

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE**

**ASSESSING THE PERSPECTIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON GHANA'S FOURTH  
REPUBLICAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY OF THE TAMALE  
METROPOLIS**

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



**HAMZA ZAKARIA**

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## DECLARATION

### Student

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

Candidate's Signature...  .....Date:.. 23-01-25.....

**Zakaria Hamza**

### Supervisors'

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation/thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor's Signature: ...  .....Date: .....23-01-25...

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## **Abstract**

This study seeks to examine the perspectives of Ghanaian citizens regarding the manner in which power is exercised in the management of the country, based on the principles of democracy. The goal of this comprehensive analysis is to provide valuable insights into discussions surrounding the impact of democratic governance in Ghana and its significance on a global scale, as well as within the African context. By prioritising citizens' perspectives in this evaluation, the study aims to offer a more complete and inclusive assessment of the state of democracy in Ghana.

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach. Twenty participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The data were subjected to thematic analysis to reveal themes, categories, and patterns. The findings reveal that civil society expressed varied views, perspectives, and experiences regarding the Fourth Republican democracy. Civil society believes that Ghana's democratic system, which is characterised by stability, multi-partism, periodic elections, and the rule of law, stands as a notable example of democratic resilience in Africa. However, civil society also indicated that public corruption and political polarisation remain critical impediments to democratic and economic progress, eroding public trust in institutions and deterring investment.

The study proposed several recommendations, including allocating increased resources and building capacity within the legal system to ensure fair and impartial proceedings. Facilitating dialogue among political parties, such as through the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), can help mitigate political polarisation and foster cooperation on national issues. Promoting transparency and accountability at all levels of government is crucial for restoring public confidence in leadership. Fostering a culture of integrity and civic engagement empowers citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Strengthening existing institutions, such as the Commission on

Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Auditor-General's Department, is essential.

Finally, a comprehensive constitutional review is imperative. This review should limit excessive presidential powers, enhance checks and balances among government branches, incorporate mechanisms for the direct election of local representatives, and extend parliamentary membership to traditional leaders to ensure diverse voices in governance.



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### **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to Mrs. Zakaria Abiba (My mother), Mr. Sayibu Zakaria (my father) and Mr. Zakaria Hafiz (my brother), I could never have arrived here without the foundation you laid. To my siblings, Zakaria Asmawu, Zakaria S. Amin, Zakaria Abdul Mateen, Zakaria Hamdia, Zakaria Ibrahim and Zakaria Yussif. To all my friend for many times I bothered you with my frustrations.



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>CS</b>	Civil Society
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NDC</b>	National Democratic Congress
<b>NPP</b>	New Patriotic Party
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>IFES</b>	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
<b>EISA</b>	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
<b>IPAC</b>	Inter-Party Advisory Committee





## Table content

ABSTRACT.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....	3
DEDICATION.....	4
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....	5
TABLE CONTENT .....	6
CHAPTER ONE.....	8
INTRODUCTION .....	8
1.0 Background of the Study .....	8
1.1.0 ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRACY .....	10
1.1.1 RELEVANCE OF ASSESSING CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES .....	11
1.1.2 TAMALE METROPOLIS CONTEXT .....	12
1.1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY .....	13
1.2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	15
1.2.0 GENERAL OBJECTIVE.....	17
1.2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES .....	17
1.2.2 General Question .....	18
1.2.3 Specific Research Questions: .....	18
1.2.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	18
1.3.5 The Limitation of the Study .....	19
1.4 Organisation of the Study .....	20
CHAPTER TWO.....	22
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	22
2.1.0 Theoretical Review.....	22
2.1.1 Participatory Democracy .....	22
2.1.2 Deliberative Theory of Democracy.....	24
2.2.0 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW .....	26
2.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY .....	26
2.3.0 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY .....	31
2.4.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW .....	34
2.4.1 THE NATURE OF GHANA’S CURRENT DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM .....	34
2.4.2 Merits of Democracy .....	43
2.4.3 Demerits of Democracy.....	55
2.4.4 ASPIRATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE CURRENT DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM .....	62
2.5.0 Conclusion .....	68
CHAPTER THREE: .....	70
3.0 METHODOLOGY .....	70
3.1.0 RESEARCH APPROACH .....	70



3.1.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH .....	71
3.1.2 STUDY DESIGN .....	72
3.1.3 THE STUDY AREA .....	73
3.2.0 THE STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES .....	75
3.2.1 STUDY POPULATION .....	75
3.2.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURES .....	75
3.2.3 SAMPLE SIZE .....	76
3.3.0 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS .....	77
3.3.1 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD).....	78
3.3.2 INTERVIEWS .....	79
3.4.0 DATA SOURCES .....	80
3.4.1 DATA ANALYSIS .....	81
3.4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	82
3.5 VALIDITY .....	83
3.5.1 RELIABILITY .....	83
3.6 Conclusion .....	84
CODING .....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
3.5 Conclusion .....	85
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. ....	86
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	128
REFERENCE .....	134
APPENDIXES 1 .....	146
APPENDIX 2.....	148



## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background of the Study

Ghana has made significant political, social and economic transformation since independence. Over the years, the country has evolved from authoritarian rule to a vibrant multiparty democracy. Thus, Ghana is widely applauded by the international community as the benchmark of West Africa as to how her democratic process appears to be consolidating, leading to peaceful, free and fair elections in the sub-region (Armah-Attoh and Robertson, 2014).

Ghana has also been applauded for her political stability and democratic governance across Africa. However, the country has faced scrutiny regarding how its democratic governance fosters economic development and the quality of life of its citizens. Ghana's Fourth Republic, inaugurated on January 7, 1993, marked a turning point in the country's political history, transitioning it from decades of instability characterized by military coups and short-lived civilian regimes to a stable, democratic governance system. The 1992 Constitution provided the legal framework for this transition, embedding principles of multiparty democracy, rule of law, and the separation of powers into the governance structure. Ghana's earlier political experiments, particularly the First (1960–1966), Second (1969–1972), and Third Republics (1979–1981), were short-lived due to military interventions. The Fourth Republic emerged after the last military government led by Jerry John Rawlings and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which ruled from 1981 to 1992. Following mounting internal and external pressures for democratisation, the PNDC transitioned to civilian rule through a referendum in 1992, which overwhelmingly approved the new Constitution.





The Fourth republican democracy of Ghana has been characterised by consistent and viable competitive elections. The electioneering process has been seen as reliable, free and fair as the Electoral Commission of Ghana has been accredited to have played a significant role in organising elections and maintaining its honour and integrity in the process (Gyimah-Boadi & Owusu, 2018).

One of the distinguished assets of Ghana's Fourth Republic is its successful transition of political power from one political party administration to the other. This was evident in the 2000, 2008, 2016 and 2024 general elections when incumbents relinquished power to opposition candidates, signifying a pledge to democratic values and credentials, as well as vivacious multiparty system with several parties participating in the election.

However, the political landscape in the country has been characterised by the dominance of two major parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which have alternated political power between them (Gyimah-Boadi & Owusu, 2018; Agyei-Mensah, 2018). A significant milestone in Ghana's democratic journey was the successful conduct of the ninth general elections under the Fourth Republic on December 7, 2024. This election further solidified Ghana's reputation as a leading democracy in the West African sub-region, especially notable given the backdrop of democratic challenges in neighboring countries. The peaceful nature of the election and the active participation of citizens underscored the nation's commitment to democratic principles.

The resilience of Ghana's Fourth Republic is evident in its ability to facilitate peaceful transitions of power and adapt to the evolving political landscape. The existence of a hung parliament after the 2020 elections, for instance, showcases the public's nuanced perspective on governance and

democracy. This adaptability and commitment to democratic ideals have been pivotal in maintaining political stability and fostering national development.

Scholars and the international community have applauded the post 1992 era of Ghana's democracy as a beacon of democracy in Africa (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009 and USAID, 2011). The electoral process since the inception of the Fourth Republic have been deemed free and fair by local, continental and international observers, which has become a reference point for assessing Ghana's Democracy. However, there has been limited research that actually give detailed perspective of civil society concerning how Ghana's democracy perform since the inception of the Fourth Republic.

#### **1.1.0 Role of Civil Society in Democracy**

The concept of civil society has deep historical roots, tracing back centuries to Ancient Greece in Western thought. It is understood as a sphere of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-sustaining, independent of the state, and governed by a legal framework or shared rules. Day & Kreutzner, (2020) defined civil society as citizens acting collectively or individually in the public domain to express their interests, passions, and ideas, share information, achieve common objectives, advocate to the state, and hold state officials accountable.

The resurgence of interest in civil society is tied to the expansion of democracy, which created space for its activities, as well as the need to address the social service gaps arising from structural adjustments and reforms in developing nations (Mlambo et al., 2019). Studies by Göth & Pelham (2020) stipulated that civil society functions as a sphere of interaction between households and the state, manifested through norms of community cooperation, voluntary associations, and networks of public communication. These norms rooted in trust, reciprocity, tolerance, and inclusivity are critical to fostering collaboration and solving communal problems. Associations, both formal and informal, provide platforms for citizens to pursue shared interests.

Civil society is widely recognised as a vital sector, whose strength positively impacts both the state and the market. It plays a crucial role in promoting good governance by advancing principles such as transparency, accountability, effectiveness, openness, and responsiveness. Through policy analysis and advocacy, civil society evaluates public policies and provides evidence-based recommendations to influence governance, ensuring alignment with public needs. Daha, (2020) state that civil society save as watchdogs, police and monitor state actions, expose inefficiencies and corruption, and uphold ethical standards, thereby reinforcing trust in democratic institutions.

Additionally, civil society fosters social capital by empowering citizens to articulate their values and beliefs. It mobilises marginalised groups, ensures inclusivity, and contributes to sustainable development through community-based initiatives. Ultimately, civil society serves as a cornerstone of democratic governance, strengthening transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

### **1.1.1 Relevance of Assessing Civil Society Perspectives**

Assessing civil society perspectives in democracy is essential for ensuring a participatory, deliberation, inclusive, and accountable governance system. Civil society (CS) represent diverse individuals within society, including marginalized and vulnerable populations whose voices might otherwise go unheard in formal political processes. Understanding their perspectives enriches democratic governance by promoting inclusivity and equity, ensuring that public policies and decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of all citizens, not just a select few.

Civil society perspectives provide critical insights into the performance of democratic institutions. As watchdogs, CS monitor government actions, expose inefficiencies, and highlight corruption or human rights abuses. By assessing their viewpoints, policymakers and stakeholders gain valuable feedback on the effectiveness of governance and the alignment of government actions with public

interests. This contributes to enhancing transparency, accountability, and trust in democratic institutions. Moreover, civil society plays a vital role in policy development and advocacy. Their grassroots connections and expertise enable them to identify key societal challenges and propose solutions grounded in lived experiences (Mlambo et al., 2019). By incorporating these perspectives into decision-making, governments can craft policies that are not only effective but also legitimate and widely accepted.

Steen et al (2016) say that, assessing civil society perspectives strengthens civic engagement. When governments actively engage with CS and consider their views, opinions they foster a culture of participation and shared responsibility for societal growth. This enhances civil society trust in democratic processes and encourages broader public involvement in governance. Their active participation ensures that democratic principles such as freedom, equality, and justice are upheld. Thus, assessing civil society perspectives is not only beneficial but necessary for building resilient democracies that reflect the aspirations of people and adapt to evolving societal needs and development.

### **1.1.2 Tamale Metropolis Context**

Assessing civil society perspectives in Tamale Metropolis, located in Ghana's Northern Region, is crucial for several reasons. Civil society (CS) in this area play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between citizens and the state, particularly in a region marked by unique socio-political and cultural dynamics. By examining their perspectives, policymakers and stakeholders can gain valuable insights into local governance challenges and opportunities, enabling more responsive and context-specific interventions.

One critical reason for this assessment is to understand the role of civil society in promoting participatory governance. Tamale, like other parts of Ghana, faces challenges such as political



marginalisation, poverty, and unequal access to resources (Fuseini, 2020). CS in the metropolis are key to amplifying the voices of marginalised and vulnerable groups, ensuring their inclusion in decision-making processes. Understanding how these organisations mobilise communities and advocate for equity provides a roadmap for addressing systemic inequalities.

Moreover, assessing civil society perspectives sheds light on their role in mitigating social tensions and electoral violence, which have occasionally disrupted democratic processes in the region. Tamale's historical context of ethnic and political divides makes the contribution of CS vital in fostering dialogue, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution (Agyeman, 2021). Their efforts in promoting tolerance and coexistence are indispensable for long-term stability and development and also promoting social capital and collective action, to enhances the quality of governance but also nurtures a more informed electorate capable of holding governments accountable.

In addition, civil society perspectives highlight their role in furthering good government, ensuring accountability by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices.

In summary, assessing civil society perspectives in the Tamale Metropolis is crucial for promoting inclusive governance, addressing systemic challenges, fostering peace, and enhancing sustainable development in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **1.1.3 Justification for the study**

Despite the increasing volume of studies conducted on Ghana's democracy and civil society, a significant gap remains in understanding the localised perspectives of civil society (CS) within the Tamale Metropolis. Most existing studies have concentrated on national-level analyses or urban centres like Accra and Kumasi, neglecting the unique socio-political, cultural, and economic





dynamics of northern regions such as Tamale (Agyenim-Boateng, 2017; Obeng-Odoom, 2013). This omission limits our understanding of how CS operate in diverse settings and their ability to navigate region-specific challenges.

Research underscores the critical role CS play in fostering democratic governance, accountability, and human rights (Kumi, 2017; Gyimah-Boadi, 2015). However, the experiences of CS in Tamale characterised by issues such as poverty, inequality, electoral violence, and limited access to social services remain underexplored. As a microcosm of broader national challenges, Tamale offers a compelling case for investigating civil society's contribution to addressing governance deficits and promoting democracy at the grassroots level.

Localised assessments in Tamale are particularly crucial, as the region's unique challenges provide critical insights into the implementation and effectiveness of national policies. For instance, while CS in the south may focus on urbanisation and industrialisation issues, those in Tamale might prioritise poverty alleviation, education, and peacebuilding. Understanding these varied priorities is essential for crafting inclusive policies and strategies.

Moreover, focusing on CS in Tamale can shed light on best practices for engaging marginalised groups and fostering inclusive participation in governance. It also allows for the identification of innovative, context-specific solutions that CS employ to navigate local governance challenges, which can inform national strategies.

By addressing this gap, this research will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the role of CS in Tamale, offering a template for leveraging civil society to strengthen Ghana's democratic consolidation across diverse regional contexts.



To fully understanding the success of Ghana's democratic governance, it is essential to conduct a detailed examination of the various viewpoints and experience of all key stake holders like the civil society. The engagement of Ghanaian civil society in elections and their broader participation is key to this process. The active participation of Ghanaian civil society in elections, involvement in civil society organisations and engagement in community initiatives illustrate their significant role in shaping the country's democracy. By examining their opinions on how democratic institutions function, how responsive the government is to their requests, and how effectively their rights are safeguarded, one can learn a great deal about Ghana's democratic circumstances.

This study seeks to evaluate the perspectives of civil society with regard to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of the country's base on the principles of democracy. Through an analysis of civil society experiences and opinions, this assessment aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the advantages and obstacles within Ghana's democratic system from the viewpoint of its intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, it will explore how Ghana's democratic model aligns with or diverges from global assessments of democracy and across Africa.

The goal of this comprehensive analysis is to provide valuable insights into the discussions surrounding the impact of democratic governance in Ghana and its significance on a global scale, as well as within the African context. By prioritising citizens' perspectives in this evaluation, the study aims to offer a more complete and inclusive assessment of the state of democracy in Ghana.

### **1.2.0 Problem statement**

In Ghana, the assessment of democracy has not been comprehensive (Gyimah-Boadi & Yakah, 2013). The global trend of democratic governance becoming more and more popular is a well-

known fact and Ghana is not an exception, although recent developments suggest a shift in public opinion towards alternative forms of governance (Asomah, 2019).

The Global Barometer Surveys, (2018) showed a decline in citizens' support for democracy and an increase in openness to other systems of governance. The democratic system in Ghana has been hailed for its achievements in fostering political stability and pluralism. However, there remains a critical need to assess the functionality and impact of this system from the perspective of its civil society.

Despite Ghana's democratic progress, various challenges persist, raising questions about the extent to which the system aligns with civil society's expectations regarding their socio-political needs (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). These challenges include issues of accountability, representation, and the influence of money in politics. The international community usually evaluates Ghana's democracy based on elections; the emphasis has mostly been on political institutions and the electioneering process which agrees with Osafo-Danso's (2015) study on Ghana's democracy to the detriment of the perspectives of civil society. This is only a partial and incomplete picture of Ghana's democracy, given the importance of civil society participation in democratic societies (Ziaja, 2020). Therefore, this crucial knowledge gap between the international community and the Osafo-Danso's (2015) study must be investigated to provide a thorough understanding of the practice of democracy in Ghana. The perspective of civil society is not just a means of comprehending the ties between the state and society; implicitly, civil society should exist because it is a better means of structuring these relationships, considering that it is the only feasible or imaginable basis for democracy (Hutchful 1995) and also, they are vital for evaluating the



country's democracy because they provide new and unique information from individuals who have first-hand experience with it.

