannot be said of all other dividends that democracy as a system of governance promises.

Lack of Accountability

Another theme that emerged as a result of data analysis was the lack of accountability of government. This theme was also common across all the participants interviewed. On this theme, participants reiterated that political leaders have been insulated from the effects of not being accountable due to the fact that many Ghanaians vote based on tribal and entrenched political affiliations. Thirteen of the 15 participants believed that the accountability that voting is designed to bring to the democratic process was not having the required effect because politicians knew that people voted based on preconceived notions that are largely premised on tribal and political affiliations.

Participant KA1 posited that:

There is no accountability, even though people have a right to express their voice through elections. But that is as far as it goes. But the biggest threat is economic inequality and lack of diligence in the exercise of power.

Expressing similar sentiments and experiences that buttressed the point made by KA1, BA1 posited that:

As a citizen of Ghana who lives in Ghana, I have been witness and I continue to be a witness of the perpetuation of a system which doesn't allow or assure that political leaders are truly accountable to the people. We call it democracy alright, but what elected political leaders do in Ghana is another thing altogether.

Participants unanimously converged on the idea of political impunity due to lack of accountability. In their opinion, political leaders act with impunity and they get away with that because the system is lax and is not stringent in terms of checks and balances. BA1 summed his frustration with the lack of accountable governance in Ghana by saying “so every four years we have peaceful, largely free and fair elections but in the intervening years, really the elected political leaders do not act and hold themselves accountable to the people”. All but one of the participants believed that until Ghanaians do away with tribal politics and blind political loyalty, the concept of political accountability will continue to elude Ghana's democracy.

Research Question 2

How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?

Introduction

Democracy as a system of governance depends largely on the citizens of a practicing nation to succeed. Citizens are the fulcrum around which democracy as a system of governance pivots (Diamond, 2008; Gilley, 2009). Therefore, this research question was intended to shed light on the critical role that ordinary Ghanaian citizens play, if any, and the consequence of apathetic citizenry on the sustainment of Ghana's democracy. Two main themes emerged from the data to answer this question; the idea of civic disengagement due to apathy and public corruption.

Civic Disengagement

The subject area of citizen's participation in democratic governance produced diverse opinions from the participants. All 15 participants gave their views on the role that citizens are supposed to play in democratic governance in general, and then followed up with their personal experiences and opinions on the role that Ghanaian citizens have played in sustaining democracy in Ghana. All 15 participants had a deep appreciation of the fact that citizen's participation is critical in sustaining democracy. At the same time, they shared their opinions on how political apathy amongst Ghana's citizens could impact the sustainment of democracy as a system of governance. To most participants, apathetic citizenry in Ghana would lead to civic disengagement and that would have adverse consequences on the sustainment of democracy. In the view of participants, political accountability was not something easily available on the political landscape in Ghana, therefore, an engaged citizenry provided some measure of counter balance to the power wielded by the political elite. A disengaged citizenry in Ghana will further worsen the

state of political accountability and erode any sway that the citizenry may have left on their political leaders. Civic disengagement will cause the slow death of democracy in Ghana according to majority of participants interviewed. Eleven of the 15 participants believed that Ghana's citizens are politically engaged and that has helped to curtail, to some extent, the impunity with which political leaders conduct themselves. Participants unanimously cited the active role that citizens play during electioneering campaigns to emphasize the point that Ghana's successful global image on elections are primarily due to an active citizenship that ensure free and fair elections. Two participants however, were of the opinion that Ghanaians citizens have not critically engaged their government and that is the reason for the lack of accountability and impunity that they witness in Ghana's democracy. They believed that an enlightened citizenry is what was needed to sustain democracy in Ghana not just engaging government for engagement sake. CO1 posited that:

Citizen's participation is the key to matured democracy. But an enlightened citizenry is what is needed to sustain a functioning democracy; not just citizen's participation. Because, if people are not educated and don't appreciate the process, how can they make refined decisions that can affect the common good of society?

Civic disengagement which in the opinion of 13 of the participants would be a direct consequence of citizen's apathy would have adverse effects on the sustainment of democracy in Ghana.

Public Corruption

The theme public corruption naturally emerged from participant's concern about civic disengagement in Ghana. All 15 participants acknowledged that public corruption is both a social and economic canker that has permeated most sectors in the Ghanaian economy. Some of them cited recent allegations of public corruption that has engulfed both the executive and legislative branches of the Government of Ghana. These allegations of public corruption, in their unanimous opinions, only came to the lime light due to the heroic activities of citizens who had declared war on public corruption. Members of the public and some investigative journalists blew the whistle on alleged corrupt public sector contracts on youth employment initiatives, and majority of the participants cited these incidents to support their claim that public corruption dissipate democratic governance without an engaged citizenry that keeps politicians in check. All 15 participants believed that widening economic opportunity between the political elite and the ordinary Ghanaian was one of the greatest threats to democratic governance, and public corruption, if left unchecked, could plunder the country into chaos. Based on the first hand experiences of all 15 participants, political leaders in Ghana count on the apathy of the citizenry to allow them make laws that are favorable to the rich and powerful and also to perpetuate the status quo of widening unequal economic opportunity between the elite and the masses. BA1 asserted that the sustainment of democracy was largely dependent on the role ordinary Ghanaian citizens choose to play.

For instance if citizens stand and begin to demand better governance and persist because change doesn't always come swiftly. So that is where the politicians

sometimes capitalize on....the pushers for change will fatigue over time and stop pushing for change. So if citizens can stand up and define for themselves what they consider acceptable governance standards and what they will consider unacceptable and persist, the emphasis is on persist, in their demand for those standards to be met, positive change will come.

All 15 participants agreed that disengaged citizenry can and would only lead to high levels of public corruption and its attendant deprivation of resources to the masses and that is one of the surest way to the demise of democratic governance in Ghana.

A 2011 report by GII, the local affiliate of TI in Ghana found that corruption remains a major challenge in Ghana. The report, amongst other things, concluded that Ghanaians view corruption as a major stumbling block to national development. Similarly the 2012 CPI by TI ranked Ghana 64th on a 174 country roster. However, Ghana's CPI score of 45 fell below 50 which is less than the average mark. The CPI scores countries from 1 to 100 with 1 signifying worse levels of corruption and 100 indicating high levels of transparency (Transparency International, 2011). The 2014 version of the CPI shows that Ghana has moved three places up to the 61st position with a score of 48 (Transparency International, 2014). Even though this is an improvement, it is still below average. It is important to indicate that the opinions and experiences shared by the study's participants did not reflect the improvements captured by the CPI.

Research Question 3

How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?

Introduction

The purpose of this question was to elicit the views and experiences of participants on the role that deliberation play in democratic governance in Ghana. Upon analyzing the data, it emerged that deliberation in Ghana led to plurality of ideas and information sharing, better decision making, and inclusive governance. Plurality of ideas and information sharing, in the opinion of participants, led to better decision making in democratic governance.

Plurality of Ideas and Information Sharing

The general trend on the subject of deliberation in Ghana's democracy elicited positive views and opinions from all participants. The idea of diverse opinions and information sharing featured prominently in the statements of all participants. All the participants believed that deliberation provided an avenue for citizens to engage with each other and government on matters of public interest. Twelve of the 15 participants indicated that freedom of expression as it existed in Ghana has been a major boost to deliberation. Twelve of the 15 participants expressed that deliberation has occasioned plural ideas and information sharing, and that has augured well for Ghana's political stability. However, the remaining three posited that even though deliberation has led to diverse opinions and information sharing, it has not culminated into shaping policy formulation and implementation. The three participants contended that the political elite only allow Ghanaians to express their opinions but those opinions do not in any way affect decisions made by the powers that be. In their opinion, the elite view deliberation as a consolatory tool to the masses. They asserted that they were not calling into question

the idea that deliberation has served and will continue to serve Ghana's democracy well, especially in the area of stability; their contention was, in the Ghanaian context, deliberation amongst the masses has become 'honorific' and lacks potency with respect to influencing policy decisions made by the political elite. The appreciation for deliberation in Ghana's democratic governance was unanimous amongst participants; however, three dissented when it came to the actual potency of deliberation in shaping policy decisions. KA1 summed up his views on Ghanaian citizens participating actively in deliberation with the following words:

Oh yes, participation will actually enhance the process. Participation has to be participating in terms of ideas and participations in terms of calling for accountability. Also when people participate, the pool of ideas that will be canvassed will be larger and the decision that will be made will be the best amongst the lot. So in terms of participation, it will enhance democracy.

The converging point for all 15 participants was that deliberation in democratic governance led to multiplicity of ideas and information sharing between and amongst citizens. And that, coupled with a solid electoral system has accounted for the political stability that Ghana has enjoyed under the fourth republic. The question of how deliberation has actually shaped policy formulation and implementation saw three participants dissenting from the other 12 participants.

