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**ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION  
IN GHANA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Ghana's strive to strengthen and consolidate its democracy is met by the incidence of electoral violence and low levels of women political participation. Having passed the 'two turnover' test prescribed by Samuel P. Huntington, Ghana became the beacon of hope for Africa's democracy. However, elections in the country are marred by violence and the unbalanced participation of men and women. This paper investigates how electoral violence impacts women political participation in Ghana. Using a Case Study Research, qualitative interviews were conducted on sampled women who contested in Ghana's 2016 elections from two cities; Accra and Kumasi. Contrary to the expected finding, it is interesting that, electoral violence minimally impacts women political participation in Ghana as they are willing to participate and contest in subsequent elections despite being assaulted, insulted, victimized, intimidated and threatened in the 2016 and previous elections. Lack of funds to finance political campaigns by women appears to be the most impeding factor for women's optimum political participation in Ghana.

**Keywords:** Electoral Violence, Women, Political Participation and Ghana.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CADA: Centre for African Democratic Affairs

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

CSO: Civil Society Organization

CVM: Civic Voluntarism Model

EMB: Election Management Bodies

ERV: Election-Related Violence

EV: Electoral Violence

GIM: General Incentive Model

IFES: International Foundation for Electoral Systems

IPU: Inter-Parliamentary Union

IWDC: International Women's Democracy Centre

MM: Mobilization Model

MP: Member of Parliament

MPs: Members of Parliament

NDI: National Democratic Institute

OIAPA: Organization for Advancement of African Policy

PT: Pipeline Theory

PP: Political Participation

RCM: Rational Choice Model

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SPM: Social Psychological Model

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Modern liberal representative democracies since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, have used elections as the cardinal instruments by which they operate (Boundless, 2016). Currently, most African countries are at various stages of democratization with elections playing significant role as representative democracy sweeps around the world (Goldsmith, 2015), Concurrently, while elections in Africa are marred by the incidence of violence (Wahman 2014, Amankwah 2013, Sithole 2012 and Lindberg 2002, 2004 & 2006), there is also the phenomenon of low women political participation with only 5% of parliamentary positions occupied by women in the entire of Africa as indicated in the 2016 report of International Organization for Advancement of African Policy (OIAPA). Ghana is not left off the hook of these quagmires. Albeit regarded as Africa's beacon of hope for democracy (Sithole, 2012 and Bob-Miller, 2014), elections in Ghana have been characterised by pockets of violence and the worrying trend of low women participation as noted Kumah-Abiwu (2017), Fischer (2016), Bob-Miller (2014) and Amankwah (2013). A cross-section of literature (Azumah-Mensah- UNICEF, 2013 and Shiraz 2015) have studied the linkages and attributed the phenomenon to the wicked shackles of low educational levels, poverty, cultural and religious barriers to women.

This paper tests how Electoral Violence (EV) impacts Women Political Participation (WPP) in Ghana focusing on the 2016 general elections.

### **1.1 Synopsis: Electoral Violence and Women**

#### **Political Participation in Ghana**

Since the return of Ghana to multi-party democracy in 1992 by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings (Hatchful: 1997 & NCCE: 2011), the country, has successfully conducted seven (7) general elections (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016) and several bye-elections as well as local assembly and unit committee elections.



However, these elections were characterized by various forms of violence across the country (Fischer, 2016). Sithole (2012) notes that the electoral violence in most parts of the country have not only dented Ghana's good record but indicates the serious electoral challenges holding back the country's democratic consolidation. These pockets of violence that characterize Ghanaian elections overtly, have the potency to degenerate into serious conflicts and covertly, deter certain groups of people especially women from participating in the political process of the country (Amankwah, 2013). Unarguably, both situations have dire consequences especially for women. It is therefore not surprising that, Ghana's aspiration to consolidate its democracy is being squished/muddled by low women participation.

Although in addition to enshrining gender equality in the 1992 constitution, Ghana has signed up to several international instruments like the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (AU Optional Protocol on Women), women's participation in Ghana's elections is still very low as compared to men.

The number of women representatives in Ghana's parliament has been one of marginal increment since the inception of the Fourth Republic posing an unbalanced representation picture with men dominating. The current Parliament has 37 women out of a 275-member parliament. Verba and Nie posit that, "where few participate in decisions, there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is" (1972: 1). Therefore, few women in Ghana's parliament means that addressing issues affecting women are decided by men who do/might not have an adequate appreciation of such issues. I argue that, elections in representative democracies in themselves, are worthless when there is an unbalanced participation of both men and women and until the underlying barriers are uprooted, the phenomenon will continue to hamper the democratic consolidation of fledgling democracies.

## 1.2 The Puzzle

After several decades of democratic practice, most countries around the world especially Africa and precisely Ghana are yet to record 50-50 representation of women and men in their parliaments. The proportion of parliamentary seats held by women is put at 23.3% worldwide and Sub-Saharan Africa at 23.6 (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2017). This does not commensurate when juxtaposed with the gender population (50.4% men and 49.6% women) worldwide (<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>) and (49.97% women) in Africa (<http://en.worldstat.info/Africa>). I postulate, though arguably, that, Africa's democratic consolidation struggle is being inhibited by two demons; violent elections and low levels of women political participation. The prevalence of electoral violence on the continent cannot be overemphasised. Lindberg (2006)'s landmark examination of multiparty elections in Africa reveals that, roughly 80% of elections from 1990 to 2003, witnessed some form of electoral violence. Bekoe (2012), Omotola (2010), and a host of other researchers on African democracy and elections also had findings that buttressed Lindberg's position. "Even an election considered to be free and fair in electoral outcome may not have been free of violence" (Goldsmith, 2015: 819). That is, the democratic advances of Africa are dented by the unfortunate reality of electoral violence (IFES, 2014).

Similarly, women's political participation has been abysmal on the continent as records across the world indicate; Nordic region 41.4%, Americas 21.8%, Europe (excluding Nordic) 19.1%, Asia 17.4%, **Sub-Saharan Africa 17.2%** and Arab States 9.6% (IWDC, 2008). Ghana has its share of these cog mires. Since 1992, Ghana's elections have been bedevilled by incidences of violence; both physical and verbal (Fischer, 2016 and CADA, 2012). Reference to the 2008 elections, Amankwah (2013) reports, as her interviewees confirmed to her that, the atmosphere was tensed and marred by violence. The period before the 2016 elections was characterised by various forms of violence with some people losing their lives while scores of others sustained various degrees of injuries.

Comparatively, Ghana's electoral violence is of less scale and magnitude vis a vis those of Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, etc. but I find it ironic and unacceptable that, elections in Africa's 'model democracy' have always been ran with pockets of violence no matter the scale and magnitude. On women political participation, Lindberg (2004: 29) asserts that since Nkrumah's post-independence Ghana to Rawlings' era of "pressured multipartism", "women have often been relegated to the margins of political participation". It is therefore not surprising that, the country still struggles to hit a 20% mark of women in parliament. 37 women out of a total of 275 (13.4%) parliamentarians in Ghana's parliament is puzzling.

The puzzle therefore is; how does electoral violence impact women political participation in Ghana? The National Democratic Institute (NDI, 2016) states that, women political participation is plague with a plethora of barriers including violence during electoral cycles. This paper investigates how electoral violence impacts women political participation in Ghana with a focus on the 2016 general elections.

### **1.3 Aim and Objective of the Study**

Having conducted seven successful general elections and witnessed three alternations of government, thus, passing Huntington's two turnover test par excellence, one would have expected Ghanaians to be consolidating their democracy with a lot of women taking active and frontal role in the country's politics by contesting elections. However, this has remained a mirage. While the works of Amankwah (2013), Azumah-Mensah (2013), Shiraz (2015) Fischer (2016) and Kumah-Abiwu (2017) link low women political participation in Ghana to illiteracy, religion, culture and tradition, this paper aims at testing another determinant; '*electoral violence*'. In so doing, the paper seeks to provide answer (s) to the question; *how does electoral violence impact women political participation in Ghana?* The paper's objective is to add to the existing and on-going research in the field of electoral violence and women participation in politics or better still close

an existing gap in that regard as little research has been done in that regard especially in Ghana.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century could be described as the century of *feminist revolution* (my emphasis) owing to the immense importance and recognition attached to the contribution of women in all spheres of life. Indeed, discussions on women and ‘development’ have shifted from the back-burner to rather occupy a central stage in global meetings. The former U.S Secretary of State Madeleine Albright eloquently said, “Success without democracy is improbable; democracy without women is impossible”. She opines that, communities prosper when women are active in politics because they raise issues that others overlook and listen to the people that others ignore. Therefore, their full and equal political participation in democratic processes such as elections brings real benefits to their countries (NDI, 2016:10). Chowdhury et al (2013), emphasize that, the effective participation and representation of women in democratic processes have been acknowledged widely therefore, genuine democratic elections must ensure women’s empowerment and strengthen gender mainstreaming at all levels of decision-making. The Commonwealth Women’s Forum at Malta in 2015, stresses the potentials women have, to change not only their own economic status but the communities in which they live. Further, the 2011 Perth Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting called on member states to demonstrate commitment towards advancing women’s political participation and leadership in all levels of decision-making. Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is dedicated to gender equality and women empowerment. This study is therefore significant as it seeks to bring to the fore the level of impact electoral violence has on the political participation of women in especially Ghana.

## **1.5 Research Question**

Given the spate of violence that characterize Ghana’s electoral processes and low women participation in same, while there is a global clarion call on all nations of

the world to demonstrate commitment to women empowerment through political participation, this paper poses the following question;

- ❖ How does electoral violence impact women political participation in Ghana?

The central burden of this paper is to find answers to this question and suggest possible ways to encourage more women to actively participate in the country's democratic dispensation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Discussions**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

As democracy sweeps across the world with elections as cardinal pillar, there are lots of studies on EV as a subfield of Political Violence (PV). This chapter reviews the discussions within literature on EV and other barriers and their impact on women political participation. An exploration of relevant existing research (literature) will establish the nexus as well as the gaps among scholarly thoughts on the concepts and thereof, position this paper as either adding to the existing literature or better still, closing the gap therein in the case of Ghana.

#### **2.1 Violence and Other Barriers to Women Political Participation**

Electoral violence within the broad context of PV has become a worrying global phenomenon attracting international attention from different contexts within the last two decades (Krook and Sanin 2016). Across the globe, enormous literature has concentrated on the wider context of PV and Participation with a few giving

attentions to the subfield of EV and WPP. Several scholars and organizations have delved into the field as they try to unbury the causes of this phenomenon and how it impacts women political participation. This part of the paper provides a funnel-type review (electoral violence at global level, African and Ghana) of literature on electoral violence (within the framework of Political Violence) and women political participation.

In the work *Women in Europe and in the World: The State of the Union* (2016: 545-552) Rubio-Marin, concludes as statistics has shown that, “a high percentage of women are still subject to gender violence; economically exploited and marginalized; powerless with regard to governance and participation in the public sphere...” With particular reference to Sweden, Krantz Wallin and Wallin, (2012) survey on ‘Politicians Security’ in Sweden reveals that, one-third of women local politicians in Sweden considered giving up their position because of the violence meted on them. Campbell and Lovenduski (2016) report of the confession by female participants in a program aimed at aspiring women leaders in the UK of sexist abuse online, making over 70% of them scared of even considering taking a role in public life. In a survey of 39 countries, Berry (2016)’s reveals that, about 40% of women Members of Parliament (MPs) have been terrorized with a threat of rape, kidnap, death, abduction of their children (or perhaps themselves; my emphasis) while in office. While One-fifth of them reported of having been subjected to sexual violence, the survey further reveals that, about 80 percent of women MPs had been psychologically abused with humiliating sexual or sexist remarks.

In Latin America, Krook and Sanin (2016)’s work on ‘Gender and Political Violence in Latin America’ found violence against women in politics and for that matter elections to have harmful effects on their rates of political participation. Corroborating Krook and Sanin, Acobol (2012)’s findings in Peru shows about 48% of women leaving office reported of being subjected to various kinds of violence. In Australia, Shepherd (2014) found that, 60% of women aged between 18 and 21 and 80% aged over 31, were less likely to run for political office having witnessed

how negatively a woman prime minister was treated. The study by UN's Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWomen) conducted in India, Nepal and Pakistan identifies masculinization of politics (citing Haleh Ashfer, 2005), lack of confidence among women (inspired by Eleanor Roosevelt's article), religious extremism and low political education of women as the other major barriers to women political participation in South Asia.

Although it may vary contextually, electoral violence has become a global problem especially in regions with fledgling democracies like Latin America, Asia and Africa (Krook and Sanin, 2016). These violence as Krook and Sanin suggest, are demoralizing and devastating such that, they make politics unattractive to women to stand for re/election and leave the squares of politics after few months or years of participating. Believing that violence against women at elections is a criminal issue threatening democracy, human rights, gender equality and women political participation, Krook and Sanin (2016) concluded their work with a call on all stakeholders to raise the issue to the top of the agenda of international discussions and ensure that, men and women can participate in politics equally without fear of violence.

On the African soil, a report by NDI in 2016 reveals that, women face a plethora of barriers in their political participation; legal, economic, institutional, etc. coupled with lack of confidence in themselves to contest for political position. This view is shared by Berry (2016) in her study of Rwanda and Kenya. Fjelde and Höglund (2014) in their study of *'Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa'* found that, albeit Mozambique, Zambia and Namibia had peaceful elections, there was widespread of electoral violence in countries like Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Researching electoral violence in Kenya and Nigeria respectively, Sisk (2008) Goldsmith (2015) regret the lethal and brutish nature of the violence that associated Kenya's 2007/8 and 2011 Nigerian elections with a similar case reported of Cote d'Ivoire in 2010. The pervasiveness of electoral violence in Africa is further elaborated in the works of Lindberg (2006), Omotola (2005, 2007 & 2010), Straus and Taylor (2009) and Bekoe (2005, 2008) and a host

of other researchers on African Democracy, Elections and Violence. IFES's 2014 article provides a general overview on the prevalence of electoral violence in Africa and how Election Management Bodies (EMBs) can help mitigate same. What I find relevant for this paper in the publication is that, though it does not consider how electoral violence impacts women participation, it exposes the nuances of electoral violence in specific contexts of several African countries. For example, in the specific case of Democratic Republic of Congo's 2011 election, it reports of attack by armed *men* with assault rifles. For me, whoever their target (s) may be, will put fear into people (especially women) and the tendency that such people will abandon the electoral process is high (IFES, 2014). For Guinea and Sierra Leone, the publication recognizes the engagement of women in the political sphere but calls for more attention to the challenges (poverty, illiteracy, gender-related issues, and socioeconomic inequalities) women face in their political activism.