The availability of this data will give evaluations of Ghana's democracy based on first-hand accounts from civil society's previous unexplored dimension. In a similar vein, the absence of opinions from Ghana's civil society creates a situation in which Ghana's democracy may not have been in line with the ambitions of civil society. Exploring this gap is essential to provide enhanced and thorough information, which will ultimately help to address the issue of inadequate assessment of Ghana's democracy.

### **1.2.0 General Objective**

The study seeks to assess Ghana's democratic system since the inception of the Fourth Republic from the perspective of civil society, focusing on the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region, Ghana.

### **1.2.1 Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate the nature of the current democratic system of Ghana from the perspective of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis.
2. To evaluate the merits and demerits of the current democratic system of Ghana as perceived by civil society organizations in the Tamale Metropolis.
3. To explore the aspirations and expectations of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis for Ghana's democratic system.



### **1.2.2 General Question**

What is the assessment of Ghana's democratic system since the inception of the Fourth Republic from the perspective of civil society, focusing on the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region?

### **1.2.3 Specific Research Questions:**

1. What is the nature of the current democratic system of Ghana from the perspective of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis?
2. What are the merits and demerits of the current democratic system of Ghana as perceived by civil society organizations in the Tamale Metropolis?
3. What are the aspirations and expectations of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis for Ghana's democratic system?

### **1.2.4 Significance of the study**

The study has evaluated Ghana's democratic system from the perspective of civil society, which is supported by the philosophy of democratic principles. Although this project has scholarly goals, its larger objective is to spark social change within a democratic framework. To gain insight into how ordinary Ghanaians feel about their government and to provide a forum for them to participate in the discussion of Ghana's democratic performance outside of elections.

The results of the study would be beneficial to Ghana and the rest of the globe since it would shed light on the attitudes of civil society toward democratic government, which can be utilised to comprehend broader patterns in democratic governance and citizen participation in the area and beyond. Additionally, it would significantly alter people's perceptions of Ghana's democracy, advancing scholarly research on democratic governance. Researchers looking into democracy, government, and citizen perspectives would find it to be a useful resource as well, as it offers empirical information and new perspectives. International organisation, advocacy groups, and civil



society organisation might use the study's findings to promote certain policies. They can use the knowledge to promote changes and enhancements to Ghana's democratic system of government.

### **1.3.5 The Limitation of the Study**

The study was affected by several challenges. They included: a small sample size, the inability of some participants to communicate effectively in English, and difficulties in answering open-ended questions by participants. Others were time, logistics, and financial constraints. These were overcome by diversifying participants selection across the metropolis and using the local language to participants who do not understand English

Another key limitation of this study is the geographical focus on the Tamale metropolis, which may not fully represent the perspectives of civil society from other parts of Ghana, especially in more rural or urbanized areas outside the Northern Region. While Tamale is a significant urban center in the north, the views gathered here may reflect specific socio-political dynamics unique to the metropolis, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the entire nation. Pilot testing instruments were done to address language and cultural nuances.

Additionally, interviews as a data collection method introduce potential biases such as response bias or interviewer influence. Participants may offer socially desirable answers or avoid criticizing the government and democracy due to fear of repercussions or cultural norms of respect, even if confidentiality is assured. The presence of the interviewer could also unintentionally guide responses, influencing the authenticity of participants' perspectives.

Also, the inability of some participants to communicate effectively in both written and spoken English posed some problems to the research work, especially the open-ended questions. The





researcher has to spend more time than expected in explaining the questions to individual participants, mostly in their mother tongue, so as to enable them to provide the needed and accurate information. Again, the interview sessions and focus group discussions were mostly carried out during working hours, which meant being absent from duty, hence could affect his work output.

With the fortitude of purpose of the researcher, however, these challenges were properly managed through the following measures: use of both English and Dagbani to enable participants to be able to understand the questions.

The use of a single case study also limits the study's broader applicability. While in-depth insights can be drawn from the Tamale metropolis, the findings may not reflect the diversity of experiences in Ghana's Fourth Republican democracy, particularly across different regions and ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the diversity in political awareness and education among participants in the Tamale metropolis could affect the quality of the data. Some citizens may have limited understanding of democratic principles or the workings of the Fourth Republic, leading to varied or incomplete responses that may complicate analysis and comparison of perspectives.

#### **1.4 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction of the entire study, including the background to the study, the statement of the problem, general and specific research questions, general and specific research objectives, and the significance of the study. The chapter concluded with organization of the study.

Chapter Two elaborated on relevant, existing, and related literature. The literature was categorized into theoretical, conceptual, and empirical reviews. Issues discussed under the empirical review

include the nature of Ghana's current democratic system, the merits and demerits of the current democratic system of Ghana, and the aspirations of the ordinary Ghanaian on the current democratic system of Ghana.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used to conduct the study. It captured the research design, the area of the study, the population of the study, the sampling process, the sampling size, the data collection instruments, and the focus group discussion and interviews. It concluded with the data source, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the results and discussion of the findings of the study. Finally, a summary of the whole study, conclusion, findings, recommendations, and suggestions for future research were presented in Chapter Five.





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 Literature Review**

This chapter analysed the existing scholarly works, including conceptual, empirical and theoretical frameworks relating to this study. Literature review is necessary in research because it aids the examination of previous research relating to current research, comparing and contrasting the works, and learning from gaps in those works. Literature review also provides a researcher with pertinent sources of secondary data which make an ongoing research activity more enhanced and standardised. It also helps the researcher to know what is known already about ongoing research to find exiting gaps (Bryman, 2016).

#### **2.1.0 Theoretical Review**

This section reviews theories relating to civil society, and democratic participatory processes which are the participatory theory of democracy and deliberative theory of democracy.

#### **2.1.1 Participatory Democracy**

Participatory Democracy is a process that involves citizens and leaders in the decision-making process. This allows citizens to believe that the state is potentially responsive to their needs because its decisions are subordinate to public opinion, which is not conceptualised as merely a statistical outcome of votes (Post, 2006).

The Participatory Theory of Democracy emphasises direct citizen involvement in decision-making processes and governance (Pateman, 2012). Rather than relying solely on elected representatives, this theory advocates active engagement of individuals in shaping policies and making decisions

that affect their lives. The idea is to foster a more direct and immediate form of democracy (Verba et al., 1978:46; Kaae & Marsh, 1979:42).

The theory is closely associated with political theorist, Carole Pateman (1970). In her influential work, "Participation and Democratic Theory," Pateman (1970) challenges traditional notions of democracy, advocating a more inclusive and participatory model. According to her, democracy should not be confined to mere electoral processes; instead, it should involve active citizen engagement in decision-making at various levels of governance. She argues that true democratic participation extends beyond voting and should encompass citizens' direct involvement in shaping policies and influencing political outcomes. Pateman's (1970) work has significantly contributed to the discourse on participatory democracy, emphasising the importance of citizens' direct engagement in the political process for a more robust and inclusive democratic system.

According to Gagnon (2010), a situation in which the people are sovereign and a government is constituted with their permission is the fundamental definition of democracy. The basic democracy, from which perhaps every style of democracy derives, can be explained as a citizenry exercising its sovereignty through institutionalising the citizenry's conceptualisation of equality, law, communication and the selection of officials. According to Saunders (2010), democracy exists when decisions made by a group take into account the expressed preferences of the group members, which is a reiteration of the participatory theory referred to above. More comprehensively, Saunders (2010) posits that democracy, as defined, is a matter of citizens' sovereignty or the responsiveness of decisions to the people's expressed wishes.

Participation is a conduit through which people contribute to the political system to meet their personal needs and aspirations. Participation, according to Verba (1996: 1), is a means by which





both officials and citizens choose their preferences and needs and exert their response to the need chosen.

In participatory democracies, citizens are encouraged to participate in community meetings, local assemblies and other fora to express their opinions, deliberate on issues and directly influence the decision-making process (Dryzek et al., 2019). The aim is to create a more engaged and empowered citizenry, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility in the democratic process.

### **2.1.2 Deliberative Theory of Democracy**

Deliberative democracy is a political theory that emphasizes the value of thoughtful, open-ended public debate in democratic societies' decision-making procedures. It contends that democracy entails giving people the chance to participate in courteous and thoughtful debates to reach well-informed judgments, rather than just using voting to aggregate people's preferences (Curato, 2013). Deliberation is not just about communicating; it is also about listening and reflecting without which communication is pointless. Benjamin Barber defines the type of listening required by a strong democrat. As he puts it, "I will listen" means in the context of a democratic discourse "I will try to understand, I will strain to hear what makes us alike, I will listen for a common rhetoric evocative of a common purpose or a common good" (Barber, 2003: 175).

Jürgen Habermas introduced the concept of deliberative democracy in the late 20th century, particularly through his seminal work *"The Theory of Communicative Action"* (1981) and further elaborated on it in *"Between Facts and Norms"* (*Faktizität und Geltung*, 1992). In *"Between Facts and Norms,"* Habermas directly addresses deliberative democracy by integrating his theory of communicative action with practical political theory. This work outlines how public deliberation



and communicative rationality can legitimise democratic processes. This proliferation of deliberative sites is consistent with the idea that democratic practice needs to be broadened. The recent turn toward deliberative systems are one manifestation of a commitment to democratic inclusion, as the more sites that can be linked to good effect in a deliberative system, the more opportunities there are for meaningful participation by varieties of actors (including ordinary citizens).

Public discussion is given a lot of attention in this. The interchange of ideas, arguments, and information is done with respect for one another and everyone involved (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). This implies that people from the public get together to debate topics of common interest in frank and rational ways. Advocates contend that deliberative democracy gives political equality, freedom, the rule of law, justice, and citizen engagement in national debate concrete meaning (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010).

Deliberative theory has been utilised extensively as a theoretical framework several studies. List, Luskin, Fiskin and McLean (2013) employed deliberative theory in their quest to explain the impact deliberation has on majority of decision-making process in democracy (List et al 2013). Similarly, In Ireland, deliberative democracy played a pivotal role in shaping policies on contentious issues such as same-sex marriage (2015) and abortion rights (2018) to enhanced the legitimacy of decisions and demonstrated how public deliberation resolve divisive issues.

From the ongoing discussion, both the participatory and deliberative theory posits that, democracy goes beyond the right to vote but rather encompasses critical elements such as rule of law, political equality, sovereignty, free media, separation of power, social and economic accountability to the people. By incorporating thoughtful methods into both participatory and deliberative systems,

democracies can confront their obstacles while capitalizing on their advantages. This combination of methods can establish a governance model that is both balanced and responsive, based on the principles of rational discussion and group decision-making.

## **2.2.0 Conceptual Review**

### **2.2.1 The Concept of Democracy**

It is a truism that scholars of democracy have not come to a complete consensus on a single definition of democracy as a system of governance. The concept of democracy is synonymous with freedom, liberty, and equality. It is a system of government that provides citizens with equal power over decisions. Democracy is a direct contrast to autocracy, which makes it an appealing system for common citizens because of its tendency to give citizens the freedom to select the person to govern them. According to Dahl (1971), democracy is a popular control over collective decision-making, with political equality as a core element of it. Schumpeter (1947) also defines democracy as a regime holding contests of elections, contestation, and participation. A country cannot be considered democratic if there is full participation but no contestation, and vice versa. Democracy showcases collective decision-making and parity in opportunities for all individuals (Christiano and Bajaj, 2021). The OED describes democracy as "rule by the citizens" or "a system of government in which the supreme power is vested in the entire people and is exercised either directly by them... or by officials chosen by them." Finally, according to former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, in The Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863, democracy is a government of the people, by the people, for the people. Democracy is a system of government where both rulers and the ruled have equal powers in terms of how the country is being governed.





In contemporary usage, democracy is frequently used to refer to a societal structure where all individuals within a state or institution possess equitable rights, devoid of inherited or unjustifiable distinctions of status or favour (Aketema, 2023). Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested and shared between leaders and the citizens, with equality for all citizens, regardless of their social status.

The popularity of democracy as a system of government across the globe is a well-known fact, even though recent developments regarding its viability are under scrutiny. In the developed world, populism and a sense of insecurity have led to a retreat from democracy (Foa & Mounk, 2017; Lappin, 2017). Trust in political institutions has declined, voter turnout is falling, and support for undemocratic regime types is on the rise (Plattner, 2015). Some believe that democracy in the West may be under threat of deconsolidation, particularly among young voters disengaged from traditional party politics (Mayne & Geissel, 2018). In 2018 and 2019, popular protests swept through Ethiopia, Sudan, and Algeria, challenging long-standing regimes and parties', suggesting that democratisation in Africa was still on an upward trajectory (Diamond, 2020). While Africa saw positive democratic trends, the global context witnessed democratic setbacks in countries like Brazil, Burundi, Hungary, Russia, Serbia, and Turkey (Diamond, 2020). This decline is reflected in the average levels of liberal democracy, which started decreasing in 2012 (Malafaia et al., 2021). Africa has made significant progress in democratic governance, particularly since 1989, making it the predominant form of governance on the continent. The conclusion of the Cold War era in the 1980s represented a significant moment in global geopolitics, leading to a noticeable transition towards democratic principles as the predominant framework (Shin, 2009). This transformative period had profound implications for Africa, where an intensified focus on democratic values became increasingly conspicuous (Lynch & Crawford, 2011). The subsequent years saw a surge



in international impetus and backing for democratisation initiatives across many African nations (Brown & Kaiser, 2007). As the worldwide trend of democratisation gathered strength, many African nations began to move away from long-standing authoritarian governments and chose instead to adopt democratic governance systems. This shift was driven by increasing domestic demands for political change and a shared desire for more inclusive and participatory forms of governance.

In addition to these internal dynamics, there was a notable trend as many African countries adopted multi-party systems, leading to increased political diversity (Seol, 2018). This evolution facilitated more competitive electoral landscapes, affording citizens a broader spectrum of choices and empowering them with increased opportunities to articulate their preferences through the democratic process (Seol, 2018). Recognising the imperative of institutional fortification in sustaining democratic governance, several African countries embarked on constitutional reforms (Ndulo, 2019). These endeavours were designed not only to bolster the foundations of democratic institutions but also to codify the rule of law and safeguard human rights (Mlambo et al., 2019).

The overarching goal of these constitutional revisions was to cultivate an environment conducive to the flourishing of democratic governance (Mlambo et al., 2019). Additionally, the global community has been instrumental in promoting Africa's progress towards democracy. Entities like the African Union and various Western countries have shown a dedicated effort to uphold democratic procedures on the continent (Nwogwugwu, 2020). This dedication was demonstrated through the use of diplomatic influence, monitoring of elections, and providing development aid closely connected to improvements in governance (Nti, 2018). The collaborative efforts of international entities thus served to reinforce and underpin the continent's democratic aspirations. However, the quality of democracy often falls short, with incumbents using various tactics to



maintain power, such as manipulating elections and undermining competitive politics. This decline is exemplified by Benin, where opposition candidates were excluded in the 2019 parliamentary elections and a hefty fee was imposed for parties to participate (Sanches et al., 2019). Africa experienced a notable increase in democratic progress, albeit at a slower pace compared to the global average. During the 1980s, many African countries witnessed the decline of one-party regimes and a gradual shift towards multi-party systems. This trend can be attributed to various factors, including the economic stagnation that was plaguing the continent, the growing pressure from the international community to abandon minority rule, and the global wave of democratisation that was sweeping across nations (Akin & Ade, 2018). It is important to note, however, that the progress made in Africa's democratic transition was not without challenges. Corruption, for instance, remained a pervasive issue throughout the continent, hindering the consolidation of democratic institutions. Corruption can take different forms: bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and misappropriation of public resources. These unethical attitudes lead to a diversion of resources from vital services and manipulate policy decisions in favour of specific interests. Consequently, corruption contributes to an unethical socioeconomic environment by exacerbating inequality and impedes overall development.

In recent decades in Africa, the importance of democracy has become increasingly apparent in sub-Saharan Africa. After years of poor economic performance, many African countries started to recognise that democracy could be a catalyst for change. Democracy in Africa can be classified into three categories: authoritarian, electoral, and liberal democracies. According to Freedom House, some countries in Africa are considered 'free', while others are considered 'partly free' and 'not free' (Ariotti, 2020). Despite variations in the quality of democracy, the majority of Africans live in countries that can be considered democratic, making it the dominant form of government





on the continent. Research suggests that the levels of electoral democracy in Africa are gradually approaching or exceeding the global average, despite lower GDP per capita (Gyimah-Boadi, 2015). The trend of democracy in Africa can be attributed to various factors, including the influence of Western democracies, development assistance, and the ability of citizens to compare their conditions with those in other countries (Nwogwugwu, 2020). According to the Council on Foreign Relations, economic prosperity and increased interactions with foreigners from democratic societies have likely influenced a positive democratic trajectory in Africa (Campbell and Quinn, 2020). However, the promotion of democracy by Western donors has been criticised for being linked to the neoliberal agenda and not necessarily improving the well-being of African countries (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2019). Despite the challenges, the democratic trajectory in Africa has shown both positive and negative changes, with some countries making significant progress in embracing democratic principles (Friedman, 2019). It is important to recognise that the concept of democracy in Africa may differ from Western liberal democracy, and the idea that democracies in the West are inherently superior to those in Africa is a fallacy (Nwogwugwu, 2020). The diversity of democratic experiences and the unique cultural contexts of African countries should be taken into account when assessing the progress of democracy in the region. Democracy in Africa has improved over time, despite the lack of some supposed prerequisites for democratic consolidation, such as a strong national identity and a well-performing economy. This progress offers hope for stability, given that, once established, democracy is the most stable form of governance when supported by minimum income levels and education (Abiduloh & Hasan, 2021). Many African countries, including Ghana, transitioned to democracy in the early 1990s by introducing a multi-party system and establishing civilian rule to replace military autocracy as a system (Akin & Ade, 2018).