Better Decision Making

Participants also overwhelmingly expressed the view that deliberation has led to better decision making and fostered a sense of inclusiveness among the citizenry.

Fourteen of the 15 participants cited deliberations between and amongst the various political parties and the Electoral Commission as an example of how deliberation has led to better decision making. For instance, majority of the participants opined that Ghana's electoral system has matured mainly due to the kind of deliberation that has occurred in electoral system. Some of them cited the formation of the IPAC in 1993 to buttress their point. IPAC was formed after opposition parties boycotted the parliamentary elections when they alleged wide spread irregularities in the presidential elections in 1993; the first elections under the fourth republic. The majority of the participants were of the firm conviction that but for the deliberations that occurred due to IPAC formation, Ghana would not have been able to chalk its electoral successes. Even though the participants agreed unanimously on the fact that deliberation enhances the quality of democratic governance, majority of them believed that deliberation has not occurred when it comes to governance in Ghana. Eleven of the 15 participants cited Ghana's 'winner takes all' political system as the reason for this occurrence. They recounted their experiences under the various political transitions that have occurred in Ghana under the fourth republic and the consensus was that each incoming government replaced people in all senior positions in government and public institutions with people loyal to their party. JG1 noted that:

Once a presidential candidate emerges as a winner of elections, all appointments are virtually done by the president. As far as our constitution is concerned as soon as you get a new president , the president appoint directly or indirectly almost 6000 officials and all these people are coming from his party. So elections in

Ghana or in our democracy, election is a big deal because once you lose, for four years you will be confined to the gallows, let me put it that way.

The remaining four participants attributed the lack of deliberation in governance to the level of acrimony that surrounds political campaigns in Ghana. They believed that acrimony in campaigns creates mistrust between political traditions and that has impacted their ability to share ideas and information during the intervening years. Drawing on the experience from the electoral system, participants believed that deliberation when done in good faith leads to better decision making and fosters inclusive governance.

Research Question 4

What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?

Introduction

This research question was intended to solicit the opinions and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on the role that elections play in Ghana's democracy. The researcher analyzed available data and interview transcripts to answer the question. Themes that emerged as far as the roles of elections in Ghana's democracy were concerned were: elections have aided Ghana's political stability, it has provided an avenue for political accountability, and has served as a means for political equality.

Political Stability

An analysis of all data sources revealed that elections have contributed significantly to Ghana's political stability under the fourth republic. The interview

transcripts revealed that 13 of the 15 participants were of the opinion that elections have significantly led to political stability in Ghana. Twelve of the 15 participants believed that elections provide citizens with a legitimate means to change government, if they so desire, and that has lowered the possibility that other illegitimate means such as coup d'état will be resorted to by those seeking change. EM1, believed that but for elections, she could not imagine the state of politics in Ghana. FS1, AS1, and JO1 all expressed similar views. To them, the fact that Ghana is in its 23rd year of democratic governance under the fourth republic is largely due to the faith that all political actors and other stakeholders have in the electoral process. Majority of the participants including SO1 cited Ghana's political history and previous attempts at democratic governance which ended as a result of military takeovers as reasons for their views. In the opinion of KO1, in Ghana, democracy is election and election is democracy. He posited that "I think if you listen to me, everything that I have said about Ghana's democracy has been election, election; I have done that deliberately because that is the Ghanaian or the general Ghanaian understanding of democracy". The unanimous view of the participants was that free and fair elections is the foundation of Ghana's democracy and as long as the citizenry believed they can choose their representatives freely and fairly, Ghana's political stability will be intact.

An Avenue for Political Accountability

Apart from political stability, it also emerged from the analysis of the data that elections enhanced democracy in Ghana by serving as a means of holding political stewards accountable. The issue of political accountability ignited a lot of emotions

amongst participants. Without exception, all 15 participants underscored the point that elections remain the only legitimate means for the citizenry to hold political leaders accountable, given that in Ghana once elections were over, political accountability was virtually nonexistent. Therefore, participants could not over emphasize the contribution of elections in the area of political accountability. The majority of participants indicated that development of public amenities has not been the major focus of political leaders; however, the little that is done usually occurs during election years. VG1 stated that the only time the majority of politicians have time for their constituents was when elections were pending and that has become the bargaining chip for the citizenry. The consensus among participants was that during the intervening years, politicians made decisions and imposed it on the citizenry. Therefore, historically, elections had become the silver bullet that allowed the citizenry to hold political stewards accountable. BA1 sharing his opinion and experience on the role elections play in enhancing democracy in Ghana said:

Elections play a very vital role in any democratic dispensation and Ghana's is no exception. It provides the opportunity for the citizenry to, at periodic times, do a score card, a report card on their elected leaders, on politicians. So Ghana is no different from any other society or country anywhere in the world when practicing democracy. That is the role elections play in Ghana's democratic dispensation or democratic practice. Providing an opportunity for citizens to do a score card, a report card on politicians; if we like you we keep you in power, if we don't, if we are dissatisfied with what you are doing we vote you out.

All 15 participants indicated that from their experience, elections remain the only major sway that the ordinary Ghanaian citizen had over his/her elected official. In their unanimous opinion election provided the greatest means of accountability for the citizenry in general.

Political Equality

One of the general views that emerged from analyzing the data was the fact that elections enhanced democracy in Ghana by serving as an avenue for political equality amongst the citizenry, irrespective of one's social class or economic status. The notion of one person one vote and the fact that each citizen's vote carried equal weight was viewed by majority of the participants as political equality. All 15 participants talked about the various inequalities that permeate the general Ghanaian society in the areas of income, application of law, and decision making in governance. Participants unanimously believed that the only facet of Ghana's democracy where equality actually manifested was the exercise of the right to vote. The Ghanaian constitution of 1992 under Article 42 guarantees every Ghanaian citizen who has attained the minimum voting age of 18 years and is of sound mind the right to vote. Every participant demonstrated general knowledge of this provision in the constitution of Ghana. Thirteen of the 15 participants believed that democracy as a system of governance thrives on the idea of political equality rooted in the notion one person one vote. Eleven of the 15 participants asserted that their understanding of democracy revolves around the notion of political equality. KA1 explained that democratic governance is incomplete without political equality premised on the idea of one man one vote. He noted:

Democracy in my opinion is a governance system where the citizenry engage with their leadership to formulate and shape policies towards the delivery of desirable public goods. It involves citizens choosing political leadership through free and fair elections premised on the idea of one man one vote one voice

Twelve other participants provided definitions of democracy that mimicked that of KA1. Even though two participants questioned the essence of having political equality with respect to voting and having no influence on matters that actually affected one's community, the fact that elections and the sacred act of voting provided equality in terms of the weight assigned to each citizens vote was unanimous. Interestingly, 11 out of the 15 participants went on to complain about the rising influence of money in Ghana's elections and expressed fears that if that development continued unabated it could erode the equality enjoyed in the electoral process. The participants who expressed this opinion believed that when the electoral process becomes expensive, politicians will become further detached from the citizenry and focus on the needs of those who bankroll their campaigns. This, they believed, will make mockery of the idea that each vote carries equal weight and deepen the already precarious plight of the ordinary citizen with respect to accountability in governance.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher took several measures to ensure that the results obtained as a result of the study were valid. The researcher employed triangulation of three data sources to ensure that results gathered from one data source was cross referenced with another source to ensure its validity. Corroboration of results obtained from one data source with

another has been documented as an effective means of validating results (Creswell, 2013, Patton, 2002). For this study, three data sources were utilized; interviews, documents review, and observation notes by the researcher. The results procured as a result of analyzing one source of data were constantly cross referenced with the other sources for purpose of triangulation.

Secondly, the researcher utilized the process of member checking to ensure that the findings were truly representative of the intent of the participants. The researcher gave each participant an opportunity to clarify ambiguous statements and also to ensure that what the researcher had written reflected what the participant intended to communicate. Similarly, participants were made aware of their right to refuse to answer any question that they did not feel comfortable answering. This was done to ensure that the results were not tainted by any form of coercion or duress on the participants. This process ensured that the study's results solely based on the data and not the opinions of the researcher.

Finally, as part of the effort to ensure that participants actually qualified to participate in the study based on the inclusion criteria, the researcher verified the identities and nationalities of participants. This was done to ensure that the results were actually based on the opinions and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens whose experiences and opinions were the units of analysis. Preventing participants who did not fall within the scope of the inclusion criteria ensured that the results were based on valid units of analysis.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the study. The chapter began with a brief description of how the research was executed; and how codes, themes, and categories were generated. Question 1 explored the general opinions and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic. Documents and transcripts from interviews were analyzed in response to this question. It emerged that ordinary Ghanaian citizens, based on their experiences and opinions, believed that Ghana has a solid electoral system. The data indicated that Ghana enjoys political stability relative to its sub regional neighbors; there are unrealized dividends of democracy under Ghana's fourth republic; and political accountability is virtually nonexistent.