Zeroing in on Ghana, Amankwah (2013)'s case study of election-related violence in Ghana, noted political clientelism among other factors as the main cause of electoral violence in Ghana. She however, failed to examine how such violence impact political participation especially by women. On her part, Shiraz (2015) associates the barriers to women political participation in Ghana to a variety of factors across social settings. Her study which dwells on the political participation of women in Muslim dominated communities concludes that, the socio-cultural norms in Muslim communities which are shaped by Islamic doctrines and principles are the inhibitors to women political participation in Ghana. However, she neglects the weight of electoral violence on this phenomenon. Similarly, Ocran (2014)'s comparative study of women political participation in Ghana and Tanzania finds the deep-rooted patriarchal arrangement in the Ghanaian society as the main barrier to women political participation and citing EISA (2012), he noted the absence of structures to augment women's participation in politics and the failure of political entities to support women within their structures as accounting for low women political representation but again, the research left the nexus between women political participation and electoral violence fallow. Ocran's finding about the patriarchal Ghanaian society is buttressed by Allah-Mensah (2005), when she



identifies traditional and cultural factors (anchored on strong patriarchal pedestal), lack of economic and social capital, illiteracy, nature of Ghana's political environment and the domestic roles of women as the barriers to their participation in Ghanaian politics. Gyimah and Thompson (2008)'s study on women participation in local governance elections in Ghana with Nadowli as a case, while corroborating the findings from the aforementioned literature, added inadequate finance, lack of confidence, household chores and farming activities as the main barriers to women political participation in Ghana. In a similar vein was Kuusokub (2011) study on women participation in Ghana's national politics alludes to the barriers noted above but again was silent on how electoral violence affect women's participation in Ghana's national politics.

The above examination of literature on violence and women political participation reveals that, while electoral violence inter alia has been identified in Europe, Australia, Asia and some parts of middle east and Africa, Ghana's story on the issue rarely establish this nexus. It is therefore convincing to conclude that, this paper fills the existing gap in research on electoral violence and women political participation in Ghana.

## **THE PAPER'S FRAMEWORK**

### **2.2 Introduction**

So far, democracy has proven to be the most preferred system of government around the world. However, democracy is strengthened by the balance participation of men and women in elections which serve as the avenue for qualified and registered citizens (voters) to elect people into government and such government so elected becomes legitimate. However, the worrying trend for most young democracies in Africa and for that matter Ghana, has been the low levels of women participation to which several factors including culture, religion, illiteracy etc., have been attributed. On the other hand, elections in fledgling democracies in some parts of Africa and Asia have been characterized by violence which do not only compromise

election results but also scare some groups of people especially women from participating in elections. The examples of Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, India and Nepal, are but a few. This section of the paper provides a framework on both Electoral Violence and Political Participation which will serve as the reference point for analysis.

### **2.3 Violence and Electoral Violence: The Decipher**

I understand violence to be an age-old concept with varying dimensions even before the advent of democratic systems. While it could be domestic, communal, or cultural, in nature, it has religious, economic political and social dimensions too. Being that, violence is a broad, complex and contextual phenomenon. The Dictionary of Political Thought (2007: 722) defines violence as “a property of force” and that, “a force is violent if it ‘violates’ i.e. if it breaks and destroys that to which it is applied”. Describing violence as “a slippery concept; nonlinear, productive, destructive and reproductive” Scheper-Hughes and Philippe also view violence as giving birth to violence and therefore a concept in “continuum” (2004: 01). They further argue that, focusing only on the physicality of violence (assault, force, or pain infliction) is a miss of point. Rather, violence should also be viewed in terms of “assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth and value of the victim”. They believe that, “the social and cultural dimensions of violence are what gives violence its power and meaning” (Ibid). I agree to this position because contemporary political dispensation or may be as before, and especially in Ghana, is marred with verbal assaults on political opponents on almost every platform be it political rally grounds or media. These verbal assaults I believe create sores and leave long lasting scars in the memory of victims and their families with the danger being that, such persons are scared to avail themselves for elections to/may be elected into political positions.

The concept of EV (within the broad framework of violence) is contextual and therefore vary in degree and extent from place to place. While this implies that the impact of such violence will differ, it also means that arriving at a consensus on the

exact frame of the concept is farfetched. However, researchers in the field have strived to put a frame around the concept based on multi country experiences and analysis. A thick line of difference exists between Political Violence and Electoral Violence while it is thin when Electoral Violence is compared to Election-Related Violence (ERV). Perhaps the distinction of these concepts given by Sisk (2008) as stated below might close the gap in our understanding.

First, I will consider Reif (2011)'s position on election violence. Basing on Fischer (2002) and in what he calls a working definition for election violence, Reif opines that, "any spontaneous or organized actions by candidates, party supporters, election authorities, voters, civil society, or other political actors that employ physical harm, intimidation, blackmail, verbal abuse, violent demonstrations, psychological manipulation, or other forms of coercion (or the threat thereof) aimed at disrupting, determining, hastening, delaying, reversing, or otherwise influencing an election and its outcome". Sisk (2008), separates electoral violence from the broad concept of ERV. He views election-related violence as any act of threat, coercion, intimidation or physical harm meant to affect an electoral process or that arises in the context of electoral competition. On the other hand, he considers EV as a sub-type of PV in which actors adopt coercion as an instrument to advance their interest or achieve some political goal. Acts such as assassination of opponents, spontaneous fistcuffs between rival political party supporters/groups, threats, coercion, intimidation of opponents, voters or election officials are all forms/attributes of electoral violence. Violent act as Sisk suggests can be targeted against people or things. Victims of such violence may be an entire community, a candidate, or election materials, offices, vehicles etc. Funneling from these views, the understanding is that, electoral violence falls within the broad framework of political violence. Thus, electoral violence is explained to have limits within the political spectrum and that is; it occurs before, during and after election periods. Therefore, any act of violence that occurs outside of an election period but politically engineered, is not considered as electoral violence but a political violence. My view is buttressed by the position of International Foundation for

Electoral Systems (IFES) which defines electoral violence as “any harm or threat of harm that is aimed at hindering or disrupting any part of the electoral process or political process *in and around the election period*” (IFES, 2014: 2). My emphasis is on the highlighted part of this definition as it clearly establishes the frame of electoral violence. Another definition worth considering is that given by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which it argues was reached at, after a cross-country study on electoral violence. It considers electoral violence as “any acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process, or *that arise in the context of electoral competition*. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections — such as efforts to delay, disrupt or derail a poll — or to influence the outcomes: the determination of winners in competitive races for political office, or securing the approval or disapproval of referendum questions” (UNDP, 2011:05). For me, this definition unifies Sisk (2008)’s and IFES (2014)’s definitions stated above. Given as aforementioned, the operational definition this paper provides in terms of what it considers electoral violence is *any act and/or threat; verbal and/or physical, in the period immediately preceding, during and the period immediately after elections (as the law prescribes) in a country, region or constituency targeted at individuals (opponents), election officials or materials, with the aim of cowering opponents into fear by harming and to some extent killing them, altering election results to the benefit of perpetrators or their political superiors and instigators*.

Any other violence is an outlier for this paper when it is not covered by the operational definition above. I make this disclaimer bearing in mind that there could be domestic and marital violence that relating to a woman’s desire to contest in elections.

## **2.4 Political Participation**

Whiteley and Seyd (2002), identify five main models of political participation; (a) The Civic Voluntarism Model, (b) The General Incentive Model, (c) The Mobilization Model, (d) Social Psychological Model and (e) The Rational Choice Model. However, Trauth et al, (2006) categorise these models into two broad types; (i) Socioeconomic Theories and Civic Voluntarism and (ii) Rational Choice and Civic Incentive Models. While I find models (a) and (b) to be of relevance to this paper's purpose, I will explain briefly models (c) to (e) and then elaborate on the relevant models.

The Mobilization Model (MM) according to Whiteley and Seyd links people's political participation to a response to environmental stimuli. Thus, people participate based on their political opportunities (when they have greater opportunity over others) and the persuasion from other people to them to get involved in politics. This model, they argue is closely linked to the resources model as Verba, Scholzman and Brady pointed out.

The Social Psychological Model bothers on understanding unorthodox forms of political participation such as protest and rebellious actions as associated with the works Finkel, Muller and Opp (1989), Muller, Dietz and Finkel (1991) and Finkel and Opp (1991). There are several variants to the model but focus has mostly been made on the expectations-values-norms theory as discussed in Muller (1979; 23-31).

The Rational Choice Model came to prominence after the seminal work of Downs; "*An Economic Theory of Democracy*" (1957). Although there has been an ongoing debate between the proponents (Tsebelis 1990, Aldrich and 1993, Jackman 1993) and opponents (Hindess 2014, Lowi 1992 and Eckstein 1992) of the theory, Downs precisely states the characteristics of a rational political actor as one who can; always make a decision from a range of several alternatives, ranks alternatives in order of preference, has a transitive preference ranking, chooses the highest ranking

preference, and makes the same decision when confronted with same alternatives each time (Downs, 1957: 6) see also, (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002: 41).

I will now return to the models I deem necessary for this paper.

## **(a) The Civic Voluntarism Model**

This model was originally referred to as the resources model following the work of Verba and Nie (1972). The main import of the model is that, three factors account for political participation. These factors are simultaneously the answers to the question; why people do not participate in political activities?

- (i) They can't – they lack the needed resources (time, money and skills)
- (ii) They don't want to – because they do not have any psychological affinity with politics.
- (iii) Nobody asked them to – that is, they fall outside the recruitment network through which people enter politics. (Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995).

According to this model, resource is the most important determinant of political participation albeit psychological attitudes and the feeling of the obligation to participate also play a role (Verba & Nie, 1972, Verba et al, 1995). Of the six groups of political activists identified by Verba et al under this model (see Whiteley & Seyd, 2002), I find 'the inactives' and the 'voting specialists' relevant for this paper as both mirror the Ghanaian women's attitude towards politics. They explain the inactives to mean those who do little or nothing at all regarding politics. The conviction I have is that, despite Ghana's relatively long practice of democracy, most women remain indifferent to the political square. Their best is to keep fingers crossed and watch events unfold in the political arena even when their issues are at stake. For example, national decisions on maternal healthcare are mostly reached by men when women are the wearers of such shoes and therefore know where they pinch most. This mostly results into inappropriate decisions that affect women. Also, the nearest most Ghanaian women have come to the political circles is to

register and vote at elections. They have indeed become ‘voting specialists’ as Verba et al (1995) opine. While this is commendable, it is not in the least enough because women constitute majority of Ghana’s population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). However, while this model probably is the most cited and important for political participation in today’s literature, it has been criticised for its emphasis on socioeconomic status as a sine qua non for participation. The argument is that, there are higher-status individuals in most societies where participation is low. For this paper, this means that, there are many higher-status women in Ghana who do not participate in politics or better still do not compete men for political positions even though they have equal or even better resources than men. The model has also been debunked on the basis that there is no cogent reason why resourceful individuals will spend their money and time in politics rather than leisure; vacation, sports and games. This point is buttressed by the work of Verba et al, (1995) in Britain when electoral participation was lower in 2001 than it was in 1979 despite massive expansion in higher education. The model has also failed to explain why people with high socioeconomic status (resources) do not participate in politics. Thus, why are women with the high economic status in Ghana apathetic to political participation? While a lot of literature link this attitude to cultural, religious and economic barriers, this paper seeks to establish the nexus between electoral violence and women political participation.

## **(b) The General Incentive Model**

This model came from the work of Olson (1965) and hence referred to as the Olson’s model. It was triggered by the incidence of high-intensity mode/type of participation; canvassing, attending meetings and running for office (see Seyd and Whiteley 1992 Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994, Whiteley et al 1994, Whiteley and Seyd 1998 Whiteley et al 2002 and Trauth et al 2006). The theory explains that, individuals need incentives to participate in politics. Verba et al (1965) conceptualize these incentives as individual and group as well as a sense of political efficacy which Campbell et al (1954), define as *the perception that political change is possible and the individual can be instrumental towards bringing such change.*

However, the model is criticised as being too narrow on the form of incentives that the individual needs in order to participate (see Whiteley et al 2002 and Trauth et al 2006). The implication of the model to this paper is that, the various forms of incentives for political participation create a paradox of participation as it is not clear exactly which form of incentive really motivates participation. I therefore argue that, a nonviolent electoral/political environment induces more participation than any of the incentives Olson and his contemporaries seek to allude to. My position may be seen as a general knowledge and therefore a moot point. However, in an electoral/political environment suffused with pockets of violence, certain groups of people will turn to dominate others. Thus, most women will naturally abstain from participating in a turbulent and violent political environment.