Democratic governance in Africa has witnessed significant political upheavals and transformations over the last twenty years. While many countries in the region claim to be democratic, the actual quality of democracy in Africa is often compromised, with inconsistent adherence to democratic values (Nti, 2018). According to a 2010 survey by Freedom House, sub-Saharan Africa reflects a global pattern of declining political rights and civil liberties. Nevertheless, there has been some advancement, as approximately one-quarter of African nations are now classified as "free". The advocacy for democracy by Western benefactors has faced criticism for being associated with neoliberal interests and not necessarily leading to improved conditions in African nations (Cheeseman, 2015). Despite the obstacles encountered, the trajectory of democracy in Africa exhibits both positive strides and setbacks, with certain countries making noteworthy progress in embracing democratic principles (Gyimah-Boadi, 2015). It's crucial to acknowledge that the concept of democracy may differ from Western liberal ideals within an African context; thus, dismissing democracies outside of the West as inherently inferior is erroneous. When evaluating the advancement of democracy in Africa, it is important to consider the diversity of democratic practices and the distinct cultural backgrounds within African nations.

### **2.3.0 The concept of Civil Society**

The concept of Civil Society (CS) is extensively utilised in political and policy discourses, solidifying its importance in the realm of policy and practice. However, there is a lack of consensus on the definitive definition of the concept, leading to substantial divergence among scholars regarding what it should be encompassed or otherwise. The doctrine of the concept refers to the sphere of voluntary individual or collective action situated between the state, the market, and the private lives of individuals (Mlambo et al., 2019). It is characterised by the autonomy of its actors



from the state and its ability to organise individual collectively around shared interests, values, and purposes.

Civil Society, lying between the individual and the state, comprises the collectivity of individuals or groups of individuals (organised or unorganised) interacting socially, politically and economically regulated by formal and informal rules and laws (Jaysawal, 2013). Differences range from emphasising associational life to restricting 'civil society' solely to formal organisations (Hogg, 2015). The appropriate relationship between civil society and the state also remains a contentious issue. This is indeed an elusive concept and a more fugitive reality. Civil society plays a role in achieving various societal aims, particularly by expressing a vision of social change that can potentially reshape the state according to an idealised concept (Young 1994: 48; Jaysawal, 2013). From a liberal perspective, thinkers like John Locke and Alexis de Tocqueville emphasized civil society as a space for individual freedom and association (Jaysawal, 2013). Tocqueville, in particular, viewed civil society as a "school of democracy," where individuals learn participatory skills and develop trust (Jaysawal, 2013). In Ghana, this is evident in citizens and informal community self-help groups that promote local accountability and participation. Critical theorists like Antonio Gramsci, however, saw civil society as a site of ideological struggle, where counter-hegemonic forces contest dominant state or market ideologies (Mlambo et al., 2019).

The idea of civil society includes specific beliefs about cohesion, politeness, independence from the government and its inherent relationship with democracy (Zhuravleva, 2015). It also varies based on each country's unique traits influenced by historical events impacting different societal groups, organisational frameworks embraced by social entities to tackle community issues, personal connections, and external pressures, such as global ties, as well as governance and

allocation of resources (Witkowski, 2014). Transformations in these elements and the collective memory within social segments regarding previous movements contribute to shaping civil society over time.

Civil society (CS) has emerged as the key arena for reclaiming citizen influence over public affairs. It appears that achieving significant and lasting transformation through the current state system is quite limited. The reformation of this system might rely on a revitalised civil society established through sustained and concerted efforts (Xavier et al., 2017).

Civil Society is an idea of hegemonic perception through which state and society relations are understood, which appears as a string of impermanent unified postures concerning transitional issues (Onwuama & Ibuot, 2019). This pointed out, what does exist is civil society as an idea and civil society as a process. Civil society as an idea is a unified symbol that conceals disunity, whereas civil society as a process is a series of ephemeral unified postures concerning transient issues with no sustained consistency of purpose (Blokhina & Grigoryev, 2019). Civil society as an idea conceals real history and power relations, while civil society as a process reveals power relations between social forces (Carpentier, 2014). Nevertheless, civil society as an idea has substantial political implications.

The quality of CS should be visualised as a field of struggle between individuals, organised social forces in which changes in the determinants of struggle and the economic-political context affect the outcome (Zhuravleva, 2015). CS contains elements of perception, exclusion and manipulation of the idea of participation for the exclusion of multiple categories of actors linked up with existing processes (Silander, 2019). CS, lying between the individual and the state, comprises individuals and groups (organised or unorganised) interacting socially, politically and economically regulated



by formal and informal rules and laws. Civil Society has to do with individual citizens, including public and private sector workers and any other citizen in the country, capable of collective or individual action in defence of their interest.

## **2.4.0 Empirical Review**

### **2.4.1 The Nature of Ghana's Current Democratic System**

The nature of Ghana's current democratic system can be described as a representative democracy. This means that citizens elect representatives to make decisions and govern on their behalf. Citizens elect representatives through free and fair elections who are responsible for implementing policies and laws that reflect the needs and interests of the people. The government of Ghana consists of three branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial. Citizens elect representatives to make decisions and govern on their behalf, with the executive branch, led by the president, responsible for implementing and enforcing laws (Fatai, 2018). The legislative branch consists of the Parliament, which includes the elected representatives and is responsible for making laws. The system is characterised by free and fair elections, a multi-party-political landscape dominated by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and a vibrant civil society. The country has a history of successful political transitions, and its democratic foundations are rooted in the 1992 Constitution, which aimed to prevent future coups, dictatorial government, and one-party states (Strouboulis et al., 2023).

Ghana is seen as a remarkable success of democracy in Africa, following its independence in 1957. The restoration of Ghana's constitutional rule in 1993 has also been described by some scholars as a hybrid form of the political system (Oduro, Awal and Maxwell 2014). The nation has been able to organise free and fair elections and alternation of power between various political parties





in the country without violence, as evidenced in 2000, 2008, and 2016 (Oduro, Awal, and Maxwell 2014). Despite the enormous progress, questions remain about the quality and nature of democracy in the country. Expanding on this discussion will provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Ghana's unique and complex political landscape, shedding light on its current dynamics, and potential future developments. Exploring the nature of Ghana's democratic system is crucial in order to grasp the intricacies of its political landscape. It allows for a comprehensive analysis of the factors that have contributed to its success, such as the role of political parties, civil society, and institutions in upholding democratic principles.

The democratic system witnessed in the last decades in Ghana has been most expressed and simulated through political parties and political elites in the country. Thus, since Ghana's return to a democratic system, political parties have become conduits through which citizens and politicians pursue their leadership ambitions (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). Unlike in the past when governments were changed through firearms, the common norm in the country nowadays is using the thumb through competitive elections (Sulemana & Agyapong, 2019). The emergence of consensus to seek power only through democratic means and also provide a platform for citizens to exercise their franchise in electing people to man the affairs of the nation through multi-party elections has become increasingly important in modern societies. This approach ensures that diverse voices are heard and represented, fostering a more inclusive and legitimate governance structure (Arthur, 2016). This demonstrates a growing constitutionalism in the country, where both leaders and citizens agreed to work within the established framework of the 1992 Constitution and see it as a sacrosanct point of reference (Gyekye-Jandoh, 2017).



Since 1992, there have been no attempts by political groups to overthrow the democratically elected government. This demonstrates the country's strong commitment to democratic principles and resilience in its electoral processes. Even when parties are dissatisfied with election results, political parties typically adhere to established democratic procedures outlined in the constitution instead of resorting to violent means (Mochtar & Afkar, 2022). This was evident in the 2012 and 2020 general election petitions challenging the validity of declared results (Kombat & Wätzold, 2018). The Ghanaian state, under the current democratic governance system, is more stable today than any other time in the country's history. Although it must be noted that the intensity of multi-partyism and its 'winner-takes-all' form has the potential to undermine Ghana's political stability, especially during elections, it is important to stress, as Throup (2011: 14), said "when everything is on the line, many Ghanaians would stop at nothing to protect the stability and the integrity of their country" (Sulemana & Agyapong, 2019).

However, scholars like Abdulai, (2017) have argued contrary that the multi-party system in the country has created ethnic and religious factions. Political parties in the Fourth Republic have seen serious competition between two main parties (NPP and NDC) haven each won and lost elections in Ghana, which sometimes led to the mobilisation of ethnic and religious identities for political gain that might also undermine the unity and stability of the country. The competitive nature of the country's electoral process and the constitutionally imposed four-year limit term also generate huge pressure on the ruling government to answer to the short-term economic wants and needs of voters and supporters coupled with their own need for political survival (Bob-Milliar & Paller, 2018). Likewise, a regular and competitive election and limited term serve as incentives for politicians to emphasise on broad issues rather than focusing on almost exclusive on the dispensation of benefits (Arthur, 2016).



Similarly, regular and competitive elections played a pivotal role during the transition process in the 1990s and still play a crucial role in the Fourth Republic. Studies revealed that, even though multi-party elections when flawed, serves as a mechanism for strengthening democracy (Abiwu and Darkwa, 2020). By providing a peaceful and legitimate way for citizens to choose their leaders, elections contribute to the democratic consolidation in Ghana. The importance of the democratic system in Ghana cannot be overstated, but it seems to be hindered by the resurgence of ethnic politics. The ethnicisation of Ghanaian politics is seen as a significant issue for the country's ongoing democratisation efforts (Re, 2015). However, despite a strong Ghanaian aversion to ethnic divisions, ethnicity continues to be influential and is increasingly prominent in Ghanaian politics (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). An ethnic electoral pattern has emerged since 1992 (Marfo et al., 2021). Ethnic group-based voting has persisted as a worry, especially in the heartland of Ghana's two main political parties (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). The NDC and NPP are widely perceived by most Ghanaians as championing the interests of the Ewe/Northerners and Asante's respectively (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). While these ethnic concerns and related mobilisation have emerged during electoral campaigns, they continue to be minimal within the country. No ethnic group in Ghana has attempted to pull out. The country has remained fairly united since the inception of the Fourth Republic, even though there appear to be persistent ethnic tensions and communal conflicts. Consequently, unlike many states in Africa, the legitimacy and territorial integrity of the Ghanaian state is unchallenged. Thus far, while ethnic divisions exist in Ghana, they do not seem likely to pose a threat to the country's unity and the stability of its democracy (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). There remains consensus among the political parties and citizens toward the maintenance of the current political status quo (democratic governance), regardless of the increasingly ethnic and religious divisions (Mochtar & Afkar, 2022). Ghanaians now possess broad agreement about





national identity, the type of government they want, who has the right to participate in political life, and how political differences can be resolved peacefully (Mochtar & Afkar, 2022).

Democratic system in Ghana is intricately tied to the perceived fairness of the electoral process and the responsiveness of governance to citizens' concerns (Atengble & Zackaria, 2022). As posited by Haynes (2022), the role played by political parties and institutions further contributes significantly to shaping citizens' overarching perception of democracy in the Ghanaian context. The belief in the fairness of the electoral process is a cornerstone of public opinion on Ghanaian democracy (Atengble & Zackaria, 2022). Citizens gauge the integrity of the electoral system, evaluating the extent to which their voices are heard and their concerns addressed. This evaluation is paramount, as citizens likely perceive democracy as contingent upon the transparent conduct of elections and the responsiveness of the political system to their needs (Haynes, 2022). Other studies suggest that, the democratic system in Ghana is also intricately linked to the citizens' assessment of government responsibility and honesty, as well as the assurance of civil liberties (Haynes, 2022). The economic dimension further amplifies this perception, as citizens evaluate government's capacity to deliver economic benefits and improve living standards (Rosema et al., 2011). These multifaceted considerations contribute to a nuanced public opinion on the nature of democracy, reflecting a collective assessment of the various facets that define the democratic experience in Ghana.

Citizens' perception of growing politicisation in various spheres of Ghanaian democratic system is rooted in the subjective observations and viewpoints held by individuals in the country. Over time, there is a discerned escalation in the influence or engagement of political considerations across all facets of Ghanaian society. This perceivable rise includes an increased politicisation of



economic, social, traditional and religious dimensions (Asekere, 2021). Specifically, political factors are notably impacting economic activities, policies and decision-making processes in Ghana. This influence can be observed in policies affecting businesses, trade, investments, and financial practices (Odijie & Imoro, 2021). Moreover, the perceived growing politicisation is evident in the increasing sway of political considerations over social issues, public discourse and cultural practice. Aspects, such as education, healthcare and community development, are believed to be influenced by political dynamics, shaping the social fabric of Ghanaian society. In the social sphere, the politicisation extends to traditional practices, customs, and cultural heritage. Political influences are observed to be affecting how traditional systems operate and how cultural events are conducted (Aidoo & Chamberlain, 2014). This suggests that, political considerations are seeping into the very fabric of Ghana's traditional identity.

Similarly, the intertwining of political factors with religious beliefs, institutions, and practices is becoming more pronounced in the democratic fabric of Ghana. This could manifest in political influences on religious institutions, policies impacting religious freedom or increased political engagement within religious communities (Aidoo & Botchway, 2021). It is crucial to note that these observations are specific to the Ghanaian context, emphasising that the perceived growing politicisation is not a generalised statement about global trends. Instead, it reflects the unique sociopolitical dynamics within Ghana. This context-specific understanding is essential for a nuanced analysis of the evolving relationship between politics and various aspects of Ghanaian life (Appiah et al., 2016).

The Ghanaian democratic system and the media landscape are widely recognised for its vibrancy, reflecting a diverse and dynamic ecosystem (Faisal et al., 2022). However, an inherent perception



of inadequacy in professionalism, particularly regarding ethical standards, is a critical concern that cannot be overlooked (Faisal et al., 2022). This sentiment is echoed by Alhassan and Abdulai (2019), who emphasise the significance of strict adherence to established ethical norms in ensuring the reliability and integrity of media content. The media's indispensable role in democratic societies is underscored by its responsibility to provide credible and objective oversight and information (Ofosu-Peasah, 2022). Regrettably, this role is purportedly compromised due to prevalent partisanship and politicisation within significant segments of the media (Ofosu-Peasah, 2022). The alignment of media personnel with specific political affiliations erodes their capacity for impartial reporting, challenging their role as impartial watchdogs crucial for sustaining an informed citizenry and holding those in power accountable (Alhassan & Abdulai, 2019).

The absence of robust regulatory frameworks exacerbates the issue, leaving the media susceptible to practices, such as slander and libel, particularly evident among extreme elements within the media landscape (Faisal et al., 2022). This deficiency in regulations safeguarding against slander and libel poses potential risks to public discourse and political stability, raising concerns about the veracity of information disseminated through media channels (Alhassan & Abdulai, 2019). These further highlight a deficiency in regulations safeguarding against slander, and libel, pointing to potential risks to public discourse and political stability. The insufficient regulation contributes to an environment where media outlets may operate without adequate checks and balances, potentially undermining social cohesion and democratic processes. This poses a fundamental challenge to the media's ability to function as an effective and autonomous democratic institution. Ghanaians are becoming more and more concerned about the political bias that they perceive in the media. Many individuals believe that certain media outlets have strong ties to specific political parties, which in turn affects their capacity to deliver news impartially and transparently. This

perception has the potential to cultivate skepticism regarding the trustworthiness of information provided by these platforms, especially during times of elections (Asomah, 2020).

Throughout Ghana's legal and political systems, there is a perception of selective prosecution, which raises serious questions about the commitment to justice and the impartiality of court procedures (Stoecker, 2022). This is the result of law enforcement or legal authorities in Ghana purposefully choosing to take legal action against some people or groups while ignoring or avoiding similar matters involving other people or groups. The fundamental idea of selective prosecution is emphasised by the purposeful and biased nature of these legal measures. A perceived selective prosecution frequently occurs inside Ghana's political parties rather than being an isolated incident. A true dedication to justice is frequently perceived to be subordinated to political loyalty while deciding whether to pursue legal action or not (Owusu, 2022). For instance, the case of James Gyekye Quayson, the opposition in Ghana on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, 2023 in GhanaWeb and some civil society accuse the Attorney General (AG) of engaging in selective justice. They wondered why the AG is not applying the same alacrity and seriousness to other cases like Menzgold, Ahmed Suale and J. B Danquah have crawled and attract no form of relevance and underserving of justice.

Political parties' emphasis the impact of political motivations on the legal system by deliberately using chosen legal actions to hurt their opponents or gain political points. Many people believe that political affiliations and considerations significantly influence the administration of justice, potentially undermining the principles of fairness and impartiality that are fundamental to any democratic society (Guarnieri & Pederzoli, 2020). These perceptions are anecdotal observations



and are evident in the broader discourse among citizens, revealing a deep-seated skepticism regarding the objectivity of legal proceedings involving political figures and their affiliates.

This issue centres on the concern that individuals in positions of power, or those closely linked to the ruling political establishment, may enjoy a certain level of immunity from legal accountability. This apprehension arises from observed patterns where such individuals, when implicated in corrupt practices or legal transgressions, appear to evade prosecution or receive comparatively lenient treatment (Rafal, 2021). Conversely, critics of the government or political opponents seem to encounter a more rigorous, if not punitive, approach from the justice system. This dichotomy not only raises questions about the equitable application of the law but also about the independence of the institutions responsible for upholding justice.