Question 2 was to find out from ordinary Ghanaian citizens, their thoughts on the threat that apathy amongst Ghana's citizens pose to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana. Upon analyzing interview data and documentary sources, it came to light that ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that an apathetic citizenry is a recipe for civic disengagement and public corruption. Participants believed that public corruption is a natural consequence of civic disengagement.

Question 3 was intended to explore how deliberation enhances democratic governance in Ghana. The data revealed that deliberation occasioned plurality of ideas and information sharing which then leads to better decision making in the public's interest. Interview data analyzed indicated that even though ordinary Ghanaian citizens are cognizant of the benefits of deliberation in democratic governance, they also overwhelmingly believed that deliberation has usually occurred and benefited Ghana's

democracy through the electoral process; same cannot be said in terms of governance. The data indicated that ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that deliberation does not occur beyond political and ideological boundaries due to the ‘winner takes all’ political system in Ghana. The majority of participants blamed lack of deliberation on the level of acrimony that occurs during political campaigns. A small number of participants believed that that any kind of deliberation that occurs between ordinary citizens and the political elite is an insincere attempt by the elite to convince citizens they are involved the decision making process.

The purpose of question 4 was to explore the thoughts of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on the role that elections play in Ghana’s democracy. Analysis of the data gathered indicated that elections accounted for political stability in Ghana. Again, it is a major avenue for Ghanaians to hold political leaders accountable for their stewardship. The data revealed that ordinary Ghanaians view elections as a means of political equality; in that, irrespective of one’s social class or economic status, votes are equally weighed. However, more than two thirds of the participants believed that the increasing influence of money in the electoral process will eventually erode that political equality that exist as a result of elections, if left unchecked. Chapter 5 further discusses the findings of the study which suggests that ordinary Ghanaians have mixed opinions and experiences with respect to the practice of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic. In one breath they extol Ghana’s democracy within the context of electoral practices and voting rights and in another they deprecate democracy within the context of governance. Also, the

study's implications for social change and recommendations for further researcher are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendation

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. To this end, the study explored both the opinions and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992. The following research questions guided the study:

- RQ1: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy?
- RQ2: How is political apathy among Ghana's citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana?
- RQ3: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana?
- RQ4: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?

Overview of the Context of Study

Based on the purpose of the study and the research questions the study sought to answer, a qualitative case study methodology was employed. This approach to research was utilized because it provided the researcher the best avenue to explore the phenomenon under study. Qualitative case studies are best suited for research studies that places prominence on depth over breadth. Therefore, given that this study was intended to provide an in-depth analysis of Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen, the researcher deemed this approach the

most suited to explore the phenomenon in a detailed manner and answer the research questions. The suitability of qualitative case study for explorative studies that are ongoing is well documented in the literature (Creswell, 2013; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Patton, 2002). Even though other approaches such as phenomenology and grounded theory could have been used, the researcher made a determination that the study's purpose was not to examine the commonality in experience amongst participants who have encountered a particular phenomenon and, neither was it to propound theories from data gathered as a result of the study. Therefore, based on the purpose of the study both approaches were deemed unsuitable and the case study provided the researcher the best avenue to answer the research questions. Three data sets were utilized for the study; interviews, documents, and observation notes taken during interviews. A total of 15 ordinary Ghanaian citizens with diverse background and experiences were interviewed for the study. They were purposefully sampled for their experience of Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic. Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour for their opinions and experiences. Also, documents and reports on Ghana's democracy from USAID, TI, UN, GII, and APRM were used. Researcher's observational notes during interviews were also analyzed for the study. The researcher used thematic analysis by applying reading and memoing to gain an intimate understanding of the data gathered and then proceeded to codify the data into broad themes, categories, and establish patterns. The data were subjected to constant review for different meanings and perspectives until saturation was attained; that is, the data were reviewed for all probable insight (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The researcher applied "detailed description" and

“categorical aggregation” to the data to paint a comprehensive picture of the study’s phenomenon based on multiple perspectives. Similarly, the researcher utilized “direct interpretation” to bolster any interpretation based on the researcher’s intuitions. This enabled “naturalistic generalization”; in that, the researcher’s conclusions and assertions were premised upon his encounter with the data (Creswell, 2013).

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section discusses the findings of the research, the second section highlights the result’s implications on social change, and the third concerns itself with recommendation for future research. The study utilized both minimalist and deliberative theories of democracy as lenses to view democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic from the perspectives and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. Therefore, the study did not result in propounding of any theory. The findings of the study are primarily the opinions and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana’s democracy since the inception of the fourth republic 1992. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge on democracy in Africa in general and democracy in Ghana specifically. As democracy become popular around the world, countries with fledgling democracy or those that aspire to be governed by democratic principles in future may learn from the experiences and opinions of ordinary Ghanaians on the best way to nurture democratic governance within context of a country’s circumstance. The findings of the study showed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens have had a dual but contradictory experience under the fourth republic. On the one hand, they described a positive experience with respect to Ghana’s electoral system and their right to choose leaders through voting. They also relished the political stability that Ghana enjoys under

the fourth republic. However, on the other, their experiences with governance in the intervening years have been quite negative. They described high incidence of public corruption, unresponsive governance, lack of accountability, unequal access to economic opportunity, and exclusive domination of public policy decision by the political elite. The results also showed that the application of law is unequal between the elite and the ordinary Ghanaian and political impunity abound under the fourth republic. These were the key findings of the study. The findings are practical lessons from Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the citizenry.

Interpretation of Findings for Questions 1

Research Question 1 asked: What are the general views of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's democracy? It was revealed that generally, Ghana has a solid electoral system; the country enjoys political stability; unresponsive governance persist; besides elections, other dividends of democracy are yet to be realized; and lack of accountability permeates all levels of government. The answers to question 1 revealed that since the return to multiparty democracy after many years in the political wilderness, Ghana's electoral system has undergone systematic and progressive changes that have led to the consolidation of democratic governance at least in the electoral sense. Since attaining independence in 1957 from the British, Ghana has made several attempts at democratic governance at different eras in its political history. The first republic through the third all suffered abrupt endings due to military takeovers. It is important to note that amongst many of the reasons cited for the overthrow of Dr. Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, was the idea that Ghana's one party political order at the time did not provide the

citizenry a legitimate means to change government, if they so desired. Therefore coup d'état remained one, if not the only avenue available. This places into context the value that ordinary Ghanaian citizens place on the right to elect a government of their own choosing. Under the fourth republic, Ghana has organized six consecutive elections and has transitioned power from one government to another without the usual violence that accompany such political exercises in neighboring countries in the sub region. The Electoral Commission (EC) which was established as part of the new constitutional order has evolved with the times. For instance, the first presidential and parliamentary elections under the fourth republic ended in a controversy when the largest opposition party, the NPP, boycotted the parliamentary elections due to what they believed were widespread attempts to rig the elections in favor of the incumbent party, the NDC. This incident amongst other things led to the formation of the IPAC which enabled political parties to be involved in the deliberation on how the electoral system is organized. The latest evolution of the electoral process that has been spearheaded by the EC in consultation with IPAC is the implementation of biometric registration and voting aimed at reducing the incidence of impersonation and multiple voting to protect the integrity of the electoral process. These major changes have had a profound impact on the perception of ordinary Ghanaians towards the EC in particular and the electoral system in general. These changes have restored trust in the electoral system and that has enhanced democracy in Ghana. The results indicated that these actions and many others have increased the trust of both the ordinary Ghanaian and other political actors in the electoral system in Ghana.

Question 1 further indicated that apart from the progressive changes that have occurred in the electoral system, ordinary Ghanaians have had a positive experience with respect to exercising their franchise. They believed that their right to vote and choose who leads and represent them at the various branches of government has largely been respected. The findings showed that the electoral process is generally fair, accessible, and transparent. Every Ghanaian who has attained the minimum voting age of 18 years and is of sound mind as enshrined in the Ghanaian constitution has reasonable access to vote without fear or favor. Even though concerns of pockets of violence and intimidation were indicated in the findings, it paled in comparison to the general trend of accessibility and transparency revealed by the results. The findings showed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens have a favorable view of the electoral process and the Electoral Commission as an institution mandated by the constitution to organize elections.