## **2.5 Defining Political Participation**

There are several ways an individual can participate in the political process. However these could be categorized into two broad forms ‘conventional’; activism in Civil Society Organization (CSO) to influence government’s policy decisions, taking part in media discussions on governmental issues, joining a political party, taking part in the electoral processes -registering, voting and contesting for positions, upholding the constitution (Munroe, 2002) and ‘unconventional’; peaceful protests - such as bearing placards, strikes, sick-outs, ‘go-but-slow’ (i.e., working sluggishly on the job), online blogging, writing to the media, calling talk shows, and sometimes unruly demonstrations (Bourne, 2010). Political Participation is also seen as a function of; Stimuli, Personal Factors, Social Position and Environmental Variables (Milbrath and Goel, 1977). Therefore, political participation (PP) is too broad a concept for one generally accepted definition to suffice. Any definition so given, will depend on the aspect of the concept that a writer wishes to highlight Lamprianou (2013) categorises the definitions of PP into two broad forms as; teleological (a goal-oriented political behaviour, from the Greek word *teleo*) and praxial (focuses on the relevant procedures involved, from the Greek word *praxis*). He categorised the definitions of Huntington and Nelson



(1976) and Verba et al (1995) under the teleological. I find that of Verba et al relevant for this paper; “an activity that has the intent or effect of influencing action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies” (Lamprianou, 2013: 23). He put the definitions of Uhlaner (2001), Riley et al (2010), Diemer (2012) and Munroe (2002) under praxial where Munroe (2002) defines PP in terms of the degree to which citizens exercise their rights in engaging in political activities. I.e. protest, free speech, vote, influence a policy course, contest for positions etc. Both categories are important and relevant for women’s political participation in Ghana’s contemporary politics. Procedurally, their participation will help political parties and other political institutions streamline women’s concerns and through that, the status quo of issues that affect women’s progress and development will be challenged leading to improved policy outcomes for women. Instrumentally, their participation will help raise neglected issues about women to the centre of parliamentary discussions and subsequent policy prescriptions to address such issues. Several definitions of PP have been offered by several scholars in the field, for instance, see Milbrath & Goel 1977, Verba & Nie 1972, Kaase & Marsh 1979 and Verba et al. 1995. The definition that falls in sync with the context of this paper is the one given by Parry et al. They opine that, PP refers to “...action by citizens which is aimed at influencing decisions which are, in most cases, ultimately taken by public representatives and official” (Parry et al, 1992: 16). Sieving from all these conceptualizations of political participation and considering the burden of this paper, I conceptualize PP to be *an active participation in the political processes by contesting for political positions through elections or other means (political appointment) and occupying such positions as representatives of the people or as public officers to influence government policies.* Actively contesting for political positions through elections and accepting political appointment presupposes that, one would have participated through most of the electoral processes like voter registration, voting, advocacy, media discussions etc. Therefore, this paper parts away from other conceptions of political participation

by emphasizing on contesting for or accepting political appointments to occupy political positions.

It has become evident from the above theoretical discussions that; electoral violence and political participation are coterminous in so far as political participation is at the core of elections. I reiterate my argument that, holding violent-free elections will encourage more participation and the reverse holds true. This paper therefore revolves around the hypothesis that; *the greater the level of electoral violence, the lower the level of women political participation in Ghana*. My position therefore is that, the more incidence of electoral violence, the lower women PP in Ghana.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Contrary to the domineering nature of Social Science research by the traditional quantitative models (Marshal and Rossman, 1999), this paper adopts a Case Study approach designed in the methodology of qualitative research with semi- structured interviews as the main instrument for data collection. Qualitative case study approach facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2013 and 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The focus of this study is to answer ‘how’ electoral violence impacts women political participation in Ghana and once the ‘behaviour’ of the target group cannot be ‘manipulated’ and that the Ghanaian context is under consideration, the study runs on the wheels of an Explanatory Single Case Study approach with the Ghanaian context into perspective (Yin, 2003, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Lately, semi-structured interviews have gained notoriety as data source for a qualitative research. In this method, the interviews are organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with emerging probe questions as the interviewer and interviewee ensue in dialogue (DiCicco et al, 2006).

#### **3.1 Field Work and Interviews**

The study focused on two regional capitals (Accra and Kumasi) and the Parliament (House of Representatives) of Ghana. The two regional capitals while recording higher rates of electoral violence, at the same time have women who have the capabilities as men in terms of education, resources etc. (as espoused in the resource incentive model of political participation) to participate in politics. Interviewing both women parliamentarians and those who contested but lost, provides varying views and this enriches the quality of the research. Respondents were interviewed

using semi-structured interview guides which were open-ended as the questions sought to draw detailed information from them.

As qualitative method, the approach allows respondents to freely discuss their stories and thus will give detailed information by delving into the complexities of the issue under investigation (Hollway & Jefferson 2000; Marshal and Rossman, 1999). The model further allows the views and experiences of respondents to be understood in context and these views are solely the respondents' and not of the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Thus, I do not know any better than the respondents, since it is their personal stories. I may disagree, select and interpret whatever they tell me, but this is a discretion that for me as the researcher must put in check (Hollway & Jefferson 2000). It provides a face-to-face conversation (where the researcher notices the mood and facial expressions of the interviewee that might lead to probe for further clarification; my emphasis) by the researcher and thus, offer an effective way to gather material that speaks to interpretative researchers' interests and goals.

The approach further offers participant(s) the opportunity to explain themselves and their world, and the participant has the task of telling the interviewer what she knows in a way that can be understood by an outsider (Magnusson and Marecek, 2015) Rather than having a large sample as in the case of quantitative design, this model extracts information from a much smaller sample by recording the voices of respondents to be transcribed by the researcher.

However, the model is limited in its ability to generalize as it heavily draws from the experiences of a few people (which are subjective). It is also not able to provide data in figures as in the case of quantitative model and therefore not suitable for (Creswell, 2014). Dwelling on a constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003, 2013), the case study approach recognizes the individual creation of meaning and thus truth is subjective and relative although it does not outrightly reject some notion of objectivity. In my view, the model's inability to provide data in figures

makes it unattractive to especially policy makers who need figures for effective allocation of resources.

Despite these criticisms, the design still holds appropriate for this paper considering the issue under investigation vis-a-vis the context of the study environment. Electoral violence impacts differently from person to person. While men and women will be affected differently, women as individuals, will have various levels of effects from electoral violence. The most appropriate approach to siphon in-depth information on the impact of electoral violence on women political participation for me is to interview them on their personal stories. Quinn (2005) argues that, interviewing is an effective way to locate clues from people's personal and cultural meanings that would be difficult to find in any other way. Interviews can yield full and rich accounts of how people see the world, what sense they make of it, and what concerns they bring to their lives (Magnusson and Macerek, 2015).

### **3.2 Size and Method**

Respondents for the two regional capitals were selected using simple random probability sampling. After obtaining the details of women contestants in the 2016 elections from the website of Ghana's Electoral Commission, they were contacted via telephone and interviewed one-on-one based on their schedule and convenience. However, there was a consideration based on party affiliations to make a strategic representation of views. Women parliamentarians were reached using purposive sampling since it was seen to facilitate easy access to them. Here the sample is chosen for a purpose; to get access to the people, times, and settings that are representative of given criteria (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). One key purpose is to ensure that all criteria of relevance are included. A second key purpose is to access a diverse sample, as a means of testing how another given criterion varies across categories (O'Reilly, 2009).

I assume women parliamentarians have tight schedules and some might not be available during the period of these interviews. It is therefore practically prudent to make the sampling method for this category flexible to get access to those readily available for the interviews and to save time. In O'Reilly's understanding, the probability random sampling is a sample, or subset, of the population selected in order that every member of the population has an equal, or at least calculable, probability of being selected. The idea is that the sample represents the whole in all important or relevant characteristics.

Twenty interviews were conducted in all with seventeen non-parliamentarians and three parliamentarians. However, the original design was to interview at least fifteen non-parliamentarians and at least five parliamentarians but the realities of fieldwork could not allow.

The paper makes use of primary data in conducting the analysis. The primary data was collected from the various respondents in Ghana's parliament and the two regional capitals through interviews with a focus on Ghana's 2016 elections.

### **3.3 Ethical Considerations**

In so far as research is about human beings, ethical issues must never be relegated (Sumner & Tribe, 2008). Gillies and Alldred (2012) argue that research ethics have focused on the 'how well participants rather than ethics of knowledge are treated'. They call for the broadening of ethical conceptions to include the objectives and intentions for the research. This paper therefore was ethically guided from the formulation of the research question, through to field work (especially), analysis, through to presentation of results or findings. I ensured the adequate security of my respondents by making them anonymous and their information confidential unless otherwise a respondent wishes to be named.

In designing the interview instruments, cultural norms, gender and religious beliefs of the respondents were borne in mind and that guided the wordings. Respondent

were treated equally and accorded the maximum respect. Also, the consent of each respondent was sought before interview.

To secure the intention and objective of the research, no part of the information was falsified and contrary findings have also been reported to ensure that, the ethics of knowledge is not distorted. Respondents/institutions who request copies of the findings shall be provided with. I shall endeavor to use appropriate language in the report bearing in mind my interviewees. I do not know any better than the respondents, after all, it is their lives. I, as far as practicable insulated the findings from my interpretations (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000). All information from sources other than me were duly cited and acknowledged according to the Harvard system.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings from fieldwork on sixteen (16) interviews and from that, reflexively analyse the findings Vis a Vis the hypothesis the paper revolves around. In doing so, the hypothesis gets either upheld or rejected as the answer to the central question (how electoral violence impacts women political participation in Ghana) of the paper will show. The chapter further provides the position of this paper in relation to previous research and offer suggestions for policy and future research opportunities and concludes thereafter.

Note: Respondents were coded R1, R2, R3, in that order to R16 where R= Respondent and 1, 2 ... = the number in order of interviews. R1, R2 and R3 are members of parliament. Henceforth, the coding system will be used to link response (s) to respondents.

### 4.1 Findings

The findings from field are provided under two main headings; background and political experiences of the respondents and electoral violence and women political participation.

#### **(a) Background and Political Experience**

I asked respondents about their backgrounds; educational level, occupation, income levels, marital status and age. Interestingly, only R14 revealed her age as (57) years as the others thought it was personal. However, relying on the data from the Electoral Commission of Ghana, it is appropriate to use an average age of 35 years. All the respondents are married with at least a child except R16 whose marital status is “complicated” as she said. Most respondents hold first degree with R11 and R14 having their second degrees’ theses on hold because of their participation in the elections. R6 has the least level of education; a certificate in catering. R16 is a fashion designer while R11, R12, R14 and R15 are teachers by profession with R7



and R10 being pensioners. R9 and R13 operate consultancy firms, R1, R2, and R3 while being parliamentarians are also; a school proprietress, an insurance broker and a lawyer respectively. However, R5 owns a school while R4 is currently unemployed and R8 is a business woman. While most respondents were hesitant to declare their income levels, R6 has the least level of income (GHS 500, not fixed though) with R9 having the highest level (GHS 10,000). R11, R12, R14 and R15 have their incomes ranging between (GHS 1,500 and 2,000) but R4 does not have any income.

According to the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM), resource is the most important determinant of political participation albeit psychological attitudes and the feeling of the obligation to participate also play a role (Verba & Nie, 1972, Verba et al, 1995). For me, 'resource' as the model states, is vague as several concepts are rolled into it. However, I find respite in Milbrath and Goel (1977)'s categorization of the resources as Socioeconomic Status (SES) which they consider as key to individuals' political participation. They argue that, people with higher SES especially higher education are more likely to be highly involved in politics than people with low SES. This is because, people with higher education are more aware of the impact government has on their lives, have more political information, are confident to discuss politics with a wider range of people etcetera. Occupation and income also determine the rate of political participation as still within CVM, Milbrath and Goel maintain that, people with high occupational status and income tend to participate more in politics than those in the lower status. It is therefore not wrong to conclude that, these expositions by Milbrath and Goel reflect in the background and SES of most the respondents. This position would have been clearer if the research had taken a controlled group comprising women who had little or no education. But even as it is, it could be argued as in the case of R1, R2 and R3 above that, women with higher SES have higher chances participate (and perhaps win) elections.

On their political experiences, I asked respondents how long they have been in politics and their experiences so far. The conviction is that, experience plays a vital role in the kind of decisions an individual will make as against making descriptive

decisions (Hertwig et al, 2004; Fox & Hadar, 2006; Newell & Rakow, 2007). This is connected to the Pipeline Theory (PT) which predicts that individuals who serve in lower-levels of political office will leverage political resources and use the experience gained to advance to higher political office (Miriani, 2008). Therefore, it is likely that, women who have long political experience will use such arsenal to enhance their chances of winning elections. From the findings, most respondents had an appreciable level of political experience. Some started with student politics and later rolled into national partisan politics while others rose through the ranks of party offices till they contested the elections. The PT seems to have worked well for R1, R2 and R3 as they have progressed from holding political party positions and other forms of political training to winning elections. Sharing their thoughts;

*R1; "I've been in politics for twelve years, I was the regional women organizer, I lost my first primary contest but won on second attempt and this is my first time in parliament. The experience has been tiring but very exciting".*

*R2; "I got interested in politics at a very tender age... my daddy was contesting as an MP in his area, so anywhere he went, I was with him... My experience as an MP has not been something bad at all, it's been a very interesting experience. Apart from the fact that, during the campaigns there were a whole lot of ups and downs but I'm ok".*

However, the failure of R14, R15 and other respondents to win elections despite several years of political experience contrasts the import of PT and thus, indicates the inherent weakness of the theory; it is not always the case people with long political experience can advance to higher political office and in this case, win elections. This is especially so in a context where a plethora of factors influence the electoral success of women. Nonetheless, the experiences from holding lower level political offices could serve as a strong harbinger to harnessing women's progress to higher offices.

In their own words as below, R14 and R15 even though have not won any parliamentary elections especially R14, they are happy with the experiences they have gained through participating and contesting elections.

*R14; "... I joined the NPP in 1992, that is I've been in it for 25years but practically as a politician, I think it is about 14years now since 2002 I decided to become an MP for my constituency so I started going around to make people aware of my ambition and mission and in 2003, I lost the first primaries I contested as the only woman among four men".*

*R15; "I will say I've been a politician since childhood because, way back in primary school I was given positions here and there up to tertiary. But I came to the limelight politics two to three years ago even with that, I was underground until the last elections when I decided to contest as an MP for my constituency". "So far, I will say it has not been bad, it has been cool and I've enjoyed every bit of it, every moment, meeting different kind of people even those you never thought you will meet. I've contacts and gone to places".*

Similar R14, R13 has also been a student politician before joining mainstream politics in 2015. Her experience and those of other respondents have been good as they confess to have learnt a lot from being part of politics. They have gotten to know the deep concerns that people have and want to be resolved which on a face value, she would not have known.