The scrutiny of high-profile corruption cases serves as a litmus test for the integrity of the justice system. Public and civil society organisations play a pivotal role in this regard, closely monitoring the conduct of investigations and the ensuing legal processes (Jiménez-Gómez & Gascó-Hernández, 2017). They are vigilant to ensure that these cases are handled with the utmost impartiality, free from any undue influence arising from the accused's political affiliations. However, when there are discrepancies in the treatment of individuals linked to the ruling party, perceptions of selective justice become further entrenched. These instances, where leniency is perceived in the face of serious allegations, not only undermine public confidence in the justice system but also fuel cynicism towards the broader framework of governance and the rule of law (Rafal, 2021).

Noting that the ruling party does not prosecute or handle claims of corruption or abuse of power within its ranks, the aforementioned draws attention to yet another major imbalance (Asomah,





2019). It appears that the ruling party may not be as committed to accountability, transparency, and the rule of law as it seems based on the observed inability to hold government officials responsible. Over the fairness and impartiality of legal proceedings in Ghana, there are serious worries over the possibility of a double standard in the administration of justice based on political reasons (Asomah, 2019).

Legal action is taken in Ghana against alleged wrongdoings of past administrations, while comparable actions by a ruling party are either disregarded or purposefully ignored (Asomah, 2019). The integrity and commitment to sustaining the rule of law of Ghana's legal system are seriously called into doubt by this practice. Ghana's political environment calls for a more objective and fair approach to legal processes since the impact of political motivations on court cases calls into question the values of justice, accountability and transparency (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2022). The growing politicisation in Ghana has led to a distortion of justice, as political loyalty often takes precedence over the pursuit of truth and accountability. Ghana's current democratic system is multifaceted with unique features different from the rest of the continent. The system is deeply rooted in high-level national cohesion and unity and factional or ethnic loyalties. The acceptance of democracy by the citizens as a system of governance breeds stabilisation and a vibrant competitive political environment.

#### **2.4.2 Merits of Democracy**

Democracy is a system whereby the whole of society can participate, at every level, in the decision-making process and keep control of it (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 2002). The concept emphasises individual dignity and calls for them to be active and take charge of their liberty or autonomy in the determination of issues affecting them and also ensure equality of all by calling for mutual respect for every individual from every other individual.



Compared to two-party or one-party systems, a multi-party system gives citizens a wider choice of representation, which results in a more accurate representation of the wide range of interests and opinions prevalent in the general public. The existence of several political parties, each representing unique social groupings and points of view, enables people to identify with a party that closely reflects their own beliefs and aspirations and also articulate the concerns of various social, economic, and cultural groups, leading to a more nuanced and inclusive representation (Drutman, 2019).

This enhances the chances of electing representatives who genuinely understand and champion the interests of specific communities or demographic groups (Drutman, 2019). The presence of numerous parties fosters a competitive environment where politicians are compelled to address a wide array of issues, catering to the diverse needs of the electorate (Drutman, 2019). As a result, the government is better represented overall. A system of checks and balances is also introduced into politics by the multi-party system, which lessens the possibility of authoritarianism or undue dominance by any one party. While single-party dominance may lead to an imbalance of power and potential authoritarian tendencies, a multi-party system encourages a distribution of power (Breen, 2020). No single party can monopolise decision-making processes, as the necessity for coalition-building and cooperation becomes a fundamental aspect of governance. This system of checks and balances helps prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few, fostering transparency and accountability. The diversity of parties with varying ideologies and interests ensures that policies are subject to rigorous scrutiny, reducing the likelihood of hasty or arbitrary decision-making (Nweke, 2015). The democratic process is strengthened when parties act as watchdogs for each other, fostering an environment where leaders are held accountable for their actions. In addition to encouraging cooperation and coalition building amongst parties, this

arrangement also pushes for compromise to prevent any one group from gaining too much influence (Wadjdi et al., 2020).

A multi-party system facilitates the inclusion of minority voices in the political process. In societies characterised by diverse ethnic, cultural, or religious groups, a multi-party system allows for the representation of minority interests. Smaller parties that may focus on specific issues or cater to minority communities can find a place in the political arena, ensuring that the concerns of all citizens are taken into consideration (Drutman, 2019). Minority representation in a multi-party system is not confined to demographic factors alone but extends to ideological diversity (Drutman, 2019). Parties representing various political philosophies, from conservative to liberal, socialist to libertarian, can coexist, giving voters a range of choices that reflect the multitude of opinions present in a complex society (Allern et al., 2020). This inclusivity promotes a sense of belonging and participation among citizens, contributing to the overall legitimacy of the democratic system (Drutman, 2019)

Political parties provide a range of perspectives to solve societal issues and promote in-depth policy discussions and deliberations. This encourages creativity and the investigation of other policy options. To win over voters, rival parties need to offer policies that are appealing, clearly defined, and reflect a range of interests (Noor, 2021). This dynamic aids in the creation of deliberate policies that are held up to public inspection. Political parties can adjust their platforms in response to changing conditions because the competitive environment encourages flexibility in meeting changing societal needs (Forteza & Pereyra, 2019; Plescica et al., 2021). This guarantees that the government will always be knowledgeable and capable of effectively handling new problems. As a result of the parties' competition, the government must become more adaptable and





responsive to continuously understand and address the shifting needs of the populace (García et al., 2018).

A multiparty system efficiently prevents the emergence of a political monopoly, in which one party holds the majority for extended periods continually (Crosson & Tsebelis, 2021; Bassi, 2021). This promotes a diversified political atmosphere and keeps politics from stagnating (Green-Pedersen, 2023). Regular, competitive elections and the possibility of party domination swings allow for the emergence of new ideas and leadership and prevent the entrenchment of a single party in power. In multi-party systems, coalition governments are common and require cooperation from the parties to achieve a majority (Herkman, 2017). The decisions that are made as a result of this inclusive process show a broader consensus and encourage cooperation and compromise. The presence of legislators from rival political parties in coalition administrations is an example of inclusiveness, which greatly enhances the legitimacy and stability of the decision-making process (Noor, 2021)

The rule of law stands as a foundational principle in democracies, acting as bedrock for the establishment of a just and stable society (Keil, 2017). This principle dictates that everyone, including citizens and government officials, is subject to and accountable under the law, promoting fairness and preventing arbitrary or discriminatory actions by the government (Naseem, 2021; Keil, 2017). Furthermore, the rule of law ensures that all individuals, irrespective of their status or position in society, are treated equally before the law (Naseem, 2021; Keil, 2017). In the democratic context, laws are applied uniformly, and legal procedures are meticulously designed to ensure the protection of individual rights and liberties, thereby establishing an equitable playing ground for all citizens in the country (Labuschagne, 2017).





The pivotal role of the rule of law in democratic societies lies in its capacity to serve as a check on the supremacy of the government. By establishing clear boundaries for governmental powers, the rule of law ensures robust protection for citizens within the legal framework (Jackson, 2016). In democratic environments, written constitutions and legal frameworks not only delineate the powers of the government but also enshrine the rights of individuals (Waqas & Khattak, 2017). This dual function is critical in shaping the behaviour of leaders, compelling them to operate within the prescribed limits set by the constitution of the country. Using legal mechanisms necessitates formulating power and discretion in normative terms, imposing inherent boundaries on conferred powers (Cambridge, 2021). These limitations encompass considerations of vires and the distinction between proper and improper purposes, facilitating judicial examination distinct from the political scrutiny inherent in the legislative process (Beatson, 2021). Consequently, the imperative that the government is subject to the rule of law holds profound implications for both political and constitutional theory (Beatson, 2021). It underscores the acknowledgment of, and imposition of specific constraints (including adherence to proper political procedures) on, the establishment and exercise of the specialized powers vested in state agencies (Maravall & Przeworski, 2003). In essence, it mandates adherence to principles of legality, constituting essential checks on the potential for arbitrary governance.

Even within a democratic framework, the subversion of constitutionality occurs if judges permit politicians or bureaucrats to evade these constraints. While it may seem adequate for identical rules to govern the government and citizens, the rule of law extends beyond this equivalence (Beatson, 2021). State agencies should enjoy civil liberties under common law, wherein individuals are free to act as long as such actions do not unlawfully impede on the liberty or reputation of others or obstruct the course of justice. This fundamental principle stipulates that interference with another's



liberty is only permissible within the bounds of the law (Beatson, 2021). Nevertheless, subject to this restriction, every individual has the freedom to pursue any lawful inquiry. The Crown, guided by its advisers, may likewise exercise this liberty when deemed necessary in the public interest to obtain information on any subject (Hutchinson, 2017). This dual function plays a pivotal role in shaping the conduct of leaders, compelling them to operate within the prescribed limits delineated by the constitution of the country.

Moreover, the rule of law contributes to the creation of a stable environment through a predictable legal framework where established laws are consistently applied and enforced (Jackson, 2016). This consistency empowers individuals and businesses to make informed decisions without the fear of arbitrary changes or unfair treatment. In turn, a stable legal environment becomes a cornerstone for economic development, investment, and the overall well-being of society (Jackson, 2016). The rule of law acts as a foundation for trust in the legal system, safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Citizens, when confident that their rights will be protected and have recourse through legal remedies in case of violations, contribute to strengthening the fabric of democratic societies (Waqas & Khattak, 2017). Independent judicial systems in democracies play a crucial role in adjudicating disputes impartially, ensuring access to a fair legal process for individuals seeking justice.

An additional aspect of the rule of law in democratic governance is its role in promoting accountability among public officials. Elected and appointed leaders are held responsible for their actions, and transparency in legal processes allows the public to scrutinise government decisions (Nyyssönen & Metsälä, 2020). Mechanisms such as legal investigations, impeachment processes,

and legal challenges provide avenues for holding officials accountable, contributing to the maintenance of public trust in the government (Nyyssönen & Metsälä, 2020).

Furthermore, the rule of law contributes to legal certainty, where laws are clear, well-defined, and consistently applied (Nyyssönen & Metsälä, 2020). This clarity reduces uncertainty and fosters a sense of order in society, allowing citizens to navigate the legal landscape with confidence, understanding the rules and consequences of their actions. It instills trust in the reliability and impartiality of the legal framework.

In essence, the multifaceted role of the rule of law in democratic societies not only acts as a check on government power but also creates an environment conducive to economic prosperity, individual rights protection, judicial fairness, accountability, and public trust. It serves not only as a fundamental value in a democratic state but a principle embedded in the legal system of the state and also on principles that democracy thrive and flourish (Keil, 2017). It also constitutes and gives powers to state agencies, and in that mode can be used by democratic governments and legislatures as a means of advancing legitimate policy objectives. (It can equally be used by undemocratic governments, or by democratically elected governments for advancing illegitimate objectives). But by the very process of granting powers and creating agencies for certain purposes, the rule of law places limits on the powers which it grants. A governmental or bureaucratic decision to use law imposes its own limits.

An enriched understanding of the global political landscape emerges through an exploration of the concept of international recognition, a pivotal factor shaping diplomatic interactions, determining legal status, and influencing the engagement of states and governments in the global community (Jackson, 2016). Whether formal or de facto, recognition carries substantial legal, diplomatic, and



political implications that profoundly affect a state or entity's ability to participate in international affairs (Mahmutovic & Lita, 2021).

The process of formal diplomatic recognition, characterised by the official acknowledgment of one state by another as a sovereign entity, establishes the foundation for state-to-state relations (Keil, 2017). Accompanied by the establishment of diplomatic ties, ambassadorial exchanges, and the acceptance of credentials, this formal recognition process facilitates diplomatic communication, cooperation, and the execution of international affairs. In contrast, *de facto* recognition, lacking the formalities of diplomatic acknowledgment, represents a pragmatic acknowledgment of an entity's existence and authority, serving as an interim or practical step before formal acknowledgment is extended (Mahmutovic & Lita, 2021).

Membership in international organisations often hinges on international recognition, with entry into bodies, such as the United Nations (UN), signifying a formal acknowledgment of a state's international standing (Kaya, 2021). Membership provides states with a platform for diplomatic and multilateral endeavours, contributing to their influence and active participation in global governance.

An intergovernmental group known as the Community of Democracies prioritises democratic values in global relations. Membership in such organisations not only provides acknowledgment but also facilitates diplomatic cooperation, creating avenues for democratically ruled nations to exchange ideas, policies, and successful approaches (Feng, 2014). This fosters international collaboration and a shared concept of democratic governance. Beyond just diplomacy, there are real economic benefits to democratic governance being recognised internationally. Foreign direct investment (FDI) finds recognised democratic countries more appealing because of the perceived





stability and openness of their democratic regimes (Pinar & Stengos, 2020). Multinational firms desire to operate in environments that maintain political stability, property rights, and the rule of law features that are typically associated with democracies.

The extensive legal and political implications of international recognition shape the capacity of a recognised entity to enter into treaties, engage in trade, access international assistance, and participate in global forums (Mahmutovic & Lita, 2021). Recognized entities enjoy the privileges and responsibilities accorded to international actors, whereas a lack of recognition may constrain their involvement in the international community (Adamidis, 2021).

The benefits of international recognition transcend political and economic spheres and have a substantial impact on the advancement of society in democratically elected countries (Silander, 2019). International support for social and human rights activities is more likely to come from recognized democracies because of their shared values and dedication to fundamental freedoms (Pinar & Stengos, 2020). International recognition serves as a protective measure for human rights in democratic countries by allowing international human rights groups to monitor any possible abuses. The protection of individual liberty, the rule of law, and the general welfare of citizens are all aided by this scrutiny. Conversely, states that do not enjoy international recognition could find it difficult to confront violations of human rights since they are mostly cut off from global accountability frameworks.

Despite its significance, the process of international recognition is intricate and non-linear. Disputes regarding the legitimacy of states or governments may arise due to factors such as territorial disputes, internal conflicts, or geopolitical considerations (Cierco, 2016). These recognition disputes can have far-reaching consequences, impacting both regional and global

stability and necessitating diplomatic efforts, negotiations, or international mediation to achieve resolutions (Esfandiari et al., 2022).

The recognition of states or governments is subject to change over time in response to geopolitical shifts, regime changes, or evolving diplomatic considerations. These shifts in recognition mirror the evolving geopolitical dynamics, significantly influencing the diplomatic landscape, alliances, and regional stability (Shyam, 2020).

The introduction of unilateral declarations of independence by regions seeking statehood adds a layer of complexity to the international recognition framework. The acceptance or rejection of such declarations depends on the stance of other states and the international community, with recognition being a determining factor in establishing the status of the newly declared states (Adamidis, 2021)

Liberty and equality stand as integral concepts within the democratic framework, representing foundational principles that profoundly influence the nature of democratic societies (Elías, 2018).

In the democratic context, liberty encompasses the freedoms and rights afforded to individuals, spanning political freedoms, civil liberties, and human rights (Touchton, 2015). Democratic governments are explicitly designed to uphold and safeguard these individual liberties, recognising and protecting fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and privacy (Deji, 2019). The rule of law in democracies functions as a safeguard against arbitrary or oppressive government actions, creating an environment conducive to individual liberty (Nwoke & Onoh, 2021).





Scholars argue that the democratic process itself plays a crucial role in the preservation of individual liberties. The emphasis on citizen participation, manifested through the ability to engage in elections, express diverse opinions, and influence decision-making processes, serves to enhance the sense of political agency among citizens (Elías, 2018). This active involvement reinforces the concept of liberty within the democratic framework.

Concurrently, equality within the democratic context revolves around the principle that all individuals possess equal moral worth and should be treated with the fairness and justice they deserve (Kaya, 2021). Democracy seeks to establish a level playing field wherein citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in political processes. The principle of one person, one vote embodies political equality, ensuring that each citizen's voice carries equal weight (Mahmutovic & Lita, 2021). Additionally, democracies actively strive to address social and economic inequalities through policies aimed at promoting equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (Esfandiari et al., 2022). The interplay of liberty and equality involves considerations of distributive justice, addressing how the benefits and burdens of society are distributed (Bell, 2014). A democratic society seeks to strike a balance that allows for individual initiative and enterprise while ensuring that no individual or group is unfairly disadvantaged due to systemic inequalities (Freeman, 2018).

Nonetheless, democratic governance recognises the need to combat economic inequality while simultaneously acknowledging economic liberty. Democratic political systems place a strong emphasis on putting policies in place that will balance economic inequality and guarantee people's freedom to pursue their economic goals (Freeman, 2018). Democratic systems guarantee that





economic activity benefits a wider range of people instead of being confined to particular social groups by employing a multidimensional strategy (Freeman, 2018).

Furthermore, the democratic ethos places more weight than just rhetoric on the need for institutions to alleviate economic inequality. Democratic governance actively works to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to inclusive economic possibilities and the use of social safety nets as a safeguard against structural injustices (Xia & Yuqiao, 2013). This method guarantees that economic liberty is a right granted to all citizens rather than a luxury reserved for a limited number of individuals by conforming to the fundamental democratic values of justice, equity, and inclusion (Phillips, 2017). The link between this and the democratic narrative strengthens the system's economic underpinnings. It represents a deliberate attempt to resolve the innate conflict between social justice and individual freedom, realizing that economic liberty can flourish in the presence of a dedication to resolving economic disparities (Frederking, 2020). To sum up, democratic governance's recognition of economic equality and liberty not only influences economic policy but also shows how receptive democratic systems are to fostering an atmosphere in which economic possibilities are both available and fairly dispersed.