Furthermore, the findings showed that ordinary Ghanaians relished the idea of genuine alternation that exists in their democracy via the electoral process. Given the history of Ghana, the results indicated that the right to change government peacefully through the ballot box is of prime importance to the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. This is in alignment with the importance that minimalist theorist places on elections, especially alternation in a democracy. Minimalist theorists postulate that democracy in itself is not an end; therefore voting offers the best avenue towards attaining those ends. Proponents of this theory believe that the most important indicator of democracy is the right that citizens have to choose their representatives through free and fair elections (Baird, 2012). In the opinion of Przeworski, democracy is a system in which parties lose elections (as

cited in Baird, 2012). In their view, in a democracy, all other things being equal, both the opposition and the incumbent should have an equal chance of losing an election.

Therefore, the importance that ordinary Ghanaians place on the ability to alternate governments through voting is explained by the minimalist conception of democracy. However, the point of divergence between this theory and the Ghanaian experience is that, to proponents, voting is both the procedure and the substance of democracy while the findings showed that even though Ghanaians placed a high premium on free and fair elections and voting, their expectations of democracy as a system of governance went far beyond the right to cast a ballot. The findings showed that the ordinary Ghanaian citizen have a positive opinion and experience of Ghana's electoral system.

Second, the findings showed that Ghana enjoys extensive political stability. The West African sub region where Ghana is located is known for its volatile political environment (Olutayo et al., 2008; Omotola, 2009). However, after 23 years of democratic governance, Ghana has remained stable after six successive elections under the fourth republic (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). The findings indicated that there is a direct link between Ghana's solid electoral system and its political stability. As a result, the findings indicated that political stability is usually discussed within the context of electoral process; because, most violence that has occurred in the sub region has mainly been associated with elections. Ghana's political stability has been credited largely to the fairness of the electoral system and the belief by the ordinary Ghanaian that voter's wishes are respected by both the incumbent government and opposition parties. An interesting revelation in the findings was the fact that ordinary Ghanaians also ascribed

Ghana's political stability to the peaceful nature of the average Ghanaian. This particular finding is not consistent with Ghana's history, given that previous coup d'état has led to the violent execution of political opponents and extra judicial killing of ordinary Ghanaian citizens (Oquaye, 2009). The findings are generally consistent with what has transpired under the fourth republic. The results of the 2012 elections were contested by the NPP, the largest opposition party; however, the aggrieved party filed a suit at the Supreme Court of Ghana to have the dispute addressed by the court instead of resorting to violence. The findings showed that Ghana has enjoyed extensive political stability under the fourth republic.

Third, the results showed that despite Ghana's solid electoral system and extensive political stability, ordinary Ghanaians have not experienced the kind of responsiveness that they expected under democratic governance. One cardinal principle of democratic governance is the responsiveness of government to the needs of the citizenry (D'Aspremont, 2010; Edozie, 2009). This principle, to all intent and purposes, has failed to materialize under the fourth republic. Ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that governance is skewed to the benefit of the rich and powerful who are politically well-connected. They revealed that from their experience the general policy direction of the state has not centered on the needs of ordinary citizens. For instance, while education, health, and energy face huge challenges; government has not demonstrated the needed political will to solve these problems that impacts the everyday lives of the ordinary Ghanaian. However, urgency is attached to paying soccer players and officials' huge sums of money to partake in global soccer competitions while electricity is being

rationed amongst the general populace. Infrastructure development has stalled, especially road networks that connect the capital to the various parts of the country. The road network between Accra (capital) and Kumasi (second city) has stalled for at least the last eight years, making road travel a torturous endeavor. This has not been on the priority list of government because officials travel by air and those who utilize the roads drive in SUVs that are designed for such roads. Priorities are set with recourse to that which benefits the rich, powerful, and politically connected. As an example, Article 25 of the Ghanaian constitution state that all persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that, basic education shall be free, compulsory, and available to all. Even though this is an entrenched provision indicated by the word 'shall', current and previous governments have failed to implement this provision. After 23 years of ratifying this constitution, basic education in Ghana is neither free nor compulsory. The general trend as indicated by the findings is that government under the fourth republic has not been responsive to the needs of the ordinary Ghanaian.

Fourth, the results indicated that Ghanaians do not only expect the benefits of democracy to be the right to occasionally cast a ballot within specified periods of time. The expectation was that democracy will provide the right to choose one's representative and also provide an enabling environment for the citizenry to thrive on the economic front. The findings indicated that other dividends such as equality before the law and respect for fundamental human rights were also expected. Apart from voting, these other dividends of democracy have generally not occurred. Ghana is an agro based economy

endowed with different raw materials. In addition to the recent discovery of oil in commercial quantities, Ghana has long been a major exporter of gold, bauxite, timber, aluminum, and cocoa. The findings indicated that these resources are not tapped to the benefit of the ordinary citizen. The expectation that democracy allows the citizenry the opportunity to have a say in the allocation of resources have not been met. As an extractive industry economy, the ordinary Ghanaian citizen is left to deal with the harsh realities of deforestation as a consequence of mining while a bulk of the proceeds are repatriated to the home countries of multinational corporations who have obtained concession rights to the mining centers. The effect has been economic deprivation and untold hardship on the ordinary Ghanaian. Social interventions such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), the Capitation Grant (CG), and school feeding programs instituted by the Government of Ghana (GoG) have not received the needed funding, and as a result are not functioning as expected. The findings indicated that on the social intervention and economic front, ordinary Ghanaians believed that democracy under the fourth republic has failed to produce dividends to the ordinary Ghanaian citizen.

Finally, the findings to question 1 showed that lack of accountability permeates all levels of government in Ghana. One of the hallmarks of a democratic society is accountability of public officials to the ordinary citizen who directly or indirectly elected them to office (Diamond, 2008). Ghana's political system under the fourth republic has not augured well for accountability. A multiplicity of factors has accounted for this development and, chiefly amongst them are the insulations that political stewards enjoy

as a result of tribal and entrenched political affiliations. Voting patterns rooted in tribal affiliations and blind loyalty to political traditions have nurtured an environment where those in political positions believe that irrespective of their performance, they are guaranteed huge numbers in terms of votes in certain geographical locations in Ghana. For example, the NPP which is currently the biggest opposition party has consistently gathered the lion's share of votes from the Ashanti and the Eastern regions of Ghana. On the other hand, the NDC, the party currently in government has also commanded huge number of votes from the Northern, Upper West, Upper East, and the Volta regions of Ghana. These rigid voting patterns, irrespective of the performance of a party in government, have insulated political leaders from the accountability that elections are designed to provide in a democracy. This polarized political environment has reduced the potential for ordinary citizens to form a strong front to demand political accountability from elected officials. The winner takes all political system in Ghana where a party in power occupies all leadership positions and replace heads of public institutions with political affiliates has also inhibited accountability under the fourth republic in Ghana. The findings showed that political impunity and unequal application of the law has been pervasive under the fourth republic. Selective prosecution by the Attorneys General and Ministers of Justice under the various governments has tainted equality before the law; a cardinal principle of democratic governance. Ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that the laws of Ghana are applied differently to people in political offices and those who are politically connected as compared to the average Ghanaian citizen. The concentration of power in the hands of the executive, coupled with constitutional provisions that require

the appointment of majority of ministers from amongst parliamentarians has inhibited the oversight responsibilities of the legislature over the executive. Bills that are debated and voted on in parliament emanate from the executive that comprise of ministers who are themselves parliamentarians. In essence, parliamentarians who double as Ministers debate and vote on bills authored in their capacities as functionaries of the executive. This constitutional arrangement is inimical to the doctrine of separation of powers and the legislature's oversight responsibility over the executive branch. It is a means to rubber stamp the agenda of the executive in parliament, especially if the party in power also holds the majority in parliament. The findings indicated that political accountability from the political elite to the ordinary citizens is woefully inadequate.

Interpretation of Findings for Question 2

Question 2 asked: How is political apathy among Ghanaian citizens a threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana? Responses from participants indicated that apathetic citizenry leads to civic disengagement which in turn leads to public corruption. Without a politically active citizenry, democracy, in the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen will not be functional.