The inability of some respondents and a host of other women who contested the elections to win could be linked to Duverger (1995)'s list of impediments to women winning elections. (See analysis part for elaboration).

To the paper's frame, experiences of respondents connote their interaction with stimuli from the political environment which could serve as a great catalyst for participation. Milbrath and Goel maintain that, the greater political stimuli available in the environment, the likelihood is greater that, individuals will pick them up. From the responses it is true that, respondents (and generalizing, women in Ghana), are zealous of taking active roles in politics and if that is the case, the low levels of women in Ghana's politics could result from impediments I refer to as 'negative environmental stimuli' of which violence at elections could play a significant role. Thus, their psychological affinity to politics gets wiped away and hence would not want to participate as the second point of the CVM above indicates.

## **Men to Women Ratio in Ghana's politics**

For several decades, women across the world have made little progress about their participation in national politics (Paxton and Kunovich, 2003). To this end, in rolling out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations (UN) considers gender equity in all spheres of life a priority. Of interest to this paper's import is point five of SDGs number five which recognizes the slow progress of women in national parliaments (23.4%) across the world and calls for stronger political commitment with measures such as the quota system to boost women's political participation and empowerment. With this inspiration, I asked respondents if they were satisfied with the ratio of men to women in Ghana's parliament and their views on the call for more women to join politics. It is revealing that; all respondents were not happy about the ratio that has women in the least. They regret the irony of women being majority of Ghana's population yet only about 13% representation in parliament. They added their voices to the clarion call on especially Ghanaian women to get involved in active politics.

R3 expresses the general unhappiness of women with the ratio and claims is the reason she decided to join mainstream politics. Being a feminist advocate, she encouraged a lot of women to take active role in politics and taught them how they could be assertive in politics. She says;

*"Ooo! As for that, we are most unhappy and I think that is what has even brought me to this point because as an advocate for women empowerment we were always engaging women to participate in politics and then it got to this point; I realized that the last candidate for my party in my constituency was a woman and when nominations were opened we had seven men filing so I decided to file and I won the primaries and subsequently won the elections. So, my desire to see an increase in women participation in the legislature brought me to this point."*

Her position, which is not entirely different from those of R15 and R16, moulds well with both the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) and General Incentive Model (GIM) as she exhibits a great psychological affinity to politics and her

instrumentality towards bringing change. R15's argument reflects the global situation of less women in national parliaments. She is not happy with the situation. She states;

*“Not at all!! at least if you check we have more women than men in this country but when you go to the law-making house and you meet only a few women, I think it is not the best. I think if in the near future, if we have 50-50 it will be the best because we women, some people think we are just to be around and help but sometimes when we are given leading roles, we perform much better than some men. So, I think if we can have more women in parliament, it will be the best”.*

R16 holds a similar and a bit contrasting view with the above respondents. She believes that women political situation and societal status is ameliorating these days compared to how it used to be in the past. She blames the bible for the status of women in society. What makes her sad about politics is the aftermath of losing elections. She says;

*“The ratio is not good enough because of the way women are handled in society I think it started since Adam because when you go to the Bible, there are so many things happening to women and it is likewise today, even though now I think things are even better than days gone. So comparatively, women are talking, now we have the platform so we are managing the situation, women are airing their views and men are listening. My problem is when one loses the contest, she is rejected, else everything is cool”.*

While she links to and blames the Bible for the current situation of women generally, her argument also follows from the Athenian construction of women. Writing on the Social and Political roles of women in Athens, O'Pry asserts that, Athens was a place “where a person could become a great scholar, poet, politician or artist unless that person was a woman” (2012: 02). This position is not completely different from how the Ghanaian society has socially constructed women who are best described as ‘kitchen masters’ (my emphasis) as we will see from the ‘Specific Violence to Women Section’ of this paper. However, what I find striking in her response is the statement; “My problem is when one loses the contest,

she is rejected”. She thinks Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) could take up that role of keeping such women active by using them as advocates for women political empowerment.

R13 thinks it is not encouraging to have only 37 women out of a 275-member parliament while R12 concludes her response with popular adage that “*what men can do, women can do same and do it better*”

In a similar reaction, R11 while she believes the call to be a worthy one is however pessimistic if that could be achieved considering the inequalities in responsibility between men and women and the patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society. She is of the view that, there should be a deliberate effort (Quota for women parliamentarians) to increase more women in parliament. She replies;

*“It is a worthwhile call but an effort in futility because of the inequalities that exist, the hindrances, the challenges that confront a woman as a career person, as a home maker, spouse, and then within the social construct our society is highly patriarchal and so it really discourages women from engaging into politics and until something definite and concrete is done to increase the woman’s gains in politics (there should be a deliberate effort as a way of encouraging more women; certain specific things had to be done to secure women’s position, that way we will be making headway; we haven’t gotten to the point where we should allow women to compete with men on the same threshold)”.*

Constituting more than half of the population, women in Ghana should have been occupying more positions in politics especially in parliament. This is however still a mystical conviction for Ghana. From the responses, it could be generalized that, women in Ghana, are not happy with the ratio that has very less women than men in the decision-making body of the country. However, there is a mixture of optimism and pessimism among them as to the realization of a balanced representation of women and men in Ghana’s politics. The reflection here is that, women want to see more of themselves in control of ‘affairs’ but the impeding shackles need to be broken to realize this. One of these shackles is electoral violence which has been left off the hook in research and that gives credence to this work.

## (b) Electoral Violence and Women Political Participation

I solicited from respondents what general view they hold about electoral violence in Ghana. The idea is to get the general scope of violence that women as politicians, experience in their political activities. It is worthy of note that, almost all respondents confirm the characterization of Ghanaian elections by violence especially verbal invectives. Except for few cases where respondents admit being physically assaulted, the incidence of physical assault on women during electioneering is rare.

R3 believes the verbal invectives she encountered were unprecedented with all sorts of lies fabricated against her. R1 attests to the prevalence of violence during the 2016 electioneering campaigns. She condemns it as something that should not be encouraged as people get killed, maimed or hurt in some other ways by violence. Sharing similar thoughts with R3 and R1, R14 introduces another dimension of electoral violence she referred to as spiritual violence. She posits;

*“Now there is also spiritual violence in politics and its meant to do everything even to kill you by spiritual means. So, the violence is not only the physical, they go around to do everything to kill you...”*

The position of R14 on spiritual beliefs to kill a person corroborates the findings of Shiraz (2015) on sociocultural beliefs as impediments to women political progress in Ghana. Analysing this from the point of the positivist would make useless of such beliefs as there is no concrete or scientific prove to reach such conclusions. The deeply rooted belief in culture and spirits of the Ghanaian society suggests a distance from recourse to scientific approach to ameliorating the political plight of women in Ghana.

R16 on her part alludes to, and regrets the violence that ensued immediately after the elections when supporters of the winning party resorted to violence in their bid to take control of public places like toll booths, KVIPs etc. I believe the clientelist

nature of Ghanaian politics is to blame for post-election violence in the country. Party supporters feel the need to take charge of public institutions occupied by appointees of the previous government without resort to laid down rules and procedures. R16 has this to say;

*“the violence that followed after the elections; burning of toll boots, harassing and beating people up etc., I think was wrong”.*

Specifically, on her, R12 recalls a plot by her opponent to physically assault her. Her story gives credence to the alarming nature of electoral violence in Ghana.

*“my opponent went to the extent of informing some people in one of the towns that when I get there, they should beat me up”.*

R11 however views electoral violence as diminishing from Ghana’s body politic. For her, electoral violence brings extra cost to contestants since the thought of it (even if it does not occur) alone implies extra security arrangement for the contestant. She further emphasizes that, potentially good candidates will abstain from politics because of electoral violence. In her words;

*“I must say Ghana has come very far because I have been around, I’ve witnessed the elections since 1996 and I must say electoral violence is gradually diminishing from our body politics even though there are pockets of violence. My general opinion on this is that, it is crippling and has cause elements. The thought of electoral violence will help you to make extra security arrangements and that makes elections more expensive. It also disallows potentially good candidates from offering themselves for political office”.*

R13 thinks that generally, the 2016 elections did not witness so much of violence as the previous elections. She holds that, her region unlike the hinterlands did not experience so much of violence but attests to the prevalence of tearing of her posters and banners, insults, but feels those were issues she expected so she did not bother so much.

Respondents confirm the prevalence of electoral violence especially verbal invectives. While some reveal of some minimal physical attacks on them during the elections, most of them indicated of having suffered verbal attacks from their



opponents and their supporters. However, they are not scared of such violence and are intrinsically motivated to participate more in politics. Most of them find it a civic duty (as in the CVM) to contribute to their communities' development hence their zeal to participate. Milbrath and Goel argue that, the sense of civil obligation to participate carries over strongly to political actions and persons with such sense are more likely to participate. Therefore, once women in Ghana find it a sense civility to participate in politics, they will do so regardless of the impediments.

### **(i) Specific electoral violence on women**

I investigated the peculiar violence women suffer by their status as women as against men contesting elections. I separate this section from the section on the general scope of electoral violence in Ghana because violence is meted out and experienced differently. As evident from literature (Berry: 2016, Campbell and Lovenduski: 2016, Shiraz: 2015, Amankwah: 2013), women suffer different sort of violence from men as they contest elections. The findings of this work corroborate the position of literature on this matter. Almost all respondents share the view that, women suffer abuse/violence which they would otherwise not have if they were men. Most of the respondents were called prostitutes with a few married ones who were not named as such.

R3 shared the story of how she was severally named and assaulted by her opponent supporters who were men.

*“For women, mostly it is verbal and it can get so bad that if you are not well grounded and focused knowing what you want to do and achieve, you will give up... it is mainly done to discourage us”.*

*I was referred to as; “wo y3 banchi”, “wo ny3 obiaa”, “na w3, oy3 abrewa” “O wo sika aduro” (you are a cassava stalk, you are nothing, you are too old, she has blood money)” ... “stones were thrown at me by the supporters of my opponent... and one of them said ‘she is a married woman when we start saying such nasty things about her, the husband will not be happy and will ask her to step down”.*

The case of R3 above exposes the extent of verbal and or physical violence to which women who contests elections in Ghana are subjected to. While physical violence

may wound, maim or kill a person, verbal invectives have far reaching emotional impact on the personality of immediate victim, their children and families. R2 who was tagged a foreigner in her own constituency recounts cases where women contestants from other constituencies were tagged prostitutes and harlots. However, as she is married, she was not called that way. R14 shares her dismay about the contradictions between propositions and actions of male Ghanaian politicians. She asserts that, often, the call is publicly made for more women to participate in politics but the actions of such proponents portray otherwise. Women who boldly come out to contest elections are humiliated and in some cases not just by men but their colleague women. A phenomenon she describes as “the woman is the woman’s enemy”. She says;

*“... that is one thing about politics in Africa and Ghana. We are singing the song that we want women in politics but the women are not coming because of so many humiliations. You come, they tell you don’t have money, somebody can even openly say ooo! She is a woman “obaa di3” (as for a woman...) what is she going to do? Meanwhile the person is a woman. Because she has not schooled, she doesn’t see the need for a woman to rise so that’s why we say the woman is the woman’s own enemy”.*

Answering a probe on the peculiarity of violence on women, exclaims that, they are mostly insults and accusations of infidelity to their partners. She also reveals the vulnerability of women contestants at the mercy of their male financial supporters/sponsors who most often request to have sex with them before they could financially support their campaigns. She exclaims.

*“insults!!!... They will even tell you have gone to bed with somebody’s husband... I was even accused of being in a hotel room (Golden Tulip) with the President and what message does that send to my husband? ... they insult us, push us down, belittle us and if you don’t have a strong heart you will just give up. I started with some women but they couldn’t continue... money also pushes us back as a woman if you go to someone who you think can help you he decides to sleep with you before he supports you”.*

R15's response was nothing different from the above respondents except that she had her insults on social media (Facebook). She was also called a prostitute and she had to counter when her patience was pushed to the wall. She had to quit Facebook to focus on her agenda. The situation of R15 raises the issues of privacy and social media attacks on politicians that is surging in electioneering campaigns lately. I think the ever-increasing usage of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etcetera, have brought people closer and it is easy for a person to unleash all sorts of invectives on the other with seconds.

However, R16 holds a contrasting view and thinks that, Ghana's democracy has grown from the politics of acrimony which she admits upon a probe used to bedevil Ghanaian elections in the past. She says;

*"I think this election didn't go that way and people were happy to see women being bold to contest for a party... "In days gone, when a woman was contesting she is being labelled as a prostitute, she is this, she is that, but this time those things didn't happen, it happened but so rampant in this election".*

*R11; "I didn't suffer any physical violence but there were few confrontations, verbal abuses, defacing of my posters and banners, those were the sources of the violence because you can't just look on aloof while your something you have sunk your money gets destroyed. So, when you see such happenings, then, you are tempted to either employ similar or worse tactics and as a candidate I got a few of those situations especially verbal, we only managed it such that it didn't escalate but there were few open confrontations".*

As indicated earlier, women suffer specific forms of violence different from men as they contest elections. These are mainly verbal invectives, intimidation and life-threatening actions as revealed from the responses. Non-married women contestants are easily referred to as 'prostitutes' just because they are women. It is surprising that, these sorts of violence do not come only from men but women in opposing camps; a situation R14 describes as "the woman is the woman's own enemy". This implies that, while women in Ghana, may strive to roll out of the shells of timidity to contest elections, their efforts are stifled by the increasing

incidence of verbal assaults and intimidation from both men and other women making nonsense of the call for more women to join politics. The impact of such verbal accusations (which are mostly untrue), are enduring. They do not only affect the targeted but their families as well. Following from the responses above and juxtaposing that with the position of Scheper-Hughes and Philippe on what really constitutes violence (see Understanding Violence above), then, it is not out of place to conclude that, Ghanaian elections are characterized by violence.