Again, other scholars are of the view that, democracy inherently promotes the idea of equality as citizens engage in decision-making processes and influence policies that shape their lives (Elías, 2018). The commitment to equal representation, the protection of minority rights, and the pursuit of social justice are considered foundational elements that distinguish democratic systems (Esfandiari et al., 2022). Ongoing scholarly debates center on the delicate balance between liberty and equality in democratic societies. While liberty emphasis's individual rights and freedoms, equality focuses on ensuring fairness and justice for all. Striking this balance is crucial to prevent

the concentration of power and to ensure that the benefits of democracy are distributed equitably among citizens (Mahmutovic & Lita, 2021).

Moreover, democratic societies recognize the significance of civic education in cultivating an informed and engaged citizenry. Academic programs that teach the principles of liberty, equality, and democratic values contribute to the development of responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities within a democratic system (Esfandiari et al., 2022).

Scholars emphasise the role of education in sustaining democratic values, fostering civic participation, and instilling a commitment to both individual liberties and the pursuit of equality (Deji, 2019). This perspective underscores the interconnectedness of education, informed citizenship, and the overall health of a democratic society. The principles of liberty and equality stand as foundational advantages of democracy, safeguarding individual rights, promoting political participation, and advancing the pursuit of social justice (Touchton, 2015).

### **2.4.3 Demerits of Democracy**

However, while democracy is widely celebrated for its success, representation, and citizen empowerment, a critical examination reveals inherent challenges that demand scrutiny.

The susceptibility of democracy to external influence is often perceived as a potential drawback, especially when a nation is exposed to foreign interference (Anyanwu & Erhijakpor, 2014). This vulnerability has the potential to significantly impact the integrity and functioning of a democratic system. In the context of democracy, a country becomes vulnerable to external influence when it is open to foreign manipulation, interference, or pressure across various domains, including policy decisions, elections, and domestic affairs (Norman, 2017). Such susceptibility increases the risk of





external actors eroding national sovereignty by influencing crucial choices, laws, or other actions that could compromise the independence of the democratic state (Anyanwu & Erhijakpor, 2014).

The foundational element of democracy lies in the citizens' ability to self-determination and governance through elected representatives, and any loss of this autonomy contradict the essence of democracy. The erosion of national sovereignty by external actors can manifest in manipulative tactics, such as election interference, support for specific political factions, and the use of propaganda to shape public opinion (Pane, 2021).

Manipulation of political processes introduces distortions in democratic decision-making, leading to outcomes that may not accurately reflect the preferences of the people. This jeopardizes the integrity and fairness of democratic elections (Pane, 2021). Outside forces opposing democratic values such as accountability, transparency, and the protection of individual rights undermine democracies. The deterioration of democratic values weakens the foundation of the democratic system, potentially compromising its principles. The belief that certain institutions are susceptible to manipulation by external forces can undermine public trust in the democratic process.

Countries highly susceptible to external influence may experience strained diplomatic relations, leading to tensions and hindering international collaboration (Zeini, 2021). Such strained relations can restrict a democratic nation's effective engagement in the global community, impacting its ability to cooperate on shared interests and address transnational concerns. Foreign actors may exploit weaknesses or take actions that jeopardize the security and stability of the democratic country, exerting influence over national security issues (Cierco, 2016).



Threats to national security may divert the government's attention away from domestic issues, prioritising foreign problems over the welfare of its citizens (Soeiro, 2020). In essence, democracy faces substantial challenges from external influence, which can weaken democratic principles, distort political processes, erode national sovereignty, and impact diplomatic relations. Addressing this vulnerability is imperative for ensuring the integrity and autonomy of democratic systems.

Corruption stands as a multifaceted challenge, impacting nations globally and posing a constant threat to various governance systems. Scholars, such as Kubbe and Engelbert (2017), have delved into the intricate relationship between corruption and democracy, revealing a nuanced interplay between the two. The strength of democratic norms, as emphasised by Podobnik et al. (2022), plays a pivotal role in shaping this relationship. Weak democratic norms render societies more susceptible to corruption, exploited by local interest groups for their gain (Igwe et al., 2021). Conversely, heightened democratic standards may foster charitable organisations supporting anti-corruption measures, aligning with the Hobbesian thesis, which suggests that, in settings with weak democratic norms, political candidates may resort to deceptive tactics, prioritising self-interest over the public good (Keteku, 2017).

Understanding the intricate dynamics between democracy and corruption is paramount, given the diverse array of issues corruption introduces, with profound implications for the foundational principles of democratic governance (Zimelis, 2020). The most significant of these implications is the erosion of public trust, an essential component of democracy. When corruption permeates democratic institutions, voters lose faith in public servants or elected officials, undermining the trust and active participation upon which democracy depends (Boehm, 2015).



Corruption compromises democratic values such, as fair representation and citizen-driven decision-making, tainting political processes. Unethical practices like bribery and electoral fraud can undermine election integrity and other political processes (Jalal, 2021). The democratic ideal of equal participation and representation is violated by the resulting unequal distribution of opportunities and resources, exacerbating socioeconomic inequality within democratic nations (Batubara, 2016).

The presence of corruption poses serious challenges to the rule of law, a cornerstone of democracy. Selective enforcement or manipulation of the law for personal gain undermines the democratic notion that everyone is equal before the law (Kelleher & Kim, 2014). This creates an environment where legal systems can be exploited for personal agendas. Corruption extends its impact beyond the misallocation of public funds, affecting vital services like healthcare and education, thereby impeding the democratic promise to serve the public interest (Jalal, 2021).

Widespread corruption does not only disrupt democratic foundations internally but also fuels political instability. The likelihood of social unrest, protests, and the collapse of political institutions increases when citizens lose faith in the democratic process (Kelleher & Kim, 2014). Fundamental democratic principles like accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement are jeopardized by corruption, fostering an environment conducive to manipulation and power abuse (Neshkova & Kalesnikaite, 2019).

The global effects of corruption exacerbate its impact on democracy. High levels of corruption can hinder a democratic nation's effective interaction with the international community, discouraging foreign investment and damaging the country's reputation abroad (Wang, 2016). This interconnectedness underscores the imperative of comprehensive efforts to combat corruption,



strengthen democratic institutions, and uphold democratic tenets such as public involvement, responsibility, and legality. Given the complexity of these issues, continuous efforts are necessary to eradicate corruption and safeguard the integrity and long-term viability of democratic systems.

While the inclusion of cognitive diversity is strength in the democratic decision-making process, challenges arise with a large number of participants (Dryzek et al. 2019). Providing ample opportunities for residents to express their ideas is a positive attribute, but it also impedes problem identification and lead to protracted decision-making procedures.

Inherent in the complex structure of the democratic process are inefficiencies and delayed decision-making, as highlighted by various studies (Batubara, 2016). The democratic decision-making involves multiple layers, including committee meetings, public hearings, and legislative processes (Tarverdi et al., 2019). While inclusivity ensures consideration of diverse viewpoints, it simultaneously intensifies the complexity of decision-making. Prolonged discussions and negotiations often result from the necessity for agreement and consent from multiple parties (Anastasiadou et al., 2020).

Democratic systems impose adherence to norms, laws and bureaucratic procedures aimed at fostering justice and transparency (Amir & Gokmenoglu, 2020). However, these procedures, such as red tape and procedural hurdles, can impede decision-makers' ability to act quickly and efficiently, contributing to increased inefficiency (Marcic, 2014). In a democratic context, voters hold decision-makers accountable (Pavlova, 2020). This accountability may translate into a cautious approach, where leaders hesitate to act swiftly out of concern for public reactions. Public opinion significantly influences decision-making, leading to a more deliberate and cautious process that contributes to overall slowness (Anastasiadou et al., 2020).

Democratic decision-making often requires consensus-building and compromises to represent the interests of a broad segment of the populace (Jalal, 2021). While crucial for inclusivity, consensus-building is time-consuming, involving discussions and compromises to accommodate different viewpoints (Chaudhuri et al., 2022). Decision-makers, especially elected officials in representative democracies, operate within set election cycles. This dynamic may incentivize leaders to prioritize short-term concerns for re-election, focusing on measures that are popular in the near term (Tarverdi et al., 2019).

The implementation of checks and balances in democratic regimes to prevent the concentration of power is crucial for preventing abuses (Pavlova, 2020). However, the requirement for agreement among multiple government branches may slow down decision-making. Competing interests among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches can lead to delays. In a democracy, decisions often require public support, necessitating extensive efforts to inform and educate the public on complex matters (Feher & Borlea, 2021). Decision-makers must engage in a concerted effort to ensure that the public is well-informed before making significant decisions.

It is essential to recognise that the deliberative and inclusive nature of democratic processes is also strength, even though these factors contribute to the perception of inefficiency and delayed decision-making in democracies. Striking the right balance between effectiveness and inclusivity remains a constant challenge for democratic systems.

Political polarisation is one of the main obstacles to democratic systems' ability to function in the current discourse. The core tenets of democracy are threatened by this phenomenon, which is defined as a widening ideological divide between various political organisations within a democratic society. The very diversity that democracy celebrates poses a paradoxical threat to its



very essence, which depends on a wide range of perspectives and beliefs. Political polarisation has numerous negative repercussions on democracy; in addition to inefficient legislation and policy-making, it also erodes social cohesiveness and the foundation of polite conversation (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2020; Schedler, 2023).

The ideological middle ground, which is the cornerstone of compromise and cross-party cooperation, has become harder to find as political polarisation deepens. Because of the ensuing dualistic viewpoint on political matters, legislative deadlock becomes the rule rather than the exception (McCoy et al., 2018). This impasse is mainly the result of parties' unwillingness or outright refusal to work together, which impedes the adoption of laws and the execution of programmes that are essential to the advancement of society (Bértoa & Rama, 2021; Schedler, 2023).

Furthermore, the effects of polarisation are felt throughout society and not just inside political institutions (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2020). This extension is seen in the division of society into ideological echo chambers in which people interact only with other members of their own kind. Such division weakens tolerance and understanding between different groups, often intensifying into increased animosity and, in the worst situations, violence (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2020).

The ability of intensified polarisation to undermine democratic norms and practices is one of its most pernicious features (Heltzel & Laurin, 2020). Political factions may justify weakening democratic procedures such as voter suppression, and contesting the validity of election results in their pursuit for power, endangering the integrity of the democratic system (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2020).



The political landscape is further complicated by the development of populist politicians who take advantage of the rifts generated by polarisation to portray themselves as the only representatives of the people against allegedly corrupt elite (Bértoa & Rama, 2021). By taking advantage of social frustrations, simplifying complex issues, and weakening the institutions designed to preserve democracy, these politicians deepen rifts in society.

The entrenchment of division presents a significant obstacle to tackling urgent global issues such as healthcare, economic injustice, and climate change (Baldassarri & Page, 2021). When these concerns become politicised, it frequently results in policy paralysis a situation in which necessary improvements are perpetually delayed because of political impasse. This can be detrimental to the progress needed in addressing these critical issues on a nation and the global at large (Benson, 2023). In sum, the disadvantages of democracy due to political polarisation include legislative deadlock, division and animosity in society, undermining democratic norms and procedures, the rise of populist politicians, and hindered progress in addressing pressing global issues.

#### **2.4.4 Aspirations of Civil Society on the Current Democratic System**

The robustness of public aspiration on democracy, as reflected in formal measures, underscores its profound integration into the socio-political fabric of the nation. The depth of this integration is better comprehended within the context of democratic beliefs and attitudes held by citizens over the years. Kiambati (2020) emphasises the significance of citizen aspirations, asserting that it serves as a crucial factor influencing democratic governance.

Ghana's democratic system is characterised by free and fair elections, a vibrant civil society, and a participatory approach to decision-making. However, it is important to understand the aspirations



of Ghanaian citizens towards their democratic system. According to Adams & Asante, (2020), Ghanaians have consistently rejected any form of power abuse and have aspirations to live in freedom from oppression (Mijana, 2020; Agomor et al., 2018). The Fourth Republic's establishment in Ghana was a turning point and reflected the people's renewed dedication to democratic rule. People were very eager to create a model of governance that was responsive, transparent, and accountable. Botchway, 2018 and Adams & Agomor, 2015 postulates that, after years of political unrest, Ghanaians had high hopes for a government that would actively work with the people to meet their needs and realise their democratic dreams, in addition to acting as a guardian of the public interest. Citizens and other stakeholders drove the need for a more inclusive and participatory governance framework to ensure that public officials uphold the highest standards of integrity and that governance procedure remain transparent and subject to public scrutiny (Törnquist, 2017; Bjarnesen, 2020). The Ghanaian people also made a compelling case for laws and judgements that represent their goals and everyday experiences (Ofosu, 2017). The Fourth Republic established a governance culture in which democratic ideals became lived realities, promoting a more just, equitable, and prosperous society for all Ghanaians (Kpessa & Atuguba, 2013, Botchway, 2018).

Ghanaians wanted a participatory system where they directly exercised authority and had a significant role in decision-making (Agomor et al., 2018). This goal demonstrates a strong dedication to the core principles of democratic government, according to which the consent of the governed is the primary source of legitimacy for the government. In this paradigm, citizens actively participated in the policy-making process and periodically exercised their political power through elections, ensuring that those in positions of authority heard and respected their opinions, concerns, and preferences. The pursuit of an inclusive and responsive governance framework is

indicative of a larger social desire for democratisation, which requires a fundamental reorganisation of power relations to give the general welfare and aspirations of the people priority. It expresses a shared desire for a political environment in which government legitimacy is based on the ideals of accountability, transparency, and civic engagement (Botchway, 2018; Kpessa & Atuguba, 2013). This would promote a governing ethos that is highly responsive to the needs, aspirations, and values of the Ghanaian people. The Ghanaian populace aspired for an equitable society that upheld human rights, provided equal opportunities, and went beyond participatory governance (Agomor et al., 2018). Every individual in this vision yearns for a socio-political environment that treats them with inherent dignity and equality, regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, or religious affiliation (Kpessa & Atuguba, 2013). Such aspirations highlight a deep-seated commitment to the principles of justice and fairness, aiming to dismantle systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality and discrimination (Ofosu, 2017). Every citizen should have access to the resources and conditions necessary to realise their full potential, including education, employment, healthcare, and political participation.



Simultaneously, the emphasis on human rights protection signifies a demand for a governance framework that not only recognises but also actively safeguards the fundamental freedoms and rights essential to human dignity (Belley, 2020). These aspirations embody a broader societal effort to cultivate a more inclusive, just, and equitable Ghana, where equality and human rights protection are not just aspirations but realities in the daily lives of its citizens.

Adefarasin, (2021) has demonstrated that, Ghanaian citizenry harboured a collective vision for a society untarnished by the blight of corruption, advocating for a governance model characterised by the equitable distribution and judicious utilisation of resources for the communal good.



Additional work of Yeboah-Assiamah et al., (2016) also gave critical acknowledgment of corruption as a pervasive impediment to socio-economic development and democratic governance, eroding public trust and exacerbating inequality. Advocating for a transparent and accountable system that ensures public resources are managed and allocated with integrity benefits the broader interests of the populace rather than allowing them to be siphoned for the benefit of a select few (Belley, 2020). Such a societal model emphasises the importance of establishing robust mechanisms for oversight and accountability, including effective legal frameworks, vigilant civil society participation, and an informed and engaged citizenry empowered to hold public officials to account.

Afrobarometer study in 2015 explored Ghanaian citizens' first-hand experiences in Ghana under the current democratic republic. The study found that while Ghanaians appreciate the progress made in the country's democratic system, there are still areas that need improvement, such as corruption, nepotism, and the need for more transparency and accountability in government. The study also emphasised the importance of including Ghanaians' opinions in the deliberation on how Ghana is performing democratically in order to provide a platform and voice for ordinary citizens and foster discourse between those governing and the governed.

The envisioned society by citizens is one where the equitable allocation and utilisation of resources catalyse inclusive development, uplift marginalised communities, and foster a sense of collective prosperity (King et al., 2013). This aspiration reflects a profound commitment to reshaping the governance landscape into one that prioritises the welfare of all citizens, laying the foundation for a more just, equitable, and prosperous Ghana (Adefarasin, 2021).



Furthermore, scholars like Murray & Rensburg, (2017) posits that, Ghanaian citizens aspired for a government that upholds the principles of social justice, promotes economic development, and ensures access to essential services such as education, healthcare, clean water, and infrastructure. The above statement was supported by the works of Ofosu, (2017) that citizens desired a political system that promotes peaceful coexistence, unity, and national integration while respecting the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the Ghanaian people. Through their aspirations, Ghanaians have demonstrated a strong commitment to democratic governance and have actively participated in the electoral process, expressing their will through free and fair elections. Citizens recognise that democracy is a process that requires the active participation and engagement of all members of society (Botchwey, 2017). Through their votes, engagement in civil society organisations, and participation in peaceful protests and demonstrations, Ghanaians have consistently shown their commitment to democratic values and their desire for a government that is accountable, transparent, and inclusive. They seek a government that prioritises the needs and welfare of the people, upholds the principles of social justice, promotes economic development, and ensures access to essential services.

They have also demanded transparency and accountability from their elected representatives, holding them responsible for their actions and decisions. Ghanaians view democracy as a vehicle for development, progress, and the protection of their rights and freedoms (Donkor, 2020). They believe that democratic governance provides opportunities for citizen participation, accountability, and transparency.