The findings of the study showed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens are cognizant of the important role that citizens play in democratic governance. As a result, they believed that any form of apathy from the citizenry will lead to civic disengagement and its attendant consequence of political impunity. It emerged from the findings that ordinary Ghanaian citizens actively participate in the democratic process, even though such engagement is clouded in partisanship. Civic engagement under the fourth republic has

taken a political dimension, where citizens who belong to opposing political parties use demonstrations as a tool to make each other's policies unpopular amongst the electorates. This has greatly stifled the potency of demonstrations as a political tool for accountability because all forms of demonstrations are deemed politically motivated irrespective of the rationale behind it. Erratic power supply, for instance, has been one of the challenges that Ghana has faced under the fourth republic. Under the NPP government in 2008, the opposition NDC and its teaming supporters, ably supported by the political pressure group CJA embarked on a series of demonstrations around the country to register their displeasure of government's performance on supplying power to the ordinary Ghanaian and industry. They also demonstrated to pressure government to act in the face of rising price levels of petroleum products in the country. In 2015, the NPP and its supporters in partnership with political pressure groups like AFAG and Occupy Ghana (OG) have embarked on demonstrations to protest the performance of the NDC government with respect to erratic power supply that has plunged the country into darkness, coupled with the effects it has had on the productivity of the nations. These demonstrations have also aimed at highlighting the perceived rising levels of public corruption in Ghana and the rising cost of petroleum prices. This has been the cycle of civic engagement in Ghana. The findings showed that a disengaged citizenry has direct impact on the sustainment of democracy in Ghana; in that citizens who are disengaged are less likely to demand accountability from the political elite. This has a real potential of metamorphosing a democratic society into an electoral autocracy. Electoral autocracy arises when citizens only participate in the election of political leaders and have no input whatsoever on how

the society is governed (Diamond, 2008). According to the findings, ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that apathy amongst the citizenry is one of the most potent threats to democracy in Ghana. It emerged from the findings that majority of ordinary Ghanaians believed that they are politically engaged; however, they also believed that their engagement has done little to improve political accountability in Ghana. The nature of civic engagement under the fourth republic lacks a bipartisan cohesion that pressurizes the political elite to be accountable. Even though there is a vibrant civil society in Ghana, such civic engagement is characterized by accusations and counter accusations from politically motivated civil society groups. The public sphere in Ghana is inundated with hot political rhetoric which only perpetuates the status quo of elite political dominance due to a weak civil society front.

In spite of these challenges, the ordinary Ghanaian believed that keeping quiet is not an option even though speaking up has yielded little to no results in terms of accountability. The ordinary Ghanaian believed that making one's voice heard is a guaranteed constitutional right in the form of freedom of expression and they do not intend to relinquish that right even if it had no real consequence on decision makers. The findings showed that participants believed that the level of political impunity and lack of accountability would be worse if citizens were not engaged. Therefore, ordinary Ghanaians believed that apathy breeds disengagement and that is a major threat to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic.

The results also indicated that apathetic citizenry impacts the sustainment of democracy by breeding public corruption. The results showed that public corruption was

a natural consequence of disengaged citizenry. Ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that due to the ineffective nature of civic engagement in Ghana, public corruption has soared since the inception of the fourth republic. The participants unanimously believed that public corruption is a serious social and economic canker which, if allowed to fester, as being perceived in Ghana, could jeopardize Ghana's fledgling democracy. The deprivations that accompany high levels of public corruption have devastating impact on the average Ghanaian citizen. Resources that are earmarked for the public's benefit are channeled into private pockets and decision making is based on the parochial interest of decision makers as opposed to the public interest. Both the 2012 and 2014 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International indicated that Ghana still struggles with high incidence of corruption (Transparency International, 2014). Even though there was a slight improvement in Ghana's score from 45 in 2012 to 48 in 2014, the major concern of the ordinary Ghanaian is that Ghana still falls below the average mark of 50 on the index. It is important to note that this slight improvement in Ghana's corruption index does not align with the views and experiences of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. Participants were cognizant of the fact that the hardships that results from corrupt officials amassing wealth at the expense of the public, breeds fertile grounds for coup d'état. Economic hardship has been cited many times as the reason for military takeover of democratically elected governments in previous attempts at democracy in Ghana. As a result, participants believed that public corruption which in their opinion thrives when the public become inept and apathetic is one of the major threats to the sustainment of democracy in Ghana. A politically active citizenry is the fulcrum around which

democracy as system of governance pivots (Oquaye, 2004; Sarfo, 2014). The answers to question 2 indicated that apathetic citizenry impacts the sustainment of democracy in Ghana by festering civic disengagement and public corruption.

Interpretation of Findings for Question 3

Question 3 asked: How does deliberation enhance democracy in Ghana? The responses to this question revealed that deliberation has led to plurality of ideas, information sharing, and better decision making in certain aspects of democracy under the fourth republic in Ghana. Participants believed that deliberation provides an avenue for citizens to engage with each other and government on matters of national importance. In the opinion of ordinary Ghanaian citizens, deliberation expands the pool of ideas on a subject matter and allows citizens to contribute their thoughts on how they are governed. This plurality of ideas that usually occur in the public sphere has led to information sharing amongst the general populace. This view of ordinary Ghanaian citizens is explained by deliberative theory of democracy. Deliberative theorists assert that there is more to democracy than periodic change of governments through the ballot box (Berg-Schlosser, 2008). At its core, deliberative democracy theory centers on the free will of the masses to participate in national discourse towards shaping policy decisions (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). The theory assumes that citizens are informed, and can contribute to discussions that center on how they are governed (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). It taps into the power of communication between governors and the governed, and accentuate the fairness of deliberation in political discourse (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010).

Proponents argue that deliberative democracy provides tangible meaning to political equality, freedom, rule of law, justice, and participation of citizens in national discourse etc. (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010). In its basic form, Gagnon (2010) posits that democracy simply connotes a situation where “sovereign citizenry and typically the formation of a government that operates by permission from the citizenry” (Gagnon, 2010, p. 4). He goes further to explain his definition in a more elaborative manner; he writes, “basic democracy from which perhaps every style of democracy is derived can be explained as a citizenry exercising its sovereignty through the institutionalization of the citizenry’s conceptualization of equality, law, communication, and the selection of officials” (Gagnon, 2010, p. 5). To reiterate the deliberative definitions offered above, Saunders (2010) is of the opinion that democracy exist when decisions arrived at by a group caters to the express desires of the members of the group (Saunders, 2010). In a more comprehensive manner, he posits, “democracy, so defined, is a matter of citizen sovereignty or the responsiveness of decisions to the expressed wishes of the people” (Saunders, 2010, p. 150). The findings showed that deliberation in Ghana under the fourth has been bolstered by the enormous freedom expression that Ghanaians enjoy. For instance, Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization that measures the expansion of freedom or otherwise around the world indicates that Ghana’s freedom is on a positive trajectory. Ghana’s status in terms of freedom, civil liberties, and political rights stood at ‘partly free’ in 1998 (Freedom House, 2014). However, since 1999, Ghana has been characterized as ‘free’ by Freedom House, with a freedom rating of 1.5, civil liberties of 2, and political rights rating of 1 on a scale where 1 represents best and 7

equals worse (Freedom House, 2014). However, the findings indicated that the enabling environment that has been created by this high level of freedom has not necessarily fostered a positive deliberative culture. Participants believed that in terms of governance, deliberation has taken place in a hostile environment where the ruling elite view any attempt by ordinary citizens to contribute and provide an alternative to their idea as disloyalty. As a result, deliberation has not led to consensus building towards better governance as expected. Citizens of different political persuasions are free to postulate ideas and share information in Ghana, but due to the political environment, such deliberations do not influence policy making and implementation. The political party in power makes all the decisions and usually, they do not take into consideration the plurality of ideas and information that is available as result of deliberation that occur in the public sphere. Ordinary Ghanaians utilize media platforms such as radio, television, and recently social media like Facebook and Twitter to contribute to discussions on all matter of national and subnational importance. The results showed that even though Ghanaians are free to express their views and deliberate on issues, within the context of governance, deliberation has not produced the expected dividends. The winner takes all political system has made it difficult, if not impossible, for political opponents to implement the various ideas that result from deliberation amongst the citizenry under the fourth republic. In a nut shell, deliberation has led to plural ideas and information sharing; however, the information and the various ideas have failed to affect the quality of governance under the fourth republic chiefly because the political elite have failed to

incorporate the views and experiences of ordinary Ghanaians in decision making under the fourth republic.

The findings also revealed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed deliberation within the electoral sector has led to better decision making. Ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that deliberation among the EC, political parties, and other stakeholders in the election process has led to tremendous improvements in the electoral process. IPAC has served as a deliberative tool that has allowed the EC to work with political parties to streamline and fine tune the electoral process for the purpose of transparency and fairness. This has played an integral part in preserving the credibility of the EC as an institution and reinforced the institution's image as a neutral actor in the political process. Through deliberation the EC, IPAC, and other stakeholders have built a solid electoral process that has an enviable record in the West Africa sub region and the world over. Ghana's record of six consecutive elections with minimal or no violence under the fourth republic has boosted the nation's democratic credentials and raised its status within the comity of nations (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). The decision to form IPAC, the decision to actively involve political parties in the planning and execution of the electoral process, and the decision to employ biometric registration and voting which was aimed at eliminating the incidence of fraud and impersonation were all viewed by participants as some of the better decisions that has resulted from deliberation amongst the various political stakeholders. In a nutshell, the findings showed that deliberation, even though occurs under the fourth republic, its impact has been asymmetrical; in that, it has

positively enhanced the electoral process while same cannot be said with respect to governance in the intervening years.