### **How happy are you as a Politician?**

My next question to the respondents was ‘how happy are you as a politician’. By that, I aimed to find out the state of mind of the respondents after having suffered verbal abuses in the name of contesting elections. The responses were varied. While most women are happy, others express mixed-feeling. The general idea I get is that, Most respondents seem to take inspiration from the CVM as they see it a duty upon themselves to actively participate at the highest echelon of decision making process. This affords them the opportunity to contribute to national policy decisions especially those that affect women. Similarly, there is an inspiration from the GIM as respondents consider themselves as the main instruments to challenge the status quo and bring about the needed change to their communities and to women’s political engagement. For most who lost the elections, the opportunity to get recognized and be known from their constituents is comforting. The successful respondents thus, R1, R2 and R3 are happy for not just winning the elections but the opportunity to be role models to many young women is worthy. Below are sampled responses

*R5; “... and that makes me happy because I am a people’s person; I want to see what I can do for and with them”.*

*R12; “In fact, I am really happy because it is not a joke at all to be a politician... so, I am a very happy person; after all, despite the fact I was not the winner, a lot of people have heard me and a lot have interviewed me as you are doing”.*

R1; *“I’m happy because I’m able to serve my community, I’m because I’m going to be a role model and a mother to so many young but vulnerable people. So that’s what makes me happy”.*

R3; *“I’m happy! It is challenging but I’m happy because I see it as an opportunity to make an impact, to contribute at the national level, to be a role model for other women and to impact the lives of my constituents, so I’m very happy”.*

On the flip side, R9 expresses a mixed-feeling since she finds people’s political behaviour to the contrary of her discipline nature. She is worried about the indiscipline and clientelist nature of politics in Ghana. Most often, and I think, for lacking understanding of how democracy and politics are done, most Ghanaians see their MPs as ‘banks’ where they could obtain money whenever they want for their personal issues rather the pressing them to ensure larger community development. I remember very well; growing up close to the then MP of my constituency, people queue early in the morning waiting for the MP to take money from him for their personal problems. In fact, some even take their breakfast there. This is the situation R9 talks about in her words below;

*“... I am a disciplined person and I expect that in every environment I go into, but politics is not like that..., Because of politics, everybody does what they want to do, there is no discipline anywhere. But the bright side of it is that you have an opportunity to help, people, see the people (grassroots), you get to know them, where they live and when to help, you know who and where to help. In the same way, you see people taking advantage of you as a politician, people lie to you because you are a politician and so many things go on. My experience as a politician has been very good and not very pleasant; you have a bit of both. But on the whole, I am happy that I have met a lot of people and impactful to them...”*

Having spent a lot of resources (money) during her campaigns in the last election which she lost, R11 was worried about funding political activities by the state. She quizzes why Ghana has criminalized state funding of a noble course that enhances democratic development. She retorts;

*“aaah!! Am I happy in the first place? No! I am unhappy because we are in a country where funding political activities by the state is*

*criminal; how do you criminalize funding an activity that leads to a democratic process? From what source do you expect the contestants to get funding? ... So even if I should go again I will consider my financial grounds before”.*

R7 is not happy as a politician owing the low levels of women participation. She cites Rwanda as doing well in terms of women representation and laments Ghanaian government’s inability since independence to make any good inroads in terms of the affirmative action. She retorts that, not only in politics, but almost all public institutions have few women in leading roles except for the teaching and nursing fields.

For R13, she is neither happy nor sad. She blames it on the domineering nature of Ghana’s politics by two political parties; the NPP and NDC, which does not give room to women in smaller parties to also get the nod to represent and work for their people. She is however optimistic that; the dominance will be broken when the smaller parties form an alliance.

Although some respondents expressed mixed-feelings relating to their happiness as politicians, most of them are happy with their chosen field. This implies that, Ghanaian women, despite all the odds and the marginalized nature of their rate of political participation find the politics a good field to operate in. This contrast the general conviction that, politics is a dirty game. It also indicates that, if all the barriers to women political participation (especially electoral violence) are minimized or better still removed, women in Ghana will be happy when they participate.

**(ii) Do you regret participating/Will you contest again?**

To find an answer to the paper’s central question, I decided to ask respondents if they have regretted their participation in elections due to the kind violence they were subjected to during the electioneering period and whether they will like to contest again. Almost all respondents have not regretted their participation although

they had spent their savings, investments and suffered some opportunity costs, they are not scared by the incidence of electoral violence (mostly verbal invectives) they were victims of. They rather, are zealous to participate since that is how they become known and get the necessary exposure and make impact in society.

*R2; "I don't regret because it really helped me get in touch with the people of my constituency first hand so I've not regretted. some challenges tried to let me regret but later on, I realized that, I should forget and regard that as part of the game so I should let it go and forge ahead*

R3 Considers the invectives as part of the game and with that conviction will not let that discourage her from future participation in politics. She replies;

*Nooo! I haven't regretted... I'm not going to let that sway me or affect me or bring me down. So, I am focused and will spend the rest of my life in politics.*

R14 is strong on her willingness to even participate more at the least given opportunity. She says;

*"No, I don't at all!! I will always want to participate anytime there is the opportunity".*

R15 No!!! I will say it is the best thing that has ever happened to me. At least it made think more about my country, it made read more. So, I don't have any regrets being in politics.

R16; I've not regretted at all! I am very, very happy even though I lost and my president lost but I am alive so I am happy to be in politics, it is a nice game.

R9; Not at all!! you see we need to make a difference and if that is what it takes to make the difference, I am ready to do that. I am ready to do something another woman/child will be happy about.

R12; In whatever you do, there will be challenges but you decide how that goes into you and how it will influence your plans. So, despite all the insults, I am on my feet to contest the elections all the time until this district/constituency gets what it deserves. I will not be disarrayed to step down.

R13; “No, I don’t regret. I will to contest again but marriage may not allow me since I will get married to a king soon and because of his position, I cannot contest elections or be actively involved in politics”.

R5; For now, it is too early for me to take a decision to contest or not in the next election. But I think I will contest again because if you fight and you don’t succeed, you fight again. The downfall of a man is not the end of their lives. Quitters don’t win and winners don’t quit. So, all these are my motivation. So, I haven’t regretted.

R7; I haven’t regretted at all! If you want to achieve something, you have to struggle. Look at where you are now (referring to me), the weather is not favorable but you are there because you want to achieve something. So, I want to achieve something and I will be in politics until death.

R8; No, I don’t regret at all. I like politics and will be contesting until I win.

R11; it is a yes and it is a no! it is a yes because there are some people who if not because of politics, they will never cross your way... it becomes annoying when because of politics some of these people try to take advantage of you. But then, it is a worthwhile experience so I have no regrets at all. I have learnt a lot and acquired some experiences which in future I can use even if not in politics, but in public life.

Not regretting and willingness to participate more in politics by respondents is an interesting finding for me. The assumption is that, violence at elections will scare women from participating but the findings reveal the opposite. The implication for this paper is that, despite the prevalence of electoral violence in Ghana, women are willing to contest in elections and participate more in politics.

## **4.2 Analyses**

The United Nations Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), emphasizes the fundamentality of women’s contribution to the achievement of transparent, accountable governance and sustainable development in all spheres. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a major shift from the relegation of women to placing them at the centre of global discussions (SDGs 2016). To this end, countries around the world



craft policies that consider gender mainstreaming cardinal especially within the political field. However, less than one in five parliamentarians across the world are women (McCann, 2013). This is a cause for worry. Hence, the need for this research.

Literature discussions have established a strong nexus between the background (especially formal education) of individuals and their political participation (Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Goetz, 2013/4). Women's low level of education, religion, income culture and tradition are seen by Kumah-Abiwu (2017), Shiraz (2015), Bob-Miller (2014), Amankwah (2013) and Azumah-Mensah (2013) as the main impediments to women optimum political participation in Ghana. While this may hold true, educational levels seem to evade this conscription as the findings for this paper indicate. Except for R6 who holds a certificate in catering, all the respondents hold at least a bachelor's degree as some still pursuing their second degrees. Thus, it might not hold strongly in contemporary Ghana, that, women's low level of education impedes their political participation as they seem to pursue higher education. Income (funding), came out the most impeding factor to women political participation in Ghana as all the respondents complained of lacking funds to finance their campaigns as their men contestants could do. Thus, the resource aspect of the CVM is at work.

Experience within the squares of politics also counts in an individual's ability to contest elections. The findings reveal that, most women in Ghana have an appreciable level of political experience and that could serve as a harbinger for their political participation. While experience may provide the necessary exposure, and build Ghanaian women's confidence to contest elections, winning the contest remains a mirage for most of them. For example, R14 who has been in mainstream politics since 1992, has been contesting as an MP since 2004 but has never won an election. Even the primaries ran at party levels to elect a candidate to represent the party in the main elections has always eluded her. Darcy et al (1994: 30) posit that, "it is not easy to chart the progress of women in winning elections" and this could result from three impediments suggested by Duverger (1955) in his 'The Political

Role of Women' i.e. voter hostility; voters may prefer a male to a female candidate, male conspiracy; the notion that, politics is the domain of men and electoral arrangements which tend to favor men over women. Although respondents attest to funding as the major impediment to their winning elections, Duverger's suggestions stitches well with the situation of Ghanaian women contesting elections. Not just do men, even women prefer male to female candidates; a situation R14 describes "that's why we say the woman is the woman's own enemy". More so, gendered roles that relegate women to the kitchen are heavily entrenched in the Ghanaian society. Most respondents recount the incidence of being reminded of their "office"- the kitchen. In a typical Ghanaian home, politics and political engagements are the preserve of men and an assertive woman is labelled rude and disrespectful as R11 and R14 revealed to me.

Respondents have expressed their dissatisfaction with the ratio of men to women in Ghana's parliament and for that matter politics. As seen from above, R3, R15, R13 and R11 all indicated their unhappiness with the appalling ratio of women to men in Ghana's politics. It is an irony that, albeit women constitute more than half of Ghana's population, they are woefully and inadequately represented in the decision-making body of the country. Based on the underlying structures within the social construct that relegate women to the background; patriarchy, religion, culture, marital roles etc. R11 is convinced that, while it is a worthwhile call for more women to participate and take frontal roles in politics, it is an effort in futility until those underlying impediments within the societal structures are broken and a conscious effort put in place to deliberately allow more women in the political square. She indicated that;

*"there should be a deliberate effort. As a way of encouraging more women, certain specific things have to be done to secure women's position, that way we will be making headway; we haven't gotten to the point where we should allow women to compete with men on the same threshold".*

Although she did not clearly state the quota system, a careful consideration of her position points to that. In fact, in recent years, more than 30 countries in various

parts of the world have implemented either constitutional quotas or established quota regulations in their electoral laws as an incentive to secure more women in national parliaments (Dahlerup and Friedenval, 2003). The system has been recognised to ‘fast track’ women to men ratio in national parliaments in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in Eastern and Southern Africa (Bauer, 2008). Therefore, based on the General Incentive Model (GIM), the gender quota system could be used as an incentive to secure more seats for women in Ghana’s parliament thereby encouraging women participation in politics.

One of the central pointers to arriving at a decision whether to accept or reject the hypothesis of this paper is to ascertain how violent the 2016 elections had been and whether respondents were victims of such violence. As demonstrated under literature review, elections especially in Africa are marred by the incidence of both verbal and physical violence. It is therefore not surprising that, all respondents testify to the embeddedness of violence in Ghanaian elections especially during electioneering campaigns. Albeit the responses point out that the 2016 Ghanaian elections have been met with few cases of physical violence as compared to the previous two elections (2008 and 2012), verbal invectives were on the ascendency. All respondents confirmed about verbal assaults meted to them during the electioneering. Some were strongly accused of adultery while most were referred to as harlots and yet some had been referred to as bunch of cassava stalks. For example, R14 was accused of being in a hotel room with the president, R15 and all respondents except some married ones, said they were labelled prostitutes while R3 was called a cassava stalk and a useless old woman. Interestingly, women from opposing camps add forces to men in pouring these verbal invectives on women contestants. Thus, women against women as R14 describes. Respondents believe that these verbal assaults were meted to them because of their status as women. For example, R16 states;

*“in our part of the world, the very popular word everybody will call you is prostitute. It doesn’t matter who you are, where you climbed*

*to on the social ladder, they will first of all call you prostitute just because you are a woman yet nobody calls the men who contest anything. But with women they will call you prostitutes just because you dare to make a difference and they wonder how dare you being a woman trying to make a difference and that alone annoy some men so they end up calling you names”.*

R3 also says;

*“... and one of them said ‘she is a married woman when we start saying such nasty things about her, the husband will not be happy and will ask her to step down”.*

The chronology of electoral violence in Ghana from 1992 to 2012 as tabularized in Fischer’s *‘Background on Electoral Conflict in Ghana’* (2016), identifies ‘Assault/Violent Intimidation’ as the highest with 2,807 out of a total of 5,707, cases recording about 49.1% among five categories of violent incidence types as shown in the table below.

<b>Type of Incident</b>	<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Assault/Violent Intimidation	2,807	49.1%
Seizure of Public Property	1,812	31.7%
Protests/Public Disorders	858	15.0%
Ballot Box Theft	142	2.4%

*Source: Fischer, 2016. (electoralviolenceproject.com/author/david).*

This gives credence and throws more light on the level of electoral violence in Ghana as my respondents indicate.

Analysing this from the perspective of the General Incentive Model, the implication is that, a calm and peaceful electoral environment will serve as an incentive for the optimum participation of women in Ghana's politics. Conversely, a violent electoral environment will disincentive the optimum participation of women. Therefore, given the prevalence of verbal invectives (with women contestants as the main victims) it will not be out of place to accept the hypothesis that; the greater the level of electoral violence, the lower the level of women political participation in Ghana. Thus, the violence that characterize Ghanaian elections will make women shun political participation. But the question that arises is; what if women in Ghana have the courage to participate in politics despite becoming victims of verbal attacks? An answer to this in the affirmative will mean that, accepting the hypothesis at this stage will be a miss of point because the import of intrinsic motivation that women may have to participate and contest elections despite the violence, is lacking.