Ghanaian citizens aspire for democratic governance that is inclusive, accountable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the people (Gyimah-Boadi et al., 2021). They expect their elected

leaders to prioritise the welfare of the citizens and work towards the overall development of the country. According to Mlambo et al., (2019) Citizens in Ghana clamour for democracy because they believe it enables them to actively participate in governance. Since the inception of the fourth republic, citizens in Ghana have focused their aspirations for democratic governance on active involvement, responsible leadership, effective resource management, and sustainable national development (Gberevbie, 2014).

The aspiration of citizens to have a stable, long-lasting, and deeply ingrained democratic system extends beyond the regular holding of free and fair elections. The process entails creating deeply ingrained democratic institutions, practices, and beliefs in society, guaranteeing that democracy becomes the exclusive option available (Agomor et al., 2018). The goal of citizens' aspirations is for democratic institutions, such as the legislature, executive branch, and courts, to become more robust and institutionalised so they can operate efficiently, impartially, and independently (Belley, 2020). Establishing strong mechanisms of checks and balances helps prevent the misuse of power and ensures accountability.



A crucial element in the establishment of democracy is the supremacy of law, which subjects and safeguards all people and institutions (Müller-Rommel & Geißel, 2020, Arhinful & Gilbert, 2021). Appiah, (2023) state that, Citizens long for a system that guarantees legal equality, makes justice accessible and unbiased, and ensures that rights are not only theoretical but also upheld. To support a thriving civil society that can speak up for a range of interests and hold the government responsible, it is necessary to protect the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. Woven into the very fabric of society is the imperative need for tolerance, pluralism, and respect for others in order to nurture a democratic community (Zghidi, 2017). A political culture that not

only respects diversity but also actively promotes communication and seeks peaceful solutions to disputes is what people truly desire.

When democracy fosters socioeconomic growth and lessens inequality, it has a higher chance of remaining stable and long-lasting. To guarantee that democracy actually benefits the populace; citizens want policies that support social welfare, economic expansion, and fair resource distribution. Building resistance to elements that jeopardise democracy, such as external meddling, corruption, and authoritarian inclinations, is part of the goal. This entails strengthening civil society and democratic institutions to fend off and defeat threats to democratic government. The broader population seeks a democratic system that includes and values all social groups, especially minorities and disadvantaged communities. Inclusive governance goes beyond simply following the will of the majority by safeguarding the rights and interests of minority groups. The desire to solidify democracy is driven by believers, who see a fully realised and deeply ingrained democratic system as the best means of guaranteeing liberty, justice, and prosperity for all members of society. It represents a long-term vision for the nation in which democracy is envisioned as more than just a system of government but as a way of life that influences all facets of social interaction and governmental structure.

### 2.5.0 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has painstakingly waded through the complex scholastic terrain to unravel the subtleties of democracy, with a focus on the participatory theory of democracy and the place of civil society within it. In addition to emphasising the need of examining prior research to gain a thorough grasp of the topic. Theoretical discussion highlights the fundamentals of participatory democracy and argues for a more transparent and inclusive form of governance that goes beyond





traditional voting to include active public participation in decision-making processes. The idea of democracy as a system in which the sovereignty of the people is paramount is reinforced by the foundational writings of intellectuals like Pateman, who fight for a democracy that is responsive and reflective of the aspirations of the public.

The conceptual review outlines the characteristics of democracy in more detail, recognising the fundamental values of equality, liberty, and freedom as well as the difficulties it faces in the modern world due to factors like economic disparity and political division. The research sheds light on the dynamic interaction between democratic ideals and the actual socio-political conditions by examining the philosophical foundations of democracy and its expressions in diverse situations, particularly in Africa. This covers the advancements achieved in Africa towards democratic governance, the difficulties associated with corruption, and the impact of outside factors on democratic procedures. Furthermore, the analysis of civil society highlights the critical role it plays in promoting social change, bridging the divide between the people and the government, and cultivating more involved citizens. The idea of civil society, which embodies the collective activity and ambitions of individuals and groups aiming for an inclusive and responsive democratic society, emerges as essential for the achievement of democratic aims despite the lack of a widely agreed definition.

The empirical review also outlines the country's political landscape, that is deeply rooted in multi-partyism, has facilitated a vibrant competitive environment, enabling political parties to act as conduits for leadership aspirations and citizen participation. Despite the notable achievements in democratic governance, concerns persist regarding the quality and nature of democracy, particularly the impact of ethnic and religious politics, and the pressures of the 'winner-takes-all' approach on political stability. The democratic process in Ghana is further complicated by



challenges such as the susceptibility to external influence, corruption, inefficiencies in decision-making and political polarisation, which collectively impact the integrity and functioning of the democratic system. Moreover, the aspirations of Ghanaians for a robust democracy underscore a collective demand for participatory, inclusive governance that upholds dignity, combats corruption, and ensures equitable resource distribution. This vision, echoing through the works of scholars and public sentiment, calls for transparent, accountable systems that prioritize citizen welfare and active participation. As Ghana strives towards these ideals, it is crucial for governance to reflect these aspirations, embedding democracy as a way of life and ensuring liberty, justice, and prosperity for all.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **3.0 Methodology**

Research methodology is a planned action that entails acquiring the necessary data or materials for a certain study (Bryman, 2016; Robson, 2002). This chapter discusses the research methodology employed for this study. This includes the research strategy or approach, research design, the population, the sample size, the sampling technique, data collection methods, ethical considerations, as well as data analysis and presentation methods.

#### **3.1.0 Research Approach**

A research approach refers to the overall strategy and direction that guide the planning, execution, and analysis phases of a research project (Surya, 2020). It encompasses the theoretical framework, methodology, and techniques used to conduct the study, collect data, and interpret the results. The choice of research approach is fundamental to the design of a research project, as it influences how research questions are formulated, how data is collected and analysed, and how conclusions are drawn. Social science researchers mostly use qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches to

guide their research, with the chosen convention depending on the research objectives (Robson, 2002). There are different kinds of research approaches, but the three most commonly used by researchers in social work are qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches. According to Morse (1991), if the issue is about finding out the factors responsible for an outcome and the degree of an intervention, then quantitative is best. It is also best for examining an idea or painting a clearer picture of an idea. If limited research has been conducted on a phenomenon and it needs to be comprehended, a qualitative approach is ideal. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to get a comprehensive understanding of Ghana's Fourth Republican Democracy from the perspective of civil societies through qualitative approach.

### **3.1.1 Qualitative Approach**

According to Naoum (1998), qualitative research focuses on meanings, sensations, descriptions and information about the quality of a phenomenon. Qualitative research methods often involve researchers making assertions based on constructivist perspectives. Researchers explore how social and historical factors shape the varied meanings individuals derive from their experiences.

This approach aims to develop theories or patterns through methods, such as case studies, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory investigations, and narratives. These methods allow researchers to delve into the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals, enabling a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Developing themes from data is the main goal of the researcher's open-ended, emergent data collection (Creswell, 2003). Stemming from the explanations above, this researcher found qualitative case study most suited for this study.

### 3.1.2 Study Design

Researchers conduct research within a theoretical framework which encompasses the study design. This enables researchers' capabilities to be as proficient as possible in gathering relevant information (Yin, 2011).

Case studies provide the ideal and suitable method for tackling this research problem and objectives under study, among other methods of inquiry, such as grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology. For instance, grounded theory is a design for qualitative research that enables the researcher to give a complete explanation (a theory) of a particular development and deliberation moulded by the understanding of people or participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). On the other hand, ethnography is a study of how people live and stay together for a particular period and emphasises similarities among them. Furthermore, a phenomenological study has to do with individual connections and experiences that emanate from the meanings and explanations people give to a phenomenon they encounter (Creswell, 2013). As stipulated in the introduction, the purpose of this research is not to examine people's ways of life as in the case of ethnography or the meaning and explanation ascribed by people regarding a phenomenon as in the case of phenomenology, nor is it about giving a complete explanation (a theory) about a process stemming from people's deliberation, understanding, or generating theories as in the case of grounded theory (Singleton & Straits, 2005), but rather to conduct a comprehensive examination of Ghana's democratic system through the views and perspectives of civil society within Ghana's Fourth Republican democracy. Therefore, qualitative case study was used to conduct this study.

Participants expounded on the problem under investigation, grounding this study in the constructivist perspective of research. This qualitative case study aims to achieve a thorough





comprehension of Ghana's democratic system. It endeavours to gather the viewpoints, perspectives and experiences of civil society who have lived through, experienced and observed Ghana's fourth republican democracy. Yin (2009, p. 18) defines a case study as a realistic study that studies a phenomenon from a genuine perspective. Researchers utilise various alternatives to collect data in a case study, contributing to a holistic examination of a phenomenon. This is particularly true when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the environment are not immediately clear. Primarily, case study concerns itself with uncovering an ongoing occurrence by subjecting it to critical and in-depth analysis aided by rigorous data collection mechanisms such as interviews, focus group discussion among others.

A case study is a qualitative design in which the researcher uses multiple activities or events to get a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. The cases are based on a specific time or activity to collect thoroughly the information required using several methods of gathering data over a period (Creswell, 2014, p. 241). The main goal of a case study is to critically scrutinise a phenomenon to form a comprehensive and clear picture of the phenomenon. A case study needed to be selected as the inquiry method for this particular study, considering that the goal is to understand the views and perceptions of civil society about Ghana's democracy. Additionally, the use of a case study provided an opportunity to capture rich and detailed data through various sources, such as interviews and focus group discussions. Furthermore, the aforementioned reasons make a case study suitable for the study, as it emphasises a holistic understanding of a phenomenon compared to other methods of inquiry.

### **3.1.3 The Study Area**

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was established by legislative instrument (L.I. 2068). Currently, it is one of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in the country and the only Metropolis in



the five regions of Northern Ghana namely: the Upper East, Upper West, Northern, North East and Savannah regions. Tamale is the Metropolitan Capital as well as the regional capital of the Northern Region. The North East and Savannah regions were part of the Northern region until they were created by referenda in December 2018.

The Tamale Metropolis is one of the 26 districts in the Northern Region. It is located in the central part of the Region and shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the west and north, Mion District to the east, East Gonja to the south and Central Gonja to the south-west. The Metropolis has a total estimated land size of 646.90180sqkm (GSS-2010). Geographically, the Metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West.

The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, is 374,744 (i.e. Tamale Central sub-district council 127,978 and Tamale South sub-district council 246,766) representing 16.2 percent of the region's population. Males constitute 49.4 percent (185,051) and females represent 50.6 percent (189,693). This implies that there are more females than males in the Metropolis. The proportion of the total population living in the urban areas is (80.8%) and that of the proportion living in rural areas is (19.2%), meaning that most of the people in the metropolis live in the urban as compared to the percentages of those living in the rural areas. The Tamale Metropolis is therefore the only Metropolis in the Region which is predominantly urban. This implies that the Metropolis could be a growth pole for the other regions in northern Ghana attracting both population and economic development in the area. This is also a potential for labour (skilled, semi and unskilled) for industry.



### **3.2.0 The Study Population and Sampling Procedures**

#### **3.2.1 Study Population**

This section discusses the number of participants involved in the study and the strategies and procedures used for selecting them. The outline the techniques and procedures used to recruit participants for the study. A population in research refers to the specific group of people or elements that a researcher is interested in studying, while a sample refers to a subset of individuals or elements selected from a larger population (Bryman, 2016). Sampling is necessary for research because it has lower cost, accessibility (availability of population elements), speed (greater speed of data collection), and greater accuracy of results (Bryman, 2016). The target population for this study was civil society who were eighteen years of age and older, lived in Ghana for at least six years, and had not stayed outside the shores of Ghana for more than six months as at the time study is being conducted since the inception of the Fourth Republic, which began in 1992. The researcher believed strongly that the target population possessed the knowledge required to give a true account of the current democratic system. This study aligns with case study research, which necessitates highly knowledgeable participants with a complete understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

#### **3.2.2 Sampling Procedures**

In research, sampling involves choosing a portion of individuals or elements from a larger population for research purposes (Vidhi, 2021). The goal of sampling is to collect information from a manageable and representative portion of the population, allowing researchers to draw conclusions and make inferences about the entire population (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). The purposeful sampling technique was employed to choose participants for the study. This technique offer flexibility that is necessary in qualitative research to address emerging themes and findings



and also enables the researcher to capture a wide range of perspectives and variations within the phenomenon of interest. Key informants are essential for a qualitative researcher to access valuable insights. They offer crucial information about the subject under study, drawing from their own experiences and expertise gained through encountering it firsthand (Gentles et al., 2015; Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016; Elfil & Negida, 2017)

### **3.2.3 Sample Size**

Selecting a sample size is very important in qualitative research (Boddy, 2016). Due to time and resource constraints, the researcher employed a relatively few and manageable sample size of 20 participants from the two constituencies in the Tamale metropolis even though saturation was attained at 18<sup>th</sup> participant interviewed. The sample comprises of 10 males (5 each from Tamale South Constituency and Tamale central Constituency) and 10 females ( 5 each from Tamale South Constituency and Tamale Central Constituency). 8 participants were selected for focus group discussion, 5 males (3 from Tamale South and 2 from Tamale Central) and 3 females (1 from Tamale South and 2 from Tamale Central). In a qualitative study like this one, the emphasis is usually not on the ability to generalise results and for that reason large sample size are usually not employed (Patton, 2002). The agreement among scholars in qualitative studies is that they stress on getting a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Using the participants' in-depth knowledge and expertise gained over time is key to get a thorough investigation of a phenomenon in a qualitative case study. It is important to stress the importance of depth over simplification in understanding outcomes from the sampled population (Creswell, 2009). The rationale for selecting a sample size of 20 for this study was based on the idea that it would allow for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and expertise from participants while still enabling the researchers to conduct a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon. Frankfort-Nachmias and

Nachmias (2008) argue that scholars in qualitative research should use a well-informed small sample size to conduct a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon being studied.

A sample size of 20 participants was suitable for this work because it gives the researcher the freedom to incorporate different perspectives without compromising the primary ideas of the study. Also, Creswell (2012) advocates for a small number of participants for qualitative research that seeks to provide a holistic understanding of a given phenomenon because a larger number of participants may rob the study of its relevant ingredients needed to aid in the examination of the phenomenon, and also a small number of participants may not also provide enough information to give an actual account of the phenomenon. Therefore, a study that seeks to prove a holistic examination of the phenomenon needs a sample size that strikes a balance between these two. In a qualitative case study, researchers also emphasise saturation, which occurs when they gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon to the point where no new information is attained (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A sample size of 20 is ideal and suitable for this study, which is in agreement with both Creswell (2013) and Patton (2002).

### **3.3.0 Data Collection Instruments**

Researchers employ data collection instruments, such as interviews and focus group discussions, to collect the necessary information for a study (Bryman, 2016). This study employed interviews and focus group discussions as data collection instruments. Interview guide is developed and pre-tested, which contained questions administered to the participants. Focus group discussions was organised to collect data from the selected people.





### 3.3.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Qualitative research uses a variety of data collection approaches because it focuses on comprehending the richness and depth of human experiences. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) is a unique method that encourages dynamic group dynamics to extract common viewpoints and produce insightful contextual information. Social constructivism provides the theoretical foundation for FGDs, which emphasise the cooperative creation of knowledge via social interaction (Morgan, 1997). Because FGDs are dialogical, they are consistent with symbolic interactionism, which emphasises the role that communication plays in creating shared meanings in social contexts (Blumer, 1969).

To enhance the validity of the research findings, the study also employed a face-to-face interview with some selected individuals. The researcher sought permission to interview some selected people to solicit their views on their perspective on the fourth republican democracy, comprise of individuals who are citizens of Ghana, have resided in Ghana for at least six years, and have never stayed outside the shores of Ghana for more than six months since the inception of the Fourth Republic. This accounted from the fact that these people were deemed to have both past and present experiences with regards to fourth republic democracy.

Each focused group discussion lasted for about sixty minutes. There were eight members in the session. Panel members in all the various discussions did express their views with regards to the topic of discussion based on their personal experiences. The discussions ranged from the nature of Ghana's current democratic system, and also merits and demerits of the current democratic system of Ghana to their aspirations and expectations of the civil society on the current democratic system of Ghana.



Before to each of the discussion sessions, the researcher, together with the participants set some guidelines that will guide the discussion. Each participant was given the opportunity to speak for about two minutes without any form of interruption from another participant. Questions were evenly distributed to participants and each participant had the option to answer or pass the question on to any other person. Members were at liberty to answer the whole question or provide a partial response, or even offer responses that were opposed to others' views, opinions and positions. The researcher, seek the permission of the participants to record the discussions and letter transcribed it. It must be noted that in almost all the cases, the researcher gave prior notice to the interviewees about his intention to have an in-depth focus group discussion with them.

### **3.3.2 Interviews**

In the field of qualitative research, which focuses on delving into the intricate details and complexities of human experiences, interviews play a crucial role as a fundamental method for collecting data. Within the theoretical framework of qualitative research, both interpretive and constructivist paradigms highlight the significance of investigating human experiences within their authentic context. Interviews align perfectly with these paradigms by offering participants an opportunity to express their viewpoints and interpretations related to different phenomena (Brinkmann, 2014; Turner, 2014; Murphy & Dingwall, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). According to Brinkmann (2014), interviews actively construct knowledge through social interactions, aligning with the constructivist idea. Furthermore, interviews facilitate a dialogical exchange that aligns with the hermeneutic circle, emphasizing the iterative process of understanding through interpretation (Brinkmann, 2014).