Interpretation of Findings for Question 4

Question 4 asked: What is the opinion of the ordinary Ghanaian on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy? The findings showed that election is the center piece of Ghana's democracy; in that, participants believed that Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic has been successful largely due to its electioneering process. The results indicated that elections have been the major reason for Ghana's political stability; it has served as an avenue for political accountability; and it has brought tangible meaning to the concept of political equality under the fourth republic. The findings showed that the continued political stability that Ghana has enjoyed relative to its neighbors in the sub region is as a result of the electoral process that has been put in place under the fourth republic. The EC as an institution has enjoyed positive perception from ordinary Ghanaians as a neutral referee in the electoral process. This has increased the trust that ordinary Ghanaians have in the fairness and transparency in the electoral process. Since the inception of the fourth republic, Ghana has organized six consecutive elections that has led to the transfer of power from one government to another without the usual violence that accompany such exercises in the sub region. Participants believed that the fourth republic, which is Ghana's longest democratic dispensation, is a direct consequence of the faith that ordinary Ghanaians have in the electoral process; in that, election results as announced by the EC is viewed by the ordinary Ghanaian as the true will of the Ghanaian electorate. This has created legitimacy for all governments elected

under the fourth republic, which has in turn reduced the viability of coup d'état as an option. The results showed that the perception of fairness and transparency in the electoral process has also reduced the tendency for elections related violence under the fourth republic. Incidence of pre and post-election violence has been prevalent in the West Africa Sub region due to the lack of trust that citizens have in the electoral process which is mainly occasioned by real or perceived bias by the EC in favor one political block, usually the incumbent. Recent example is the case of Ivory Coast, where the incumbent tried to connive with the EC to alter the results of an election the incumbent had lost. This led to protracted civil unrest and violence that cost lives and damage to properties in several million dollars. This and many other incidents have characterized the organization of elections in the West Africa Sub region and, as a result, robbed many states the needed political stability to develop. After 23 years of democratic governance under the fourth republic, Ghana is still ranked one of the most politically stable nations in Africa and the findings of this study indicated that ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that elections is the major reason for this accomplishment.

Again, the findings showed that elections under the fourth republic have served as one, if not the only avenue for political accountability. Accountability is an essential ingredient of democracy that distinguishes it from other forms governance systems. The need for elected representatives to account for their actions and inactions to the electorate ensure that elected officials make decisions based on the interest of the electorate as opposed to their personal parochial interest. The data sets analyzed for this research indicated that political accountability with respect to governance is virtually nonexistent

under Ghana's fourth republic. The political culture and system has enabled an environment of unresponsiveness of the political elite to the citizenry. Therefore, participants believed that elections present the only avenue for the electorate to demand political accountability from the political elite. Participants unanimously described their experiences with political accountability with words such as abysmal, inadequate, and nonexistent. Their observation was that the political elite only take active interest in the needs of ordinary Ghanaians during election years. To participants, many infrastructure developments and social intervention programs that have occurred under the fourth republic were instituted before or during elections. The findings showed that when elections are over, the system reverts to the status quo of political dominance by the political elite especially in the area of decision making and little to no political accountability. Parliamentarians who seldom visit their constituencies or constituents regularly do so in election years. Regrettably, this cycle has perpetuated a quid pro quo situation where the electorates demand material things or certain favors from candidates in return for their votes. The reason, according to participants, is that the electorates have realized that the only time politicians in Ghana will succumb to both the express and implied wishes of the voter is before elections. Even though the political accountability during the intervening years has been described by participants as nonexistent, the results indicated that generally, the focus of the political elite during election years is on the needs of the average Ghanaian; primarily to woo them for their votes, and that has led to some level of political accountability under the fourth republic. Election as an ingredient of democracy has been designed to ensure that elected representatives act and make

decisions that are in the interest of their constituents (Baird, 2012). The findings indicated that in the off election years, political leaders under the fourth republic of Ghana have not been accountable to the ordinary Ghanaian citizen; however, participants believed that during election years, political accountability is displayed firstly by the attitude of the political elite to the masses and secondly by the fact that voters are able to reward and punish politicians, by retaining an incumbent or by voting another candidate into office through the power of the ballot box.

Finally, the findings showed that elections provide a tangible platform for political equality under the fourth republic. The interview data analyzed indicated that ordinary Ghanaians believed that inequality exist in all facets of Ghana's democracy between the masses and the political elite. Participants believed that the application of law, access to economic opportunities, justice, and state policies in general are all skewed in favor of the political elite. For instance, alleged financial crimes committed by people who are either in political positions or are associates of political appointees seldom attract the serious attention of the state in terms of investigation and prosecution; however, the ordinary citizen is swiftly hurled before the law courts and given hefty sentences for petty crimes. Selective prosecution has occurred frequently under the fourth republic. Attorneys General and Ministers of Justice of the various governments under the fourth republic have selectively prosecuted cases based on the political affiliations of the accused person. However, the findings showed that ordinary Ghanaians believed that elections provided them a tangible avenue for political equality. Participants believed that irrespective of a citizen's economic, social, and political status, every citizen voted once

and each vote commanded the same weight. The constitution of Ghana under Article 42 guarantees every Ghanaian citizen who is at least 18 years of age and of sound mind the right to vote. Given that each citizen's vote is of equal weight and influence in terms of count, participants believed that elections is one of the tangible avenues under Ghana's fourth republic that ensures political equality between the ordinary Ghanaian and the political elite. To the participants of this study, elections provide that equal playing field that is nonexistent in many of the other facets of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic.

Conclusion

This study revealed that ordinary Ghanaian citizens have dichotomous views, opinions, and experiences of democracy in Ghana under the fourth republic. The study revealed that ordinary Ghanaians measured Ghana's democratic performance by two standards; their experiences and opinions of the electoral process in general and how government conducts the business of the public during non-elections years (governance). The study confirmed that ordinary Ghanaians, like the international community, placed high premium on the electoral success of Ghana under the current democratic dispensation. Ordinary Ghanaians believed that apart from the fact that elections have played a critical role in consolidating Ghana's democracy, it is responsible for the positive image of Ghana's democracy within the international community. The findings showed that participants believed that election is the fulcrum around which democracy pivots in Ghana under the fourth republic. The results indicated that except a few areas of concern such as tribal voting patterns and high political tensions in elections years,

ordinary Ghanaians believed Ghana has developed one of the best electoral systems in Africa, if not the world. The preeminence of elections in Ghana's democracy was clearly revealed in the findings and that confirmed the emphasis that the international community places on Ghana's electoral prowess. Ordinary Ghanaians credited Ghana's political stability to the country's electoral prowess by citing the inclusive nature of the electioneering process and its resultant fairness and transparency.

Also, the study found that ordinary Ghanaian citizens believed that, in the intervening years (governance), democracy in under the fourth republic has not lived up to their expectations. In the area of justice and equal application of law, selective prosecution of cases based on an individual's political affiliation and status in society has undermined the critical ingredient of equality before the law. Perceived constitutional defects such as provisions in the Ghanaian constitution (Article 78) that mandates the executive to appoint majority of ministers from parliament undermines the doctrine of separation of powers, in that it inhibits the legislature's oversight responsibility over the executive. The results confirmed that entrenched political affiliations and tribal voting patterns have insulated the political elite from the consequence of unresponsiveness and that has created an environment of political impunity on the part of elected officials.

Again, it was found that there were disparities in economic opportunities available to ordinary Ghanaian citizens and their elite counterparts. Participants believed that even though Ghana has done relatively well economically under the fourth republic, it was revealed that most of the economic gains and opportunities that have accrued have disproportionately benefitted the political elite and their affiliates. The results showed

that ordinary Ghanaians believed that the distribution of national resources is skewed in favor of the elite and the politically connected under the fourth republic.

Finally, the results confirmed that even though the average Ghanaian has had a positive experience with respect to participation in the electoral process, their expectation of democracy as a system of governance went beyond their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. The results revealed that ordinary Ghanaians are excited by the positive gains made in the electoral process since the inception of the fourth republic; however, they are pessimistic with respect to how governance in the intervening years have been conducted under the fourth republic. Lack of political accountability, unequal application of law, dwindling economic opportunity for the ordinary Ghanaian, rising income inequality, political impunity, rising levels of corruption, and the winner takes all political system have all been major obstacles to the ability of the ordinary Ghanaian to access the full dividends of democratic governance under the fourth republic of Ghana.