I probed respondents as to whether they are happy as politicians given their experiences. It is surprising that, despite the vilification, intimidation, assault and verbal invectives they have been victims of, respondents are happy participating. Most of them think that, participating in elections is not just about winning elections as there are numerous lasting and transferrable benefits that contestants gain for participating. Yet, others are convinced that, they have gained a rich experience and gotten more insights into their communities' problems. For example, R5 is happy because of the exposure she has had. She says;

“... and that makes me happy because I am a people’s person; I want to see what I can do for and with them”.

Similarly, R12 emphasizes her happiness as a politician as she is content with the opportunity for people to have heard her. She says;

*“... so, I am a very happy person; after all, despite the fact I was not the winner, a lot of people have heard me and a lot have interviewed me as you are doing”.*

Beyond the basic understanding that they have won elections and therefore have every reason to be happy, R1 and R3 take pride in service to nation and community and being role models to others, and that is what makes them happy. R1 asserts;

“... I’m happy because I’m able to serve my community and I am a role model to other women and vulnerable children”.

In her words R3 says;

“... I see it as an opportunity to make an impact, to contribute at the national level, to be a role model for other women and impact the lives of my constituents, so I’m very happy”.

Thus, the above respondents and others are happy participating and contesting in the elections. However, R9 and R13 express mixed-feelings owing to indiscipline political behaviour and the inability of major political parties (NDC and NPP) to give room for women in smaller political parties to also get the opportunity to represent their people in parliament respectively. R9 reveals;

*“My experience as a politician has been very good and not very pleasant; you have a bit of both. But on the whole, I am happy that I have met a lot of people and impactful to them....”*

R11 was worried about funding political activities by the state and quizzes why Ghana has criminalized state funding of a noble course that enhances democratic development. For that, she does not have enough reason to be happy. She retorts;

*“aaah!! Am I happy in the first place? No! I am unhappy because we are in a country where funding political activities by the state is criminal; how do you criminalize funding an activity that leads to a*

*democratic process? From what source do you expect the contestants to get funding? And when they have lost, from where do you expect them to raise the lost funds? So, until we discuss the issue of political funding, it will be very difficult. I believe, we have to define the role of the state in funding political parties and people should be called to account how they spend”.*

R7 is not happy as a politician owing the low levels of women participation. She cites Rwanda as doing well in terms of women representation and laments Ghanaian government’s inability since independence to make any good inroads in terms of the affirmative action. She retorts that, not only in politics, but almost all public institutions have few women in leading roles except for the teaching and nursing fields.

Although some respondents expressed mixed-feelings and some feel unhappy, their feelings were not borne out of being victims of violence but the electoral policy that does not allow state funding of political activities and political party structures that do not favour women. Thus, most Ghanaian women are happy participating in politics. This implies that, electoral violence is not the bane for Ghanaian women’s low political participation but other barriers like funding and internal party structures need to be considered for such phenomenon.

To accept or reject the hypothesis, another variable of analysis was investigated and that is whether respondents are willing to participate and contest in subsequent elections. The probe reveals that, most respondents are not perturbed by the violence they have been victims of and are willing to participate and contest in elections whenever there is an opportunity. Despite all the odds and the marginalized nature of their rate of political participation, women in Ghana find politics a good field to operate in. This contrast the general conviction that, politics is a dirty game and therefore not a place for women. It is interesting that, women have also learnt how to play the ‘dirty game’ and may even do better than men.

Except R5 and R11 who although have not regretted contesting, doubt their ability and willingness to contest in subsequent elections, all other respondents were

optimistic of their willingness to contest despite the challenges of vindictiveness, intimidation, assault etc they have been and might be subjected to.

R2, R3, R12 and R14 consider the violence they have been subjected to as part of the game to which they will not subdue and withdraw from politics. It is rather a source of strength for them. They are therefore ready to contest in elections any time there is the opportunity to do so. Their words are as follows;

*R2; "I don't regret because it really helped me get in touch with the people of my constituency first hand so I've not regretted. some challenges tried to weigh me down, that try to let me regret but later on, I realized that, I should forget and regard that as part of the game so I should let it go and forge ahead*

*R3; "Nooo! I haven't regretted... I'm not going to let that sway me or affect me or bring me down. So, I am focused and will spend the rest of my life in politics.*

*R12; In whatever you do, there will be challenges but you decide how that goes into you and how it will influence your plans. So, despite all the insults, I am on my feet to contest the elections all the time until this district/constituency gets what it deserves. I will not be disarrayed to step down.*

*R14; "No, I don't at all!! I will always want to participate anytime there is the opportunity".*

Analysing from the second point of the CVM; that people do not participate in politics because they do not have a psychological affinity to it, the propositions of the above respondents suggest a contrary. Thus, they have the necessary psychological affinity to politics and therefore their ability to withstand the violence and the intrinsic zeal to participate and contest in subsequent elections is suggestive of the fact that, they have psychologically tuned their minds and ready to dance to the tune of the political music. The second point of the CVM in this regard could be viewed in the affirmative and thus; people participate in politics because they have the psychological affinity to it.

Also, R15 and R16's (words below) have not regretted participating and contesting the elections. While R15 considers her participation as the best thing that has



happened to her, R16 views politics as a ‘nice game’. Deducing from their propositions, it could be analyzed that exposure to politics demystifies the euphoria that, politics is a ‘dirty game’ and only meant for ‘men’. It further connotes that, when such euphoria is broken, optimism to politics by women will increase and therefore will result into more/optimum women political participation in Ghana. People who are near and exposed to the political square understand the dynamics of politics and will tend to participate more than those that are distant and unexposed to it (Milbrath and Goel, 1977). The call, therefore is that, the necessary structures that expose women to politics in Ghana must be put in place if the call for more women to participate in politics is not just a hoax.

*R15 No!!! I will say it is the best thing that has ever happened to me. At least it made think more about my country, it made read more. So, I don't have any regrets being in politics.*

*R16; I've not regretted at all! I am very, very happy even though I lost and my president lost but I am alive so I am happy to be in politics, it is a nice game.*

Within the GIM, the convictions of R7 and R9 of politics and their unrelenting zeal to bring about change fall rightly in sync with Campbell et al (1954) definition of the theory's positions on individual and group incentive and political efficacy as conceptualized by Verba et al (1965). To Campbell et al (1954), political efficacy is the perception that political change is possible and the individual can be instrumental towards bringing such change. Juxtaposing this with the R7 and R9 with propositions below draws a nice stitch of theory and data. It is also a good weave when their convictions are brought together with Lamprianou (2013)'s *teleological* categorization of the definition for political participation.

*R7; "I haven't regretted at all! If you want to achieve something, you have to struggle. Look at where you are now (referring to me), the weather is not favorable but you are there because you want to achieve something. So, I want to achieve something and I will be in politics until death".*

*R9; "Not at all!! you see we need to make a difference and if that is what it takes to make the difference, I am ready to do that. I am ready to do something another woman/child will be happy about".*

The 1992 constitution of Ghana forbids chiefs and queen mothers from engaging in partisan politics and R13 though has not regretted and would wish to contest again, her marriage will not allow her as she says;

*R13; "No, I don't regret. I will like to contest again but marriage may not allow me since I will get married to a king soon and because of his position, I cannot contest elections or be actively involved in politics".*

R5 on her part thinks it is too early for her to decide whether she will contest the next election. However, she has not in the least regretted her participation and believes she will 'fight again'. She says;

*R5; "For now, it is too early for me to take a decision to contest or not in the next election. But I think I will contest again because if you fight and you don't succeed, you fight again".*

R11 is pessimistic about contesting in the next election though she has no regrets for her recent contest. She is sceptical about funding and that is what will be the determinant of which way her decision will go. She replies;

*R11; "Now if you ask me if I am going into politics again, I am afraid to say yes. So even if I should go again I will consider my financial grounds before".*

From the foregone discussion, it is convincing that, while Ghanaian elections are bedevilled by electoral violence, women contestants who are mostly the victims of verbal insults, name calling, intimidation etc., are not scared to contest in elections. This is an interesting finding for me as it contrasts my conviction that, the higher there is electoral violence, the low there will be women political participation. Primary data from interviews with respondents reveal that, despite the violence, women are willing to participate and contest in elections in order to get to the centre of policy making and influence decisions that affect women. They are not scared by the violence. The paper's hypothesis; *the greater the level of electoral violence,*

*the lower the level of women political participation in Ghana* therefore stands rejected as the answer to the paper's question; *to what extent does electoral violence impact women's participation in Ghana's politics?* is that, electoral violence has only a minimal impact on women political participation in Ghana.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This part of the paper provides possible policy recommendations, limitations and opportunities for further research.

The essence of research is to provide solutions to societal problems and this is done through policy. Against the backdrop that Ghanaian women are willing to participate and contest in elections yet they hardly win, a possible solution could be the use of Gender Quota System to deliberately secure parliamentary seats for women in Ghana's parliament. Duverger's conception of voter hostility is at play in Ghana where even women prefer and vote for male candidates to their fellow woman candidate. In this regard, a policy directive could make political parties reserve and make safe constituencies in their strongholds contestable only by women and that will provide the gateway to bringing more women in Ghana's parliament. Another policy recommendation to ensure more women win elections and represent their constituents in parliament is to provide them the necessary electoral training and funding. This idea results from the question I asked respondents if they had any avenues where they met as women contestants to discuss issues of violence on them. Most respondents cited the efforts of *ABANTU for Development* which has, through its '*The Women Manifesto for Ghana*' (2004) document, supported them with workshops on how to handle violence against them and to win their contests.

Of course, the paper has some limitations. The research could have interviewed non-contesting women to find out why they do not. Data from them and those who have been to parliament before, would have given more balanced and insightful finding. Equally, a broader based sample size would have given a true reflection of

the phenomenon under investigation and perhaps lead to a different finding. Also, the data from field is entirely a subjective position of the respondents and does not suggest all women in Ghana would have same conviction. Further, the research could have investigated and compare the violent nature of elections in Ghana over the years so that an understanding of the trajectories can give an insight for determining why the current situation is what it is.

Most respondents blame their inability to win elections on the lack of funds. Therefore, a future research could consider how funding women contestants could catalyse their winning elections and thereby increase their numbers in parliament. Another opportunity is to investigate what happens to the women contestants who lose elections and are unemployed. Optionally, an investigation could be conducted to find out how socially constructed gendered roles affect the optimum participation of women parliamentarians. More so, another angle of investigation could be why ‘voter hostility’ towards women and not men contestants.

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## APPENDICE 1

### DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LUND UNIVERSITY

#### QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview intends to collect data for a research titled “The Impact of Electoral Violence on the Political Participation of Women in Ghana”. It is purely for academic purposes and the data will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You may opt to decline answering a question that you will not want to share the information on.

If you permit me, we may start.

#### **Part A. Background**

1. Can you please tell me a brief about yourself?

**Probe:** age, marital status, education, occupation and income range.

#### **Part B. Political Experience**

1. How long have you been in politics and how is your experience so far?
2. How satisfied are you with the trending ratios of men to women in Ghana’s political space?
3. What is your view on call for more women to get involved in Ghana’s politics?
4. How happy are you as a politician?

#### **Part C. Electoral Violence and Women Political Participation in Ghana**

5. What is your general view on electoral violence in Ghana’s politics?

**Probe:** Do men and women suffer the same kind of violence? How?

What sort of violence do women suffer differently from men in the political space?

6. How have you been violated during your campaigns by other contestants?

**Probe:** What is the gender of your violator(s)?

How about violence from non-contestants?

How frequent have you suffered sexual abuse, verbal and/or physical assault, personality attack etc. because of your political activism?

Do you think this violence on women in politics is on upward or downward trend? Why?

7. How often do you discuss issues of electoral violence/abuse on you or your colleague female with others?

**Probe:** What sort of abuse/violence do you discuss most?

**Part D: Marital Issues and Participation**

8. Can you please tell me of any marital problems/abuse you have faced because of your political participation?

Probe: How about any discussion you had with your colleague in that regard?

How have your experiences in electoral violence influence your political participation?

What is your advice to other who want to take active roles in Ghana's politics?

## APPENDICE 2

### SAMPLED TRANSCRIPTIONS

#### The Impact of Electoral Violence on Women Political Participation in Ghana.

Respondent 1

#### Background

Qn: If I may know your background please?

Ans: I am mother of 6, a proprietor, interested in women and children, love farming and animals, sports and I am a caterer by profession.

#### Political Experience

Qn: For how long have you been in politics and how has been your experience so far?

Ans: I've been in politics for twelve years, I was the regional women organizer, I lost my first primary contest but won on second attempt and this is my first time in parliament.

The experience has been tiring but very exciting.

Qn3: Are you satisfied with the trending ratio of men to women in Ghana's parliament?

Ans: Ooo! Not really. I think the men are outshining the women but this time round we're have 37 women in parliament. This is not very encouraging but comparatively very good.

Qn: So how happy are you as a politician?

Ans: I'm happy because I'm able to serve my community, I'm because I'm going to be a role model and a mother to so many young but vulnerable people. So that's what makes me happy.

#### Electoral Violence

Qn. What is your general view on electoral violence in Ghana?

It's been on! Anybody who tells you it is not there is just lying. It's been on and I don't think it is very healthy. I can talk about my constituency for example; I contested with a male, and during the day of the elections military men were unleashed on my constituents and beating some people and all that. I am a female and if I am contesting a man why do you bring military men? It is so bad! People get killed, maimed and all that and I don't think it is something we should

encourage. Election is supposed to be free and fair, show your mind where you want to vote to. So that is basically what I can talk to.

Probe: So, prior to the election day...?

Ans: Yea! there were some violence. You drive somewhere you hear there are people who want to attack you and the fights and all that, and you are going for your keep fit and your opponents will run into your group; you know, it is not a pleasant thing.

Qn: so how about the aftermath of the elections?

Ans: Ooh! Aftermath it has been cool and you know the name calling in politics when you are woman is there. But aftermath, I can't foresee any violence coming for now and I can't tell of any that I've known in the past.