This research used an in-depth open-ended individual interview conducted in person to gather the views of civil society on the current democratic system in Tamale. The researcher conducted these

interviews personally, without the help of any research aides. An interview involves both the interviewer asking questions and recording responses to understand the thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and behaviours of the participant. A face-to-face interview involves a social interaction between an interviewer and interviewee where questions are asked and answers are recorded (Creswell, 2014).

Once again, it allowed the interviewer to further investigate unclear answers from the participants. This tool allowed the researcher to gather more in-depth insight into participants' perspectives and thoughts on the existing democratic system. participants were also given the chance to seek clarification on questions they found confusing. Additionally, the tool enabled the researcher to analyse the emotions and physical gestures (non-verbal communication) of the participants. By using this tool, the researcher was able to confirm the credibility of his results as it was easy to distinguish inaccurate answers from participants. By utilising an interview guide, the researcher gathered pertinent, firsthand, thorough, and detailed data from study participants.

### **3.4.0 Data Sources**

A data source is a location where the data that is to be studied originates from. A data source may be the initial location where data is born or where physical information is first digitized, however, even the most refined data may serve as a source, as long as another process accesses and utilizes it (Kothari, 2008). The data sources for this study included both primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary sources included the participant who comprise individuals who are citizens of Ghana, have resided in Ghana for at least six years, and have never stayed outside the shores of Ghana for more than six months since the inception of the Fourth Republic. The secondary sources will include books, journals, reports, and other public articles.



### 3.4.1 Data Analysis

Raw data is inherently disorderly and tumultuous, necessitating a process of analysis to extract meaning and comprehension (Gentles et al., 2015). Data analysis involves making sense of the unprocessed data obtained from the field concerning the studied phenomenon (Watkins, 2017). Data management is particularly pivotal in qualitative research, primarily due to the substantial volume of information typically amassed during the data collection stage (Moore, 2018). To manage data efficiently, a structured approach was adopted to categorizes data according to distinct subject themes and organizes it into named files for seamless accessibility, retrieval, and analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected for this study. The study adopted an inductive approach to thematic analysis. The inductive approach starts with precise content and then moves to broader generalisations and finally to theories, ensuring effective linkage of themes to the data (Patton, 1990). Ensuring effective linkage between the themes and the data is a key advantage of the inductive approach (Patton, 1990). Any researcher can effectively deal with the observational data collected throughout the study due to this flexibility. In such a situation, there needs to be a variety of options to frame the analysis around precise words, i.e., "explanations." Collecting different data, such as observational data, aims to provide explanations for the entire proceedings of the study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) propose a six-step approach for conducting data analysis: becoming familiar with the data; creating initial codes; looking for themes within the codes; reviewing the themes found; defining and labelling themes; and preparing the report on the findings. The interviewed recorded was transcribed verbatim and read it aloud to become acquainted with the

data set. Next, the codes were reviewed and transcripts, creating a list of preliminary codes. The codes were further examined, identifying patterns among similar codes to generate themes. The discussions were done in both English and the local dialect understood by the participants. The discussions conducted in the local dialect was translated into English.

### 3.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Engaging in a research project that involves human participants raised issues related to privacy and confidentiality. The use of data gathered from interviews and focus group conversations unexpectedly posed ethical dilemmas. Collaborations with relevant parties was done to ensure thorough consideration and to pre-emptively tackle issues of concerns, and resolution of ethical matters before the study begins. Following Creswell's guidance (2013), it is crucial to anticipate and address ethical issues before initiating the research, emphasising the ongoing effort to identify and mitigate these concerns at each stage of the research process. Within the framework of this study, the participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point, underscoring the voluntary nature of their continuous participation (Creswell, 2013).

**Informed Consent:** Participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study. They voluntarily agree to participate without coercion, and their consent were recorded.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Researchers protected participants' personal information and ensure that responses cannot be traced back to individuals unless explicit permission is given. Anonymity is particularly important in sensitive studies.



**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the research was completely voluntary, with the participants been informed that, they have the liberty to withdraw at any point without any explanation.

### 3.5 Validity

Validity, often referred to as credibility or trustworthiness, ensures that the findings accurately represent the researcher, participants or readers' experiences. Validity measures aimed at ensuring that findings represent the phenomenon being studied. The interview guides developed by the researcher for the interview sessions were cross-checked by the research supervisor to find out if they could measure or describe what they were supposed to measure or describe to ensure validity or trustworthiness of the study. Researchers critically reflect on their own biases and how these might shape the research process and findings. Sharing findings or interpretations with participants to confirm their accuracy and resonance with participants' perspectives (Creswell,2014). Providing detailed accounts of the context and phenomena to enable readers to determine transferability. Comparing data from various sources or methods to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in findings. the researcher used more than one strategy during the data collection process (triangulation) - face-to-face one-on-one interview and focus group discussion.

#### 3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research is often referred to as dependability or consistency. The researcher ensured that findings of the study were credible and could be relied upon for decision making by embarking on processes that sought to eliminate or minimize distortions and causal errors that could affect the results.

This concept ensures that the findings are not random or arbitrary but result from systematic and transparent procedures. Strategies to enhance reliability include: Providing a detailed description





of the research process, decisions, and data collection methods to allow others to trace the logic and ensure consistency in the study's approach. Using multiple data sources, methods, or investigators to corroborate findings and reduce the impact of researcher bias. Engaging external researchers to review coding, interpretations, and data analysis processes to enhance rigor and reduce personal biases. Another strategy was, recording of the interview sessions as suggested by Neuman (2006).

### 3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research methodology chapter meticulously outlines the comprehensive approach adopted to study Ghana's Fourth Republican Democracy through the lens of civil society's perspectives. Employing a qualitative case study design, this study engaged in a rigorous process of data collection using interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich, in-depth insights from various participants. The selection of a purposeful sampling technique allowed for the collection of diverse viewpoints, ensuring a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Ethical considerations were paramount, with measures taken to safeguard participant confidentiality and privacy. The research's strength lies in its methodological rigour, providing a solid foundation for generating meaningful findings that contribute to our understanding of democratic governance in Ghana from the vantage point of civil society. Through this methodological framework, the study aims to capture the detailed complexities of Ghana's democracy, offering valuable contributions to the discourse on democratic practices and civil society's role in shaping governance.

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## **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion.**

This study sought to evaluate the perspectives of civil society with regard to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of the country's based on the principles of democracy. The goal of this comprehensive analysis is to provide valuable insights into the discussions surrounding the impact of democratic governance in Ghana and its significance on a global scale, as well as within the African context. By prioritising perspectives from civil society in this evaluation, the study aims to offer a more complete and inclusive assessment of the state of democracy in Ghana. Through an analysis of civil society experiences and opinions, the assessment aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the advantages and obstacles within Ghana's democratic system from the viewpoint of its intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, it explored how Ghana's democratic model aligned with or diverged from global assessments of democracy and across Africa. The following research objective guided the study:

### **General Objective**

The study seeks to assess Ghana's democratic system since the inception of the Fourth Republic from the perspective of civil society, focusing on the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region, Ghana

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate the nature of the current democratic system of Ghana from the perspective of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis.
2. To evaluate the merits and demerits of the current democratic system of Ghana as perceived by civil society organizations in the Tamale Metropolis.

3. To explore the aspirations and expectations of civil society in the Tamale Metropolis for Ghana's democratic system.

### Coding

We applied reading and understanding of the gathered data to the interviews and focus group discussions, codifying it into broad themes, categories, and sub-categories to establish a clear pattern. We also reviewed the data for various meanings and perspectives until we reached saturation (Cresswell, 2009). Cresswell (2013) applied a thorough examination known as "categorical aggregations" to provide a clearer picture of the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. The table below depicts the initial codes that emerged from the two data sources.

**Table 1**

#### Initial Codes Generated from the interviews and focus group discussion

Interviews	Focus Group
<b>Objective One</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power to the People</li> <li>• Injurious Democracy</li> <li>• Checks and Balances</li> <li>• Multi-Political Parties</li> <li>• Ineffective Institutions</li> <li>• Political Loyalty</li> <li>• Public Unhappiness</li> <li>• Institutional Corruption</li> <li>• Socioeconomic Inequality</li> <li>• People-Centered Constitution</li> <li>• Reduce Executive Power</li> <li>• Strong Institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable Democratic Process</li> <li>• Peaceful Dispute Resolution</li> <li>• Perceived Corruption</li> <li>• Political Polarization</li> <li>• Accountability and Transparency:</li> <li>• Rule of Law</li> <li>• Multi-Party System</li> <li>• Separation of Powers</li> <li>• Rights and Responsibilities</li> <li>• Compromising Democratic Integrity</li> <li>• Concentration of Power</li> <li>• Winner-Takes-All Politics</li> </ul>





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme Inequality</li> <li>• Privileged Elite</li> <li>• Representative Democracy</li> <li>• Stable Transition</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> <li>• Parliamentary Representation</li> <li>• Selfish Interests</li> <li>• Amendment of the constitution</li> <li>• Freedom of Expression</li> <li>• Financial Influence</li> <li>• Multi-party System</li> <li>• Periodic Elections</li> <li>• Political Influence</li> <li>• Lack of Independence</li> <li>• Credibility Loss</li> <li>• Political Alignment</li> <li>• Potential Social Unrest</li> <li>• Declining Patriotism</li> <li>• Constitutional Review</li> <li>• Executive Power Limitation</li> <li>• Institutional Independence</li> <li>• Government Independence</li> <li>• No Political Interference</li> <li>• Elimination of Polarisation</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Legal Equality</li> <li>• Political Inclination</li> <li>• Credibility Loss</li> <li>• Respect for Rights</li> <li>• Political Stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoiding Abuse of Power</li> <li>• Peace and Stability</li> <li>• Freedom of Speech and Expression</li> <li>• Accountability and Transparency</li> <li>• Social Justice</li> <li>• Political Participation</li> <li>• Political Polarization</li> <li>• Corruption</li> <li>• vote Buying and Electoral Malpractice</li> <li>• Constitutional Reforms</li> <li>• Inclusive Governance</li> <li>• Strengthening Institutions</li> <li>• Independent Institutions</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful Transitions</li> <li>• Lack of Neutrality</li> <li>• Partisan Influence</li> <li>• Lack of Neutrality</li> <li>• Political Interests Over Public Interests</li> <li>• Poor Representation</li> <li>• Lack of Fairness and Independence</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective Two</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of Individual Freedoms</li> <li>• Human Dignity</li> <li>• Fair Treatment for All</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities</li> <li>• Freedom of Expression</li> <li>• Corruption and Political Polarisation</li> <li>• Low Civil Awareness</li> <li>• Lack of National Agenda Commitment</li> <li>• Low Patriotism</li> <li>• Economic Uncertainty</li> <li>• Promotion of Peace and Stability</li> <li>• Political Participation</li> <li>• Protection of Human Rights</li> <li>• Decline in Trust</li> <li>• Limited Citizen Influence</li> <li>• Tolerance and Respect</li> <li>• Free and Fair Elections</li> <li>• Inclusive government</li> <li>• Compromised Electoral Integrity</li> <li>• Peaceful Political Transitions</li> <li>• Electoral Malpractice</li> </ul>	



<b>Objective Three</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster Inclusive Governance</li> <li>• Enhance Civic Education</li> <li>• Promote Transparency and Accountability</li> <li>• Political and Electoral Reforms</li> <li>• Civic Engagement and Accountability</li> <li>• Strengthening Institutions</li> <li>• Economic and Social Development</li> <li>• Promoting Inclusivity</li> <li>• Anti-Corruption Measures</li> <li>• Enhancing Citizen Participation</li> <li>• Promoting Peace and Stability</li> <li>• Promoting Social Cohesion</li> <li>• Ensuring Voices of the People Were Heard</li> <li>• Participation and Inclusiveness in Governance</li> <li>• Inclusiveness and Representation</li> <li>• Inclusiveness and Equality</li> <li>• Restoring Public Trust</li> <li>• Ensuring Independence of State Institutions</li> <li>• Weak institutions</li> <li>• Political Polarization and Partisanship</li> <li>• Truthfulness and Fairness in Public Institutions</li> <li>• Free and fair elections</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights protection</li> <li>• Constitutional rule</li> </ul>	
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**Note. Initial coding from all two data sources**

These are initial codes created after displaying raw data collected from the participants and focus group discussion from the table above

**Table 2**

**Second Codes Creation of Categories from interviews and focus group discussion**

Objective One	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checks and Balances</li> <li>• Multi-Political Parties</li> <li>• Ineffective Institutions</li> <li>• Political Loyalty</li> <li>• Public Unhappiness</li> <li>• Institutional Corruption</li> <li>• Executive Power Limitation</li> <li>• Institutional Independence</li> <li>• Government Independence</li> <li>• Elimination of Polarisation</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Legal Equality</li> <li>• Political Inclination</li> <li>• Credibility Loss</li> <li>• Respect for Human Rights</li> <li>• Political Stability</li> <li>• Periodic Elections</li> <li>• Privileged Elite</li> <li>• Representative Democracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable Democratic Process</li> <li>• Political Polarization</li> <li>• Strengthening Institutions</li> <li>• Social Justice</li> <li>• Political Participation</li> <li>• Constitutional Reforms</li> <li>• Independent Institutions</li> <li>• Accountability and Transparency</li> <li>• Rule of Law</li> <li>• Multi-Party System</li> <li>• Separation of Powers</li> <li>• Rights and Responsibilities</li> </ul>





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable Transition</li> <li>• Parliamentary Representation</li> <li>• Selfish Interests</li> <li>• Lack of Fairness and Independence</li> <li>• Poor Representation</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective Two</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compromised Electoral Integrity</li> <li>• Peaceful Political Transitions</li> <li>• Promotion of Peace and Stability</li> <li>• Low Patriotism</li> <li>• Free and Fair Elections</li> <li>• Corruption and Political Polarisation</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities</li> <li>• Political Participation</li> <li>• Protection of Human Rights</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective Three</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation and Inclusiveness in Governance</li> <li>• Promoting Peace and Stability</li> <li>• Promoting Social Cohesion</li> <li>• Promote Transparency and Accountability</li> <li>• Economic and Social Development</li> <li>• Truthfulness and Fairness in Public Institutions</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free and fair elections</li> <li>• Human rights protection</li> <li>• Constitutional rule</li> <li>• Political and Electoral Reforms</li> <li>• Weak institutions</li> <li>• </li> </ul>	
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**Note. Code generated from categories from all two data sources.**

After the initial coding and, the researcher proceeded to do a second coding where the initial codes were combined into categories. Codes that were similar in nature and conveyed similar meanings were combined into a single category

**Table 3**

### **Application of Themes to Research Questions**

#### **Final Codes Created of Categories from interviews and focus group discussion**

<b>Objective One</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Stability</li> <li>• Multi-Party system</li> <li>• Periodic Elections</li> </ul>
<b>Objective Two</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule of Law</li> <li>• Political Polarisation</li> <li>• Public Corruption</li> </ul>
<b>Objective Three</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Transparency and Accountability</li> <li>• Constitutional Rule</li> </ul>



## **Discussion and Analysis of Findings**

### **Discussion and Analysis of Findings on Research Objective One**

Objective one of the studies sought to investigate the nature of Ghana's current democratic system. Individual responses and focus group discussions generally indicated that Ghana had experienced democratic stability, a multi-party system, and periodic elections since the inception of the Fourth Republic.

Ghana's democracy has enjoyed some stability since the inception of the Fourth Republic after independence in 1957, making her a remarkable success in Africa. Democracy, as defined by most participants, is a system of governance presaged as the apex of political systems, promising stability, representation, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. Ghana, having successfully navigated several democratic transitions and maintained relative political stability since 1992, often serves as a beacon of democracy in Africa.

Ghana has a robust legal framework that upholds the rule of law. Participants believed that the judiciary operates independently, although they acknowledged challenges relating to resources and capacity. They noted issues, such as selective prosecution and the perception of political loyalty bias, which sometimes influenced legal actions (Owusu, 2022; Stoecker, 2022). Despite these challenges, the country generally respects the enforcement of laws, which contributes to democratic stability.





A critical aspect of democratic stability is that Ghanaians and the participants show a high level of support for the democratic system. Studies by Mochtar & Afkar (2022), Mijana (2020), Agomor et al. (2018), and Asante (2020), as well as the Afrobarometer study in 2015, support this view. How people feel about democracy and their trust in its institutions are very important to how long and strong it is. A participant stated as follows:

*Democracy in Ghana can be described as stable with a history of successful political transitions, a fairly free press, an active civil society, and an independent judiciary* (Interview with participant, April 22, 2024).

Ghana's democratic stability features a clear separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary. Although occasional tensions and interference between branches occurred, the design of the system prevented any of the branches from gaining unimpeded leverage over the other. Therefore, participants believed the branches remain independent.