Implications for Social Change

Government of Ghana

The findings of the study provide valuable information on the experiences, opinions, and views of ordinary Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic. The study's results should inspire a concerted effort on the part of both the Government of Ghana and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to institute reforms that will address the concerns of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. In view of the importance of citizen's participation in democratic governance, there should be a paradigm shift in the responsiveness of government to citizens and how government engages with citizens

on policy formulation and implementation. The prevailing political culture of winner takes all which was revealed as one of the major obstacles to consensus building through deliberation should be replaced with a system that encourages inclusiveness in governance. By so doing, government can tap into the trough of information that results from deliberation amongst the citizenry and utilize such information to shape public policy to deliver desired political goods of the citizenry. Similarly, to bolster political accountability constitutional reform that is geared towards deepening separation of powers amongst the all branches of government should be instituted. As the findings of the study showed, certain provisions in the Ghanaian constitution has encouraged the concentration of power in the hands of the executive branch of government at the expense of both the judiciary and the legislature. The legislature's oversight responsibility over the executive has been inhibited by structural defects in the Ghanaian constitution. For instance, the constitution mandates the executive to appoint majority of ministers from amongst parliamentarians and that has led to a situation where parliamentarians who double as ministers rubber stamp the executive's agenda in parliament partly because they are part of the executive branch they are supposed to hold accountable as lawmakers. This constitutional arrangement inherently weakens political accountability and is an affront to separation of powers in constitutional governance. Again, the independence of the judiciary is compromised by the fact that the executive appoints the Minister of Justice who is also the Attorney General of the state responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes against the state. Participants revealed that Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General of the various governments under the fourth republic

have shown reluctance to investigate and prosecute cases of individuals in government or those perceived to be politically aligned to the government of the day. The results revealed that government under the fourth republic have been unresponsive to the needs of the ordinary citizen; has not been politically accountable to the electorate; winner takes all political culture has stifled deliberation in governance; and political impunity has been occasioned by the over concentration of power in the hands of the executive branch as sanctioned by the constitution. These weaknesses should be fixed by constitutional a reform that realigns political structures in Ghana to make it more accountable to the citizenry.

The International Community

Again, the international community, especially the UN and its allied organizations that specialize in democratic governance should take a fresh look at how democracy in developing nations is evaluated. In the case of Ghana, researchers, practitioners, and the international community should shift from the over concentration on elections as the ultimate determiner of Ghana's democratic status. Even though the study's findings are consistent with the international community's assertions on Ghana's electoral process, the study also reveals that such over emphasis on elections has not augured well for governance in the intervening years. The results of this study should inspire a paradigm shift in the way democratic governance in the West Africa Sub region is evaluated; a holistic approach that takes into consideration all the ingredients of democracy as opposed to over emphasizing on elections as the ultimate determiner of a country's democratic status. For instance, it is problematic to tout a nation as the standard bearer of

democracy in West Africa when it has consistently scored below average in the CPI under its democratic dispensation. Similarly, it is important to note that democracy without accountability is electoral autocracy; and the results of this study revealed that ordinary Ghanaians overwhelmingly believed that governance under Ghana's fourth republic has not been responsive to the needs of the citizenry. Also, the findings also showed that ordinary Ghanaians believed that their views and opinions are not considered in the formulation and implementation of public policy. Based on these results, the international community must recalibrate their measuring scale of democratic governance in Ghana under the fourth republic to incorporate responsive governance in the intervening years after elections. These changes will ensure that Ghana's democracy is held to the same standards that are used to measure democracy in the advanced world. This will enhance accountability and responsive governance under Ghana's fledgling democracy under the fourth republic. It is critical that Ghana's democracy is not half baked, if it will be touted by the international community as the standard bearer of democracy in one of the most volatile political environments in Africa; the West African Sub region.

Recommendations for Future Further Research

Based on the results of this study, further research is needed to investigate why deliberation as a democratic tool has thrived and led to progressive changes in Ghana's electoral system while it has failed to materialize in the broader political system (governance) during the intervening years under the fourth republic. A phenomenological study of political actors in the electoral system could shed light on how deliberation has

thrived in the electoral system and how it could be implemented wholesale under the fourth republic.

Again, given that this study was limited to a sample size of 15 participants who were purposefully sampled, the ability to generalize the results obtained is greatly inhibited. Therefore, a survey study of a larger sample size based randomized sampling will be a step in the right direction to provide a platform for generalization of the results procured from this study. The demographic of participants makes the study's findings more reflective of the experiences and opinions of ordinary Ghanaian citizens below the age of 45 years old. As result, further research is needed to test the results of this study beyond its scope.

Finally, the findings of the study indicated that political accountability under the fourth republic in Ghana is virtually nonexistent, especially amongst the various branches of government. Therefore, further researcher into institutional accountability under the fourth republic of Ghana will provide insight into this phenomenon and possibly suggest strategies to address it. Whiles investigation into intergovernmental accountability is essential, the results of this study also indicated that research into civic engagement under the fourth republic of Ghana will be a step in the right direction.

Summary

This qualitative case study explored Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. This explorative study has provided valuable information on a hitherto relatively unknown phenomenon; the perspective of ordinary Ghanaians on Ghana's current democratic dispensation. The results showed both

the thriving and struggling aspects of democracy in Ghana. The results confirmed existing literature on Ghana's solid electoral system. The study provided insight into the experiences and opinions of ordinary Ghanaian citizens with respect to elections in Ghana. Also, the study highlighted the fact that ordinary Ghanaians' expectation of democracy as a system of governance went beyond their constitutional rights to vote in a free and fair elections. While admitting that Ghana since 1992 has made tremendous improvements in its electoral processes as widely postulated by researchers and the international community, the study also revealed that Ghana's democracy has not lived up to the expectations of its ordinary citizens in the area of accountable governance. The findings are inconsistent with the blanket labelling of Ghana as the standard bearer of democracy in West Africa. The point of being a democracy is largely premised on the idea of political accountability; where elected officials are responsive to their respective constituents and act in the collective good of the citizenry. The study found that ordinary Ghanaians have had a dual experience under Ghana's current democratic dispensation; a positive view and experience of the electoral system and a negative experience and view of governance in the intervening years. In this regard, it is important that successes in the electoral system are not only sustained but improved upon whiles frantic efforts are needed by all stakeholders in Ghana's democracy to ensure the delivery of desirable political goods to the ordinary Ghanaian.

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Appendix A: Letter to Participants

Name of Participant

Date:

Address

Dear (Name),

My name is Ransford Osafo-Danso and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research to explore the firsthand experiences, opinions, and perspectives of ordinary Ghanaian citizens under Ghana's democracy since the inception of the fourth republic. Many scholars, practitioners, and the international community have hailed Ghana as the shining example of democratic governance in the West Africa sub-region. These conclusions are mostly based on Ghana's ability to organize elections peacefully, and also predominantly capture the opinions of the political elite. What is unknown; however, are the perspectives, experiences, and opinions of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. This research will provide a comprehensive analysis of Ghana's democracy from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen.

I appreciate your consideration to participate in this study. In order to fully understand your experience and gain your perspective, we need to meet for approximately one hour for an interview. You are at liberty to choose the location of the meeting and you are not required to agree to anything that is outside your comfort zone. The purpose of the meeting is to learn about your experience, opinions, and perspective on Ghana's

democracy under the fourth republic. Any information you will provide will be kept strictly confidential.

At your earlier convenience, please contact me to schedule date and time that we can meet. You can reach me at (848) 468-0194 or email me at Ransford.osafo-danso@waldenu.edu. Thank you once again for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Ransford Osafo-Danso

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date:

Location:

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Interviewee:

1. Describe your understanding of democracy as a system of governance
2. What are your thoughts on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic?
3. What are your personal experiences under Ghana's democratic dispensation?
4. What do you think about the assertion that Ghana is the hope of democracy in West Africa?
5. Why do you think Ghana is being perceived as the beacon of democracy in West Africa?
6. What are your thoughts on the role elections play in Ghana's democracy?
7. How would you describe the electioneering process in Ghana?

8. How would you describe your experience with the election process in Ghana?
9. What are your thoughts on the role that citizens play in democratic governance?
10. Describe your observation on the role that Ghanaian citizens play in Ghana's democracy
11. At the personal level, how involved do you feel in the democratic process in Ghana?
12. In your opinion, what is the best way to sustain democracy in Ghana?
13. Describe your experience with respect to how governments at all levels respond to the needs of the citizenry in Ghana
14. How would democracy improve or otherwise when citizens play an active role in the democratic process in Ghana?
15. Based on your current assessment of democracy in Ghana, where do you see Ghana's democracy in Five years?
16. Would you say democracy in Ghana has met your expectation? Why? And why not?

Appendix C: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of the perspectives of Ghanaian citizens on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic. The researcher is inviting Ghanaian citizens who are 18 years of age and older, who have lived in Ghana for a minimum of four years since 1992, and do not hold or have held any political office in Ghana either by appointment or election to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Ransford Osafo-Danso, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian citizen.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-time individual interview at a location of your choosing/Skype for approximately one hour in length. This interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts of the interview will be presented to you for clarification of ambiguous statements and to further ensure that the transcripts reflect what you wanted to communicate.