Qn: So particularly, you in person has there been any instance where you were violated verbally/physically?

Ans: As for verbally we hear it but physically never.

Qn: How about sexual abuse, being a woman has there been any instance where you have someone who wants to support you and demands for sex from you before?

Ans: Ooo! They know I am a married woman and anybody who knows me knows that, my marriage is number one so you can't even go there.

Probe: So, by that you mean nothing of such had happened?

Ans: Ya! I haven't had that experience.

Probe: Because some men who despite your marital status they still want to.

Ans: Me, day one I'm talking about my husband, so that topic won't even last

Qn: Do you have opportunity as women contestants before the elections to discuss issues about violence and those related to your elections?

Ans: O ya! As women, we talked about not only violence but basically everything; finances, security, (you know the men are stronger than women) so we talk about strength and all those things.

### **Marital Issues**

Qn: Have you had any marital problems since you started?

Ans: Noo! My husband has been very supportive and when I have forms to fill he fills them, even during my campaigns and keep fits, he is out there with me, he was



the electoral officer for the day for me, he was at the electoral commission to check on my votes etc. he is very, very supportive.

Qn: How about your children?

Ans: My children, my daughter is not a politician but she was there with my keep fit and my elder children are out of the country but they support me and little ones here are very, very supportive.

Qn: Being a parliamentarian in the midst of a lot of men, what sorts of advances do men make towards you being a woman as beautiful as you are?

Ans: I have a lot of friends, I've a women organizer for a whole region, I deal with men and women and I am basically a female person because I have four sisters we've lived together. But in the outside world, men are my friends and it's been cool.

Qn: What is your advice to younger women who want to take up politics as a job to do in their lives?

Ans: I will tell them to push on, they shouldn't look at the limitations, the negatives. They should forge ahead and then once that is their passion they should go for it. Once something is your passion nothing can stop you. So if their passion, they should go for it but if it is not their passion they will get distracted along the way and then they want to quit.

### **Respondent 3**

#### **Background**

Qn: I would like to know about your background.

Ans: I am a Lawyer by profession. Until I entered parliament I've been in corporate legal practice I worked for several institutions both in public and private sectors.

Probe: How about your marital status?

Ans: Ya, I'm married for over twenty years

#### **Political Experience**

Qn: For how long have you been in politics?

Ans: In active politics, I will say that since I decided to run for political office but prior to that, I'm also a member of an association called International Federation of Women Lawyers (FEDAW) and we advocate for women's empowerment and the welfare of children and because of that we engage women who are into politics. We

try to encourage and support them because we aim to increase the number of women in the political sphere.

Qn: So how has been your experience so far in politics?

Ans: So far, I will say that it has been interesting and challenging especially as a legislator and a representative of your people, the expectations on you are very high because they see you as a development agent while in actual fact you are not. So that expectation puts a lot of pressure on you so that makes it challenging but I believe that it gives us the opportunity to make an impact in the lives of a lot of people; so, it is good.

Qn: How satisfied are you with the trending ratios of men to women in Ghana's parliament?

Ans: Ooo! As for that, we are most unhappy and I think that is what has even brought me to this point because as an advocate for women empowerment we were always engaging women to participate in politics and then it got to this point I realized that the last candidate for my party in my constituency was a woman and when nominations were opened we had seven men filing and I asked myself so can't we find any woman to replace our woman candidate so I decided to file and I won the primaries and subsequently won the elections. So, my desire to see an increase in women participation of women in the legislature that has brought me to this point.

Qn: How happy are you as a politician?

Ans: I'm happy! It is challenging but I'm happy because I see it as an opportunity to make an impact, to contribute at the national level, to be a role model for other women and also to impact the lives of my constituents, so I'm very happy.

### **Electoral Violence**

Qn: What's your general view on electoral violence in Ghana's politics?

Ans: I think there's quite significant amount of electoral violence in Ghana. For women, mostly it is verbal and it can get so bad that if you are not really well grounded and focused knowing what want to do and achieve, you will give it up. I experienced in my constituency; the verbal violence was really unprecedented; they will gout and say all kinds of things, fabricate all kinds of lies against you and the language that they will use. In fact, there were certain radio stations I stopped listening to because I knew that they were stations which were controlled by my opponents and the kinds of things that I will hear, I will not be happy, so I won't listen. So, I think that, electoral violence is quite high in Ghana and for the women it is mainly done to discourage us. I got a feedback from my constituents that, ooo!

She is a married woman when we start saying such nasty things about her, the husband will not be happy and will ask her to step down. So, I think that's the objective.

Probe: what kind of words were used on you?

Ans: Some of the words I didn't listen myself, it was some of my executives who report to me and that the words they use are not worth repeating. They say things like; "wo y3 banchi", "wo nya obiaa", "na w3 oy3 abrewa" ( you are a cassava stalk, you are nothing, you are too old). Some went to the extent of saying I use dirty money for my campaigns "you are getting it from sika aduro" just to discredit you in the eyes of the electorate. I went to a function and some of the supporters of my opponent actually threw something at me. But one of my executives stepped on the way and blocked it from hitting me so it hit him instead. It nearly resulted into a fight at the end of the programme.

Probe: Were there instances where you were referred to as a prostitute?

Ans: I think I'm a married woman, I don't think I had that.

Qn: Have you had any opportunity to discuss issues about violence and others related to the elections with other women contestants?

Ans: Ok! I had a lot of my FEDAWL associates who came around to talk to the delegates about the importance of voting for a woman candidate and the women in my region we formed a caucus and supported each other.

### **Marital Issues**

Qn Did have problems when you tried to contest?

Ans: Noooo! I will have to say that I am very grateful to my husband, he has been very, very supportive. Though a private business person, and because of the polarized nature of Ghanaian politics, you will have problems when the party you are seen to aligned to is not in government. So, having his wife stepped out to contest on the ticket of a political party could affect his business. But he said " if this is really what you want to do, I will support you to do it". He supported by taking care of the children.

Qn: Considering the level of insults and attacks raided on you, would you say you have regretted going into politics?

Ans: Nooo! I haven't regretted. Like I said, during the campaign sometimes when people come to me and they talk about those things they are saying on radio stations, I said look, I know who I am and I know why I am doing this so I'm not going to let that sway me or affect me or bring me down. So, I remained focused and I also

realized that, I had a lot of support from the constituents because they really wanted a change.

Qn: Finally, your advice to younger ladies who want to go into politics?

Ans: Oh well, I will encourage them to participate even from the lower level, in school you can start and put yourself up for elections for whatever position to build up confidence as you go along. You can get into the district level elections as assembly woman and then that will build your confidence gradually and then finally you get to the position of a member of parliament. They shouldn't be discouraged by things that they will encounter because we all know that as women we are fighting from a negative position. Women have been side-lined through the ages and we are fighting to gain that recognition and it is not easy. So, they should know that they will encounter a lot of challenges but that will also build their confidence and build you as a person so that when you are able to achieve something, know what you have gone through and because of that, you make sure that you deliver to impact the lives of people. So, I encourage a lot of women to be active in politics so that this disparity will not be there. Ghana, when you consider the population the women are more than the men but when you look at all our positions the men are always more than the women.

## **Non-Parliamentarians**

### **Respondent 14**

#### **Background**

Qn: I would ask about your background.

I am 57yrs. Married with three children, with income around GHS 2000.

#### **Political Experience**

Qn: For how long have you been in political and how has been the experience?

Ans: In politics concerning my party NPP, I joined the NPP in 1992, that is I've been in it for 25years but practically as a politician, I think it is about 14years now since 2002 I decided to become an MP for my constituency so I started going to make people aware of my ambition and mission and in 2003, I lost the first primaries I contested as the only woman among four men. You know the men they have money, so they go around telling people a whole lot of things concerning a woman; a woman can't give you money, she can't give you anything. But you know we are not talking about money. It is about what the person can do, as an MP, it is with you and the constituency. You are going to be a servant to the constituency. The little that you can do to support the constituency to bring it good name is what

you practice. But to Africans and Ghanaians, when talking about politicians an MPs who have money, they think, especially the delegates if you have money, then maybe you can do everything for them. So, I didn't mind, in 2007- 2008 I came for second primaries, then I was the only person contesting the MP who was the regional minister for Ashanti so it wasn't easy for me at all. It looks the regional office members supported him greatly because they pleaded with me he was the regional minister and will double as the campaign director for the region and if he loses the contest it was going to be a shame so I should allow him this time so they will give the chance in the next election. But my supporters asked me not to step down for so there was some conflict in the constituency which I can't talk about now. They tried stopping a day before the elections but I refused so he had to camp people at a hotel which is against the party's rules. Yet there were two party top executives with him pleading with them, giving them money so that they will have the opportunity. The following he came with about 25 police men so at the end of the day those he camped voted and I lost with 6 votes. In the next election, my chairman asked to bring GHS 50,000 otherwise he was going to field another candidate which he later did because I couldn't provide the money.

Probe: you being a woman, why didn't they support rather?

Ans: errrm! That is one thing about politics in Africa and Ghana. We are singing the song that we want women in politics but the women are not coming because of so many humiliations. You come, they tell you don't have money, somebody can even openly say ooo! She is a woman "obaa di3" what is she going to do? Meanwhile the person is a woman. Because she has not schooled, she doesn't need for a woman to rise so **that's why we say the woman is the woman's own enemy**. Because in my third contest, out of about 350 delegates we had about 96 women so if all of them had voted for me, I would have won the elections because we the contestants were 5 and I had only 26 votes which was very bad.

Qn: Do you support the call for more women to be in politics?

Ans: yah! The affirmative action should take place. I support the idea that women should come into politics because women, we can do the work. We do and do it well; we do it without reservation but the men do it with reservation.

Qn: So, given all these experiences you have had, are you happy as a politician?

Ans: Yah! and I will continue to be, because come next four years I'm coming out again. I won't stay back. Now I have learnt a lot so upon what I've learnt, I see politics not to be money but the men see it to be money and the delegates who will vote are the very people that will fail you because they will take your money and tell everything from heaven to earth indicating that they will vote for you but they

will and take somebody's money and decide to go the other side. When it comes to voting, they don't vote as individuals, they discuss at their various polling stations. So, if they decide to vote for a particular candidate, all of them will vote that way thinking of nothing; even the woman who takes care of them and despite knowing the crucial roles women play in their lives. **unless you decide to sleep with them.**

### **Electoral Violence**

Qn: What's your general view on electoral violence in Ghana's politics?

Ans: Hmmmm! talking about electoral violence, I am against it and so I do everything in a very neat way. I don't contribute to violence because it is not good; it kills, destroys and brings about enmity among ourselves and politics will not pass as far as society continues to exist we as men and women will forever remain as one. So, if we don't do away with violence and keep doing things that will bring about violence, for example during the elections, my accredited polling agent was not at the polling station because my opponents gave him money not to attend, take your call and was advised to put off his mobile phone. But opponents are not enemies. *Now there is also **spiritual violence** in politics and its meant to do everything even to kill you by spiritual means.* So, the violence is not only the physical, they go around to do everything to kill you but we have different souls which all belong to God and when we set into violence and we bring out a very disastrous violence whom are we going to rule? Look at what is going on in other countries. So, as for political violence we have to do away with it but it now that because of power people are also diving deep into politics causing problems that will bring violence. Just after voting what happened at 'asawase'? NPP/NDC were just fighting there. The bad about violence is when one gets maimed.

Qn: What sort of violence do women suffer differently from men during campaigns and elections?

Ans: Insults!! And they will even tell you have gone to bed with somebody's husband. But in my case, because they know I'm independent but originally from the NPP, they said I've taken money and pick up from the NDC. I was even accused of being at a hotel (Golden Tulip) with the President when he came to Kumasi and what message does it that send to my husband? So, they insult us, push us down, they can dodge with the papers at some constituencies by not allowing you to hold of the nomination forms unless you are wild or go to Accra for it yourself. They belittle the women and if you don't have a strong heart you will just give up. Some women but they give up along the way. I started with some women but they couldn't continue. Money also pushes us back because apart from paying money to people, it also involves money; gong up and down and a whole lot of things and the money

is not there. And as a woman if you go to someone who you think can help you they decide to sleep with you before he supports you.

Qn: Has there been any instance where you suffered physical assault?

Ans: Oooo! It was only once just recently when I was an independent candidate. I was on floating and because I was branded NDC, I decided to put on an NPP T-Shirt I printed eight years back, I gave some to my supporters and on our way, we saw people in NPP pick up not knowing they were coming to fight with us so they manage to stop the car but I told my driver not to stop so they decided to drive ahead of us criss-crossing our way so we had stop then they said some of my supporters are wearing NPP T-Shirt so they jumped my car and started to remove the shirts I knew they wanted to come because I was also in the same colours so I called to fight me but people intervened. Another thing I will call an assault was when I called people to endorse my forms and the NPP thought they were their members and gave them letters of dismissal.

Qn: How frequent has been the demand for sex?

Ans: O! I've never experienced one before except that accusation of me being with the president as I earlier reiterated. But there was a plot by my opponents on my campaign leader when they arranged with to have sex with him in a hotel and she recorded and distributed to radio stations and that was used to campaign against me.

Qn: But how have all these gone to affect your psychological thought, emotions etc?

Ans: the effect I have is that, now my party is in power and I decided to go independent, so maybe this is the time I should have been given a position but they are saying because I have done that, I have to be on suspension for some time.

Probe: So, you are on suspension now?

Ans: That's it. But I've written reinstatement letter but they've not given me a response yet.

Qn: Did have any opportunity as women contestants to discuss issues about violence?

Ans: Yes, but not just violence, we had the opportunity to be with the electoral commission at the regional level with an external body (NGO) who spoke to us as to how we as women how we should be careful, eschew violence, monitor our delegates and agents in order to prevent cheating and they gave us some little funds. They did four times but I only heard of the last one which I attended.

Qn: How has it been with your family in all these years you've been in politics?