Here are some sample questions:

1. Describe your understanding of democracy as a system of governance
2. What are your thoughts on Ghana's democracy under the fourth republic?
3. What are your personal experiences under Ghana's democratic dispensation?
4. What do you think about the assertion that Ghana is the hope of democracy in West Africa?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue and stress from the hour long interview. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. The study will provide an avenue for participants to make known their perspective on Ghana's democracy.

Payment:

There is no payment for participating in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by keeping them under locked/password files. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via (848) 468-0194 and/or ransford.osafo-danso@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210 (for participants in the US) or 001-612-312-1210 (for participants outside the US). Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

You may keep or print a copy of the consent form.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to the email with the words 'I Consent' you are agreeing to participate.

Curriculum Vitae

Ransford Osafo-Danso**Education**

- ***PhD Candidate, Public Policy and Administration:*** Walden University, Minneapolis, MN.
2012-Present (GPA: 4.0/4.0)
Courses: Governance & Public Policy, Fundamentals of Law and Public Policy, Quantitative Reasoning & Analysis, Qualitative Reasoning & Analysis, Advanced Qualitative Research, Foundation for Doctoral Studies, Leadership & Organizational Change, Contemporary Issues & Cases in Courts, Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Dissertation Topic: Beyond Elections: Ghana's Democracy from the Perspective of the Citizenry.

- ***MPA, Public Administration & Policy Analysis:*** Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), IL. 2009. (GPA: 3.67/4.0)
Courses: Grantsmanship & Grants Writing, Public Budgeting, Public Policy Analysis, Public Organization, Public Information Management, Community & Economic Development, Marketing & PR for Managers, Quantitative Analysis.
- ***B.A Arts, Economics and Law:*** Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana, 2006. (GPA: 3.52/4.0)
Courses: International Trade & Economics, Advance Economic Principles, Macro & Micro Economics, Development Economics, Mathematics for Economist, International Law, Introduction to the Judicial System of Ghana, Contractual Law, and Industrial Law.
Capstone Topic: General view on Criminal Abortion in Ghana.

Work History

- ***Tank, Automotive & Armament Command (TACOM), Warren, MI.***
Serve as a Logistics Management Specialist with the responsibility of maintaining complex logistical support policies.

Perform functional analysis and evaluation of TACOM activities involved in providing logistics support.

Evaluate, develop, assess, and support improvement in procedures and computer system operations.

Assist in developing, coordinating, and maintaining complex logistics support policy, procedures, and directives.

Examine the relationships of different logistics programs, processes, and concepts involved in planning, developing, acquiring, and providing life cycle logistics support.

Analyze and review current and future TACOM maintenance policy, procedure, and directive.

Maintain data management and system integrity inside the Army's current logistics software enterprise, Logistics Modernization Process (LMP).

Develop and coordinate Army maintenance policies, procedures, and directives.

Provide guidance and support to TACOM managers in Maintenance, Provisioning, Supply Catalogs, Tools, and Item Introduction in order to ensure life cycle actions.

Identify report, assess, and resolve data management issues.

Serve as a research expert to TACOM employees in Maintenance, Item Introduction, and Provisioning.

Create best practice methods for testing data accuracy and integrity during data migration efforts.

Extract and disseminate data to TACOM managers in such areas as Maintenance, Provisioning, Publication, and Item Introduction.

Instruct Army maintenance personnel on proper maintenance philosophy per standard operating procedures (SOP).

Conduct policy and procedure reviews.

Assist in the administrative oversight of contract work
(July, 2013- Present).

- **TRADOC Transportation Capabilities, Fort Eustis, VA.**
A member of the Army Watercraft team. I worked as a team member to device strategies that helped to field new army watercraft systems into the army's inventory.
- ***Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), Battle Creek, MI.***

Member of the Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code Production Team: I was tasked with the production and processing of both NATO and domestic CAGE Codes for vendors who conducted business with the United States Government. I produced and processed over 120 CAGE Codes per shift which led to 17% reduction in backlog. I utilized Systems for Award Management (SAM) and Business Identification Number Cross-reference Systems (BINCS) to streamline the award of CAGE Code to vendors and also ensure that the integrity of the system is kept intact. I used Department of Defense Electronic Mall (DOD EMALL) in conjunction with WebFLIS for stock-out reports, material receipts acknowledgement and MILSTRIP requisitions.

- ***Directorate of Logistics (DOL), White Sands Missile Range, White Sands, NM.*** NIE Action Officer: responsible for Network Integration Exercise; A training program that brings soldiers from different units around the country to conduct mission support exercises.

Alternate Coordination Officer: tasked with the coordination of personnel and equipment of units deploying to the National Training Center (NTC).

SSA Clerk: using the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS), I catalogued, processed, and received orders, created Bin Labels and did close-outs and backups.

SAMS Clerk, Maintenance Division: I processed work orders; tracked, completed, and closed work orders within SAMS. I was able to process over 60 work orders per day and as a result reduced backlog by 21%. I generated Maintenance 006 (DOL level) and 026 (Unit Level) reports, analyzed them, and briefed the Deputy Chief of Maintenance on the status of equipment going through maintenance.

Freight support Officer, Transportation Division: I was tasked with processing DD Form 1149 (Requisition and invoice/shipping document). I processed over 67 bills of lading per shift, reducing equipment receiving time by 20%. I utilized the Global Freight Management (GFM) system to hold spot bids for prospective carriers to bid on shipment going in and out of WSMR.

- ***Logistics Management Specialist, Dept. of the Army:*** Successfully completed all classroom training in Supply Management, Material Maintenance Management, Transportation and Distribution Management as described in the Transportation's Master Intern Training Plan (MITP).
Level II Life Cycle Logistics Certified.

- ***Water Treatment Specialist (92W)***: United States Army. Installed, operated, and maintained water supply and treatment equipment and systems. Assisted in water reconnaissance and setup, operation, and maintenance of water points; assisted in site preparation, setup, operation, troubleshooting, and maintenance of water purification equipment and storage facilities; operated and maintained equipment used in production of portable water in field locations; performed water quality analysis test (September, 2010-November 2011).
- ***Platoon Guide***: R-Company, United States Army, Fort Lee, VA. Coordinated, administered and organized the platoon to ensure that the troops were mission ready and effective. Served as a liaison between the Platoon Leader and members of the team. I supervised a total number of 40 troops and served as the platoon's administrator in the absence of the platoon leader. (December 2010 - March 2011).
- ***Barracks Maintenance Administrator***: United States Army, Fort Lee, VA. Led and administered a barracks housing 190 troops efficiently and effectively by systematically planning, organizing and coordinating barracks maintenance activities which led to a substantial reduction in maintenance cost, and an increase in time management. (December 2010 – March 2011).
- ***Assistant Care Manager***: Aspen Community Living, Akron, OH. As Assistant Care Manager in a healthcare delivery organization, I supervised a five member team to deliver excellent healthcare services to clients by planning their activities of daily living, budgeting and managing their short and medium term finances and providing needed support in the area of transportation, companionship, and appointment management (August 2009 - August 2010).
- ***Graduate Assistant***: Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Worked on the library database and made sure the voyager displayed current information when sought by the end user. I also doubled as a cataloging assistant tasked with adding new stock of books to the library's collection (August 2007-August 2009).
- ***Teaching Assistant***: Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis (SIUE). Planned and organized curriculum for graduate students preparing to take their final comprehensive examination. Taught and reviewed courses in public policy, health administration, public budgeting and professional seminar which led to 100% passing rate of masters candidates (August 2007-August 2009).
- ***Functional Consultant***: Pro_vision Consultants Limited, Ghana. Worked as a consultant on Oracle Human Resource Management Systems; A multi-million dollar project by the Government of Ghana which was aimed at enhancing civil

service administration and reducing payroll fraud. This project led to saving the Government of Ghana about 25% in payroll expenditure. (May 2006 - May 2007)

- Member of the Government of Ghana payroll stabilization team at the Controller and Accountant General's office. Entered and transferred data to Oracle Applications for payroll processing. (Sept. 2006 - May 2007).
- Training
- ***Defense Acquisition University (Correspondence Courses):*** Successfully completed core certification requirements for Level I Cycle Logistics and Level I Program Management (March 2012-Present)
- ***Army Logistics University, Fort Lee, VA:*** Intern Logistics Studies Program (February 2012-June 2012)
- ***Army Logistics University, Fort Lee, VA:*** Ordnance (Logistics) Basic Officer Leadership Course (October 2012-February 2013)

Honors/Awards

- ***Member of Pi Alpha Alpha;*** National Honor Society formed to recognize and promote excellence in the study and practice of public affairs and administration.
- ***Member of Golden Key International Honor Society.***
- ***Distinguished Honor Graduate,*** United States Army Advance Individual Training School, Fort Lee, VA. 2011.