Ans: they have been supportive but at times they think of the money involved and try to discourage me from contesting but being my desire, I had to plead with them to reason up with me. I believe if you sensibly do it, it will not involve a lot. You just to be tactful and know how to talk to the people. I noticed my husband didn't like my contest in the last elections but he couldn't tell me stop but they all wished that at the end of the day it will be well so when you don't win at the end they get more affected than even you the candidate.

Qn: When you finally filed your nomination, did your husband, children and other family members been on the campaign with you?

Ans: Yes, some were going with me, but daddy couldn't after all he hasn't been doing that,

Qn: So, given all these experience of violence, attacks and funding issues, would you say you have regretted going into politics?

Ans: No, I don't at all

Qn: Finally, what's your advice to younger ladies who want to take active roles in politics?

Ans: If they want to take active roles in politics as women, I will advise them to keep it up but they should be very bold; they should be bold in their spirit, body, mind and soul. I'm saying that because if you are not careful you can be diversely affected. So, they should be courageous and bold enough to take it up not just singing the song I'm a politician and politics will give me opportunities, privileges, no! When your heart is in and you are a real politician you can make it. They should know that, it can either be positive or negative. But I will encourage them to come into politics because we need to save the land and our body politik with women.

## **Respondent 9**

### **Background**

Qn: Could you tell me about your background please?

Ans: I am an adult, married, a journalist, I am still pursuing a master's degree in Project management engineering. What I do now is marketing construction companies. So, I own a full fledge event management company.

Probe: Perhaps you could tell me about your income range:

Ans: Yah, when it comes to income range, I work for myself so as it is now I pay myself about GHS 10,000 a month.



When it comes to money for politics, yes, it is a big challenge. It doesn't matter what you do, you always need money. From the experience, I gathered I needed too much money, I put in all my savings, investments, I put in all I had to make sure I had a good result. But at the end of the day, politics is not what you see, there was a lot of underhand dealing involved so your true effort does not show because as somebody says, "It is a mafia game" I mean some people are a lot hungrier to win so they do all sorts of things, in my case there was a lot of stealing in my constituency like the throwing in of already printed ballot papers and all of that. Because it was my first time I just told myself that it was a good experience I didn't want to take it up too much though I initially wanted to but I looked at it and decided there is always a first time, I learnt my lessons so I didn't take it up.

### **Political Experience**

**Qn:** For how long have you been in politics and how has been the experience so far?

**Ans:** I was introduced into politics in 1992/3 when I did my national service at the state protocol. I interacted a lot of the parliamentarians then, I learn how politics is done both in private and public and that ignited my interest in politics. But I didn't enter politics straight away, I went to school and worked for myself until three years ago when I realized there's so much more I can do for my people and then decided to join politics. By nature, I am a philanthropist and in my own small way, I conduct a lot of free health services to market women who hardly go for check-ups, and I decided to take it to a bigger stage because that is I will get a lot of recognition, support and cover many other women and one way or the other you help somebody it touches your life. Basically, that's what got me into politics and that's about it.

**Qn:** How happy are you as a politician?

**Ans:** Yh, in my case I have been a private person doing my own business for a long time so I formed my own habits before getting into politics, I am a disciplined person and I expect that in every environment I go into, but politics is not like that. When you know something is wrong, to get people to do the right thing you have to find a nice way of lobbying and talking to them otherwise you lose votes and I think that as a country, we have to choose leaders who are strong enough to nurture our youth and the country as a whole. Until such a time politics ruins a community. Because of politics, everybody does what they want to do, there is no discipline anywhere and the country is going to the dogs; nothing is done properly. But the bright side of it is that you have an opportunity to help people, see the people (grassroots), you get to know them, where they live and when to help, you know who and where to help. In the same way, you see people taking advantage of you as a politician, people lie to you because you are a politician and so many things go

on. My experience as a politician has been very good and not very pleasant; you have a bit of both. But on the whole, I am happy that I have met a lot of people and impactful to them, I touched their lives and as I am talking to you, I am paying school fees for about fifty children, I was able to give communities about ten boreholes, I was able to help women with skills and trade, I support a lot of widows and religious institutions.

### **Electoral Violence**

Qn: What's your general view on electoral violence in Ghana's politics?

Ans: Well, in politics we see a lot of that. We do not encourage it as politicians but at the end of the day we do anything to win and you have following who are also willing to do anything to support you and if you are not careful and don't preach peace, you can easily induce them to fight and do things for you or do things in your name which are not pleasant. I believe that as a country, we are of age now and we all know what want is peace. The violence that followed after the elections; burning of toll boots, harassing and beating people up etc, when the supporters of the winning party wanted to takeover public places by all means when there is a constitutionally laid down procedure to that I think was wrong. In some cases when it came to women, there were serious verbal abuses; abusing especially women politicians, calling them names which was not necessary, a typical case was what they did to the electoral commissioner (that woman worked hard to get to where she is now) but you had another woman who accused her of sleeping with men before she had the position which for me is unfortunate for a woman to do that. Even me as a parliamentary candidate, I the opposition insult me on radio called me names, and say all sorts of things but they that purposely to make you as infamous as possible so that they can benefit from the ride but if as a people, we have positive attitudes we will not buy or encourage that. So, for me, as a people we need to reorient ourselves towards positivity and that alone is what can push us as individuals, groups and country forward.

Probe: What kind of words are used in these verbal accusations?

Ans: *in our part of the world, the very popular word everybody will call you is prostitute. It doesn't matter who you are, where you climbed to on the social ladder, they will firs of all call you prostitute just because you are a woman yet nobody calls the men who contest anything. But with women they will call you prostitutes just because you dare to make a difference and they wonder how dare you being a woman trying to make a difference and that alone annoy some men so they end up calling you names.*

In my case, they said that I was using my daughter's pictures to contest; how can use a sixteen-year old's picture for my campaign, for them I look too young but I am young. I am a full-grown woman but blessed in my own way and for that reason I don't think I deserve to be called names.

Qn: How about your sexual life, were there any instances where sex was demanded from you for a support?

Ans: First, you know it's a man's world in politics and for a woman to get in there I believe it depends on how you comport yourself. It is automatic for men in any circle, whether it is corporate world, politics, some men will approach you but I believe that it is all up to you. I don't think anybody will force you or rape you.

Probe: Did you suffer that?

Ans: I didn't and the reason is that, I campaigned with my husband through and through, he was with me throughout and warded off a lot of people and made me safe and I think that was a good thing for me. He supported me so well and for that I appreciate him, I love; he is one in a million. He adores our two daughters and I know he will support them in whatever they want to do.

Qn: Did you have any platform with other women to discuss issues of violence against women?

Ans: Not really, I think whenever women met and especially where politics is concerned, we spoke about financing. That was our major problem, we didn't know where to go to, what to do but the party supported though not enough. For me, that is the biggest problem we face as women.

### **Marital Issues**

Qn: how did your husband receive the news of you contesting?

Ans: he was surprised, he was shocked and asked if I was sure I wanted to do politics and I said yes because I am tired of being on my own and want experience life in the corporate world. I wanted a bigger challenge than what I had and of course I wanted to make an impact in people's life especially women.

Probe: How about your children?

Ans: They supported me but unfortunately, it didn't give me enough time for them because and that was I realised that I was really sacrificing them since I couldn't visit elderly daughter in school neither could I help my little one with her assignments. They didn't get to see me often and that was really a big deal for me. So, I decided to roll my little one in and took her on campaigns during weekends for her to see what I was doing and for me to know she is with me.

Qn: Have regretted going into politics anyway?

Ans: Not at all!! you see we need to make a difference and if that is what it takes to make the difference, I am ready to do that. I am ready to do something another woman/child will be happy about.

Qn: How about your view on the call for more women to go into politics?

Ans: I support that 100%!! But what we need to do is that, at least we should get women with an acceptable basic education so that they will be meaningful in their call. For example, with at least a diploma or HND certificate, a woman can go into politics but if nothing at all, you become a ridicule instead of making an impact.

Qn: Your advice to younger ladies who want to take up active roles in politics

Ans: They should first be themselves and not somebody, they should believe in themselves, it only in that way that the impossible becomes possible. That is what I want to tell them. The sky is the limit.

## **Respondent 11**

### **Background**

Qn: I would like to know a bit about you

Ans: I am an educationist, passionate about adolescent carrier choices and savings and investments and entrepreneurship and the environment. I am married with three children and I hold a first degree in social studies and currently pursuing a second degree. I have not been successful in politics but it has been a worthwhile experience.

Probe: If you may tell me your income range please?

Ans: Between 1,500 and 2,000 GHS.

### **Electoral Experience**

Qn: For how long have you been in politics and how has been the experience?

Ans: in main stream politics, it has been since 2012, but I did a little bit of student politics. I wasn't too involved into mainstream politics because I felt it was dirty, the insults, the maligning, ya, those things kept me away from active politics, but sometimes it gets to a point when people realize your capacity and they feel that you should be able to engage in the process.

Qn: So, what's your view on the call for more women to active roles in politics?

Ans: It is worthwhile call but an effort in futility because of the inequalities that exist, the hindrances, the challenges that confront a woman as a career person as a home maker, spouse, and then within the social construct our society is highly patriarchal and so it really discourages women from engaging into politics and until something definite and concrete is done to increase the woman's gains in politics (there should be a deliberate effort as a way of encouraging more women; certain specific things had to be done to secure women's position, that way we will be making headway; we haven't gotten to the point where we should allow women to compete with men on the same threshold).

Qn: Are you happy as a politician?

Ans: Aaaah!! Am I happy in the first place? No! I am unhappy because we are in a country where funding political activities by the state is criminal; how do you criminalize funding an activity that leads to a democratic process? From what source do you expect the contestants to get funding? And when they have lost, from where do you expect them to raise the lost funds? So, until we discuss the issue of political funding, it will be very difficult. I am of the opinion that, we have to define the role of the state in funding political parties and should be called to account how they spend. Now if you ask me if I am going into politics again, I am afraid to say yes, even as I see my family has indicate to me, I doubt if they will give me the opportunity to contest again though I have my final decision. So even if I should go again I will consider my financial grounds before.

### **Electoral Violence**

Qn: What's your general view on electoral violence in Ghana's politics?

Ans: I must say Ghana has come very far because I have been around, I've the elections since 1996 and I must say electoral violence is gradually diminishing from our body politics even though there are pockets of violence. My general opinion on is that, it is crippling and has cause elements. The thought of electoral violence will help you to make extra security arrangements and that makes elections more expensive. It also disallows potentially good candidates from offering themselves for political office.

Probe: Do men and women suffer the same kind of violence?

Ans: No, I don't think so. You know violence is in various forms, we have emotional abuses or verbal abuses and women turn to suffer those more. It often doesn't involve the candidates, it involves their following but sometimes behind the scenes, they fund the violence and then on the surface they come to portray to be reducing the violence.

Qn: Did you suffer any form of violence during the electioneering?

Asn: I didn't suffer any physical violence but there were few confrontations, verbal abuses, defacing of my posters and banners, those were the sources of the violence because you can't just look on aloof while your something you have sunk you money gets destroyed. So, when you see such happenings, then, you are tempted to either employ similar or worse tactics and as a candidate I got a few of those situations especially verbal, we only managed it such that it didn't escalate but there were few open confrontations.

Probe: What sorts of words were used on you in the verbal violence?

Ans: It amazing that sometimes the verbal come from you own party, your internal people at the grounds who feel dissatisfied, you know in any election, there are victims and villains so those who lost the primaries in my party never forgave and we had platforms that spewed out venom and accusations and those things are crippling and if you don't react as a candidate, people take it to be true and it works against you and if you don't react in a good manner, it puts you in bad light.

Probe: If you could give me some specific words that were used on you

Ans: yaa! Some were very petty; I want to reap where I've not sown, that I am an opportunist, a thief, corrupt, I even heard "she is childless we don't want a childless MP". Some of them you just get over it but others you have to react.

Probe: Were there instances where you were referred to as a prostitute?

Ans: Honestly no. because I am married and a very decent woman, it never came up, even it did it won't gain currency. But when you are trying to be assertive, it is interpreted as arrogance.

Qn: Did you hear before and during the elections such abuse; she is a prostitute... did you hear that of other candidates?

Ans: Oo! I heard that of other candidates not prostitution alone, but that some were fraudsters,

Qn: Did have any platform where you discussed issues about electoral violence with other women?

Ans: I had, for me during the electioneering I had a lot of media coverage and when I get such opportunities, I don't miss it, I talk about it. There's lately an attack on a certain woman because she is a head-dresser and it is something I have been condemning. Once the constituents voted her that is it she should rather be applauded for her courage and assertiveness because it is not easy to win an election. Unfortunately, these things are perpetuated by fellow women.

Qn: When you had the idea to contest, how did your family receive it?

Ans: It was mixed feelings; for my children were happy because all they know is their mother is going to be a public figure and the luxury that comes with it. They are still young so couldn't appreciate whatever difficulty there was. But with my husband, it wasn't an easy news; in fact, he never said yes but he never said no, he was just quiet because he knew the weight of the responsibility, for my family knew entering politics was going to take me away from my role as the galvanizer, front-liner and a major decision maker and my husband was weighing who was going to fill that vacuum, how he was going to manage all that; that was what I deduced from his demeanour.

Qn: Have you regretted entering politics?

Ans: It is a yes and no issue. Yes, because people who would have met you had opportunity to say nasty things about you and others taking advantage of you. But then it is a worthwhile experience and I have no regrets at all, I lost but I haven't lost the experience. Except for the finances, it is really a pleasant experience. In future, it is going to inform my decisions and steps either in politics or public service.

Qn: were there instances where men demanded sex from you?

Ans: I didn't experience but there were some colleagues who experienced that.

Qn: What's your advice to younger women who want to be active in politics?

Ans: My advice to them is that, they should continue to keep decent and go for their dreams. There's a saying that 'if you are worth your dreams then your dream is worth fighting for'. So, once they have crystalized their dreams and know what it is, they should go for it, they have equal and sometimes even better potentials than even their male counterpart. Any young woman hoping to enter politics in future should be entrepreneurial, save, find out sources of funding long before they come out to contest and they should be relevant to their immediate community long before you nest political ambition then they know that you have something to offer.