Ghanaians value democratic norms, emphasising political participation and respect for the electoral process. Peaceful transitions of power in recent decades highlight the populace's commitment to democracy. This was a response from the focus group discussion as follows:

*In describing the state of democracy in Ghana, Ghana, among African countries, is one of the countries that has a strong democracy in Africa due to its stable nature since the Fourth Republic. Since then, Ghana has had transfer of power every four years. Due to the multi-party system, which we are running in the country, we have a lot of parties that are competing for power every four years, though we cannot say it is hundred percent peaceful. When we are going to put it in scale, we can say that it's very peaceful because we have recorded not many casualties. Though there*

*were some number of deaths in the last elections, generally, there has been a very peaceful transfer of power in elections (Participant in the Male FGD, March 24, 2024).*

Ghana has a vibrant civil society, including NGOs, think tanks, and advocacy groups that help promote accountability, human rights, and civic engagement. These vivacious organisations play a vital role in promoting accountability, human rights, and civic engagement. These organisations act as watchdogs by monitoring government activities, exposing corruption, and encouraging transparency, thus holding duty bearers accountable (Mlambo et al., 2019; Manaf et al., 2022). They also advocate and create awareness on violation by providing legal support and also lobby for reforms to protect people's freedom. In doing so, civil society strengthens democratic processes and empowers individuals to play an active role in societal development (Mlambo et al., 2019; Adnani, 2021). Furthermore, they create a platform for dialogue between government and citizens in order to foster a civic engagement to educate citizens on their rights and freedom.

One practical example is Transparency International, a global think tank organisation that focusses on combating corruption and promotes accountability by researching and publishing reports, such as the Corruption Perceptions Index, which ranks countries based on perceived levels of corruption in their public sectors. By exposing corruption and inefficiencies, the organisation pressures governments to adopt anti-corruption measures and improve transparency.

These think tank organisations play a pivotal role in ensuring political stability in Ghana which also metamorphosis into significant economic growth, particularly due to her natural resources, such as gold and oil. Economic stability contributes to political stability through the provision of jobs and poverty reduction. Despite economic growth, challenges, such as income inequality, unemployment, and regional disparities remain.





Ghana's political system includes mechanisms for the representation of various ethnic and regional groups. Major political parties often have broad-based support, which helps mitigate ethnic and regional tensions. This was reflected by a participant as follows:

*The significant strength of our democracy is that it ensures peace because of the hope that, there will always be a transition of power; those in opposition often hope that they will ever get power. This often puts them in a situation where they wouldn't want to destabilise the country and that's one of the strengths. It also brings tolerance among ethnic groups and religious groups, because, now people are getting more attracted to their political party than their tribe. I find my political members more loyal than my family members if we don't belong to the same political party and there are instances people pick their political affiliates over their family members and it's because of the political party system as a result of our democracy (Interview with participant, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

Participants emphasised the commitment of Ghana's leaders to democratic principles. Peaceful transitions of power, such as the handover from Jerry Rawlings to John Kufuor, John Atta Mills, and John Mahama to Nana Akufo-Addo, exemplify responsible leadership. The presence of a free press, anti-corruption agencies, and active civil society organisations helps hold leaders accountable, although corruption remains a persistent issue, according to participants.

International partners, such as the United States, the African Union, and various international organisations, support Ghana's democratic progress. These entities provide aid, technical support, and diplomatic backing that continue to help strengthen political stability in the country. The findings showed that Ghana has enjoyed extensive democratic stability since the inception of the fourth republic. This finding from participants also emphasises that democratic stability is



dependent on economic performance, coupled with better employment opportunities for citizens; thus, if the economic situation in the country is stable and its able to have a positive impact on the lives of its citizens by creating sustainable employment and better remuneration, go long in contributing to democratic stability in the country.

Findings on Objective 1 further indicated that a multi-party system is a hallmark of democratic governance, providing a platform for diverse political voices and ensuring that government reflects the will of the people. A multi-party system is a political system in which multiple political parties have the capacity to compete for political offices, either separately or in coalition (Ferazia et al., 2020). In Ghana, the multi-party system has played a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape since the reintroduction of democratic governance in 1992. The adoption of a new constitution paved the way for competitive elections and the establishment of multiple political parties.

The multi-party system has evolved through successive elections, with power alternating between major political parties, primarily the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The Electoral Commission of Ghana oversees the conduct of elections, ensuring they are free, fair, and transparent. Despite the fact that participants acknowledged their shortfalls, the Commission's ability to navigate and conduct successful elections over the years, demonstrates its impartiality and professionalism in a multi-party system. The constitution and electoral laws provide the framework for political parties' formation, registration, and participation in elections. These laws aim to ensure a level playing field for all political parties.

The NDC and NPP has dominated Ghanaian politics since 1992, as power has been alternating between the two parties since then. This competition among these two major parties continuously scrutinises and debates the policies of governments, fostering a dynamic political environment. Multiple-party systems provide civil society with more representation, which better reflects the public's diverse interests and viewpoints. Because multiple political parties exist, each representing different social groups and viewpoints, people can identify with a party that closely reflects their own beliefs and aspirations while addressing the concerns of various social, economic, and cultural groups, resulting in a more nuanced and inclusive representation (Drutman, 2019). This is reflected by a participant as follows:

*I can vote freely during general elections and elect a leader of my choice and of any political party I want. It has also provided me with the service of independent institutions and enjoyment of human rights and expeditions and provided me an opportunity to join any political party and can also contest for political positions if qualified (Interview with participant, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

Besides the two major political parties, several smaller parties contribute to the political discourse. Although they rarely win significant seats in parliament and the presidential votes, they play a role in representing diverse views and interests.

The results further show that the multi-party system in Ghana allows for broad representation of the country's diverse ethnic and regional groupings. Major parties often have support bases that cut across ethnic lines, promoting national unity. The presence of multiple parties in parliament ensures checks and balances in the executive branch. Opposition parties scrutinise government actions, hold it accountable, and provide alternative policy options consistent with the study of Nweke (2015).



Competitive elections and party rivalry lead to robust policy debates, helping to refine and improve governance practices. These dynamics contribute to policy innovation and responsiveness to public needs.

The dominance of the NDC and NPP led to political polarisation, with intense rivalry sometimes resulting in divisive politics. This polarisation hinders bipartisan cooperation on critical national issues. Smaller parties often face resource constraints, limiting their ability to compete effectively with the major parties. This disparity affects the overall inclusiveness of the political system. While major parties strive for broad support, there are instances where political competition exacerbates ethnic tensions, particularly during closely contested elections.

To consolidate their support, politicians invoke ethnic division, particularly in a closely contested elections, political leaders sometimes utilise language that exacerbates ethnic identities, prioritising the interests of their ethnic group above national unity (Taylor, 2016). This behaviour undermines national cohesion and jeopardises the inclusivity of the political system by transforming elections into ethnic contests instead of ideological or policy-oriented discussions. The elections of 2008 and 2012 illustrate this phenomenon, with both the NPP and NDC receiving accusations of making inflammatory remarks that intensified ethnic tensions (Sefayarko, 2020). Ghana exhibits a pattern of ethnic-based voting, with specific regions consistently supporting particular political parties. This ingrained voting behaviour frequently marginalises smaller ethnic groups and fosters a sense of exclusion among communities that do not align with the major political parties.

Ghana enjoys relatively high voter turnout rates though fluctuating, reflect strong public engagement in the political process. Voter turnout in Ghana's general elections has varied



significantly since the inception of the Fourth Republican elections in Ghana has been the fluctuating turnout rates measured as the number of votes cast divided by the number of registered voters. The official turnout rate which was only 50.16% in the November 1992 election jumped to 78.20% in the December 1996 election and then went down to 61.74% during the first-round election on 7 December 2000. The turnout rate then sharply increased to 85.12% in the December 2004 election only to drop down to 71.00% in the first round December 2008 election. The turnout rate went up again in 2012 and dropped sharply in 2016 and by 2020, turnout rose 79.00%, showing renewed interest, possibly driven by intense political competition (Anaman & Bukari, 2020). Overall, Ghana's voter turnout illustrates fluctuating political engagement but relatively high.

The multi-party system's competitive nature incentivises parties to mobilise voters and address their concerns. NGOs, civil society organisations, and the Electoral Commission engage in civic education to inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities, promoting informed participation in the political process. International organisations and foreign governments support Ghana's multi-party democracy through funding, technical assistance, and election monitoring. This support helps strengthen democratic institutions and processes. Various international donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), strengthen democratic institutions in Ghana by providing financial support toward civic education activities to improve transparency aimed at promoting free, fair, elections (Bonsu et al., 2022). Furthermore, Foreign governments and international bodies like the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth, and the Carter Center send election observers to monitor and assess the fairness, transparency, and integrity of the electoral process, and also ensuring that international standards are met (Chigudu, 2015). Finally, technical expertise is been offered to the Electoral Commission of Ghana including modern





electoral practice like biometric registration of voters and verification and other legal reforms to ensure efficiency and credibility of electoral processes by International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) (Asamoah, 2019; Kumah-Abiwu & Darkwa, 2020).

Ghana's success with a multi-party system serves as a model for other countries in the region, promoting democratic values and practices in West. Since the start of the Fourth Republic in 1992, Ghana's impact has grown due to its dedication to democratic values such as respect for human rights, independence of the judiciary, and freedom of speech. Due to its effective multi-party system, Ghana has become an inspiration to other West African nations, significantly expanding democratic ideals and practices throughout the continent and proving that peaceful handovers of power through free and fair elections are feasible even in a historically unstable political environment. The idea that democracy can withstand extended periods of authoritarian or one-party rule has been strengthened by the steady rotation of power between Ghana's two major political parties, the NPP and NDC. This peaceful transfer of power between these rival parties demonstrates the resilience of Ghana's democratic institutions and serves as a model for other African nations grappling with political instability.

Ghana's multi-party system is a cornerstone of its democratic stability, as it fosters political competition, representation, and accountability. While challenges, such as polarisation and resource disparities exist, the system's strengths in promoting inclusive governance and active public participation are evident. The study revealed that Ghana has enjoyed a multi-party system that gives civil society the opportunity to freely choose a political party that reflects their own beliefs and aspirations under the Fourth Republic. This further demonstrates how multi-party

systems reflects diverse voices, the contestation of power, and the development of a resilient and responsive democratic society.

Additional findings on objective one indicates that, apart from democratic stability and a multi-party system, periodic elections are a fundamental aspect of democratic governance, serving as a mechanism for citizens to choose their representatives and hold them accountable (Gyimah-Boadi et al., 2021). In Ghana, periodic elections have been crucial to maintaining political stability and democratic integrity since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992. All the twenty participants emphasised that periodic elections were one of the key strengths of Ghana's democracy, as they served as a peaceful and legitimate avenue for civil society to evaluate their performance and choose who leads them, and this also contributes to the consolidation of democracy in the country. This is reflected by a participant below:

*One of the key significant strengths of our democracy is its periodic elections, four we have to for elections to choose who should be our leaders, even if we are dissatisfied, we still believe that, there is still a day we have other elections that we can exercise our mandates. one of the significant strengths its periodic elections and also the rule of law, which applies to all manner of people equally and the multi-party system we are practicing, representing diverse group of people and also gives people the opportunity to choose any party to belong to and no one stopping and free speech (Participant in the Female FGD, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

The participants went further to explain that free and fair elections do not mean a country's democracy is robust, but a successful democracy goes beyond elections free elections and peaceful transfer of power. This was reflected by a participant as follows:





*Ghana's democratic system has been hailed in the international community based on the fact that we are practicing free and fair elections or elections without conflicts and good democratic practice doesn't mean when you don't have conflicts. So, it's about time countries who want to appreciate the nature of Ghana's democracy to do a holistic investigation of how Ghana's democracy is being practiced. To analyse democracy goes beyond election violence and so to me, it has not been as good as expected as our democratic dispensation is concerned, because of the current perception index. I don't know where Ghana ranks, it's very alarming, and even in education our performance is nothing to write home about. All this boils down to democracy. So, if policies are being implemented in the interest of the citizens, do you think we will be where we are? I think that Ghana's current democracy is in shambles, and in tatters (Interview with participant, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

After military rule, Ghana became a democratic state in 1992. Since then, the country has held a four-year term elections cycle, which is essential to democracy. The 1992 Ghanaian Constitution requires periodic presidential and parliamentary elections to ensure that political power comes from the people.

The Ghana Electoral Commission administers the country's elections. Its responsibilities include voter registration and the conduct of public elections. The Constitution and electoral laws serve as a comprehensive election framework. These rules govern all elections activities, including campaigning, voting and resolution of election disputes. Participants cast doubt on some of the actions of the Electoral Commission, which they acknowledged mar the credibility of the Commission. However, they still believe that the Commission contributes significantly to the country's democratic system. This was reflected by a participant as follows: *"The current*

*Electoral Commission has lost its credibility and trust. All the top Commissioners are politically inclined to a particular party. Their actions and in actions are geared towards supporting a particular political party (Interview with participant, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

Regular elections in Ghana provide voters with the opportunity to choose between various candidates and political parties, thereby fostering a competitive political environment. This competition is essential in motivating political parties to engage with the electorate and address their concerns, as parties must appeal to a broad base of voters to secure victory. Consequently, elections serve as a critical mechanism for ensuring that political leaders remain responsive to public needs and priorities, as they are compelled to offer policies and programmes that resonate with the population.

While Ghana has built a strong reputation for holding peaceful and credible elections since the inception of this Republic, there have been instances where the electoral process has been marred by violence and tension. This underlines the challenges associated with political competition, particularly in highly contested elections. Participants pointed to the 2020 general election as an example of such tensions, where electoral violence resulted in the tragic deaths of some individuals. This violence, while not widespread, highlights the underlying pressures within Ghana's electoral system and the potential for political competition to exacerbate conflict in certain contexts.

The occurrence of violence in some elections, including the 2020 polls, underscores the need for continuous efforts to strengthen the electoral process and mitigate tensions. Enhancing the capacity of institutions such as the Electoral Commission, promoting civic education, and ensuring fair



political competition are essential steps in safeguarding the generally peaceful nature of Ghanaian elections and preventing future instances of electoral violence.

The formation of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) a platform in Ghana where political parties, the Electoral Commission (EC), and other stakeholders meet to discuss electoral issues, share ideas, and provide input on how to improve the electoral process. IPAC plays a key role in promoting dialogue and collaboration among political parties to ensure free, fair, and credible elections. This enabled political parties to be involved in discussions on how the electoral system is organised. The evolution of the electoral process that was spearheaded by the EC in consultation with IPAC was the implementation of biometric registration and voting aimed at reducing the incidence of impersonation and multiple voting to protect the integrity of the electoral process. The recent broadcast of the IPAC meeting on national television has been widely praised by the general public. This broadcast has contributed to a significant shift in the perception of civil society towards the Electoral Commission (EC) specifically, and the electoral system as a whole. The public dissemination of these discussions has fostered greater trust in the electoral process, as it demonstrates the EC's commitment to openness and accountability. This increased visibility of the decision-making process has also strengthened the relationship between electoral authorities and civil society, enhancing the credibility of both the EC and the broader democratic system. These changes have restored trust in the electoral system, which has enhanced democracy in the country.

The participant applauded the Electoral Commission for the use of the biometric voter registration, which in one way or the other reduced election fraud and improved voter registration accuracy. However, participants continue to emphasise that the Electoral Commission should work to demonstrate fairness and impartiality to all political parties and civil society, that they work for



country interests and not for a particular party, which is in consonance with Atengble and Zackaria (2022).

Ghanaians rely on periodic elections as a key mechanism for holding politicians accountable. The consistent conduct of free and fair elections has played a vital role in legitimising Ghana's democratic institutions and fostering active political participation among the populace. Despite occasional incidents of electoral violence and the ongoing need for reforms, ensuring that elections remain regular, transparent, and inclusive continues to be a top priority. The future stability and effectiveness of Ghana's democratic system will hinge on the adoption of technical innovations, enhanced civic education, and sustained international cooperation to improve the electoral process. The findings also showed that civil society has the opportunity to assess the performance of any government every four years under the fourth republic.

### **Discussion and Analysis of Findings on Research Objective Two**

Research Objective two sought to find out the merits and demerits of Ghana's democratic system since 1992. The responses generally revealed that there is rule of law in the Ghanaian political system with high levels of political polarisation and perceived public corruption.

The responses showed that civil society is cognisant of the importance role that the rule of law plays in democratic governance. The rule of law is a foundational principle of democratic governance, as it ensures that all individuals and institutions are subject to and accountable under the law (Kelly, 2020). In Ghana, the rule of law is critical for maintaining order, protecting human rights, and fostering an environment conducive to economic and social development. By ensuring that laws are applied consistently and fairly, the rule of law promotes stability, which is essential





for peaceful coexistence and effective governance. It provides a framework through which individuals' rights are protected, enabling citizens to seek justice and hold institutions accountable. Furthermore, the rule of law is vital for fostering a conducive atmosphere for economic growth by ensuring legal certainty, protecting property rights, and encouraging both domestic and foreign investment. In the social realm, it promotes equality, reduces corruption, and ensures that government actions remain within the bounds of the constitution. As such, the rule of law plays a crucial role in reinforcing democratic governance and sustainable development in Ghana. This principle dictates that everyone, including citizens and government officials, is subject to and accountable under the law, in order to promote fairness and prevent arbitrary or discriminatory actions by the government, as espoused by Naseem (202) and Keil (2017). The results further indicate that the rule of law ensures that all individuals, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, religion, status, or position in society, are treated equally before the law, which is in tandem with Naseem (2021) and Keil (2017). This was reflected by a participant as follows:

*I can vote freely during general elections and elect a leader of my choice. It has also provided me with the service of independent institutions and enjoyment of human rights and expeditions and provided me an opportunity to join any political party and can also contest for political positions if qualified (Interview with participant, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana is the supreme law of the land and also serves as a sacrosanct document, providing the legal framework for governance and guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms. Article 1(2) of the Constitution states: "this Constitution shall be the supreme law of Ghana, and any other law found to be inconsistent with any provision of this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void." This ensures that all laws and actions by the government



must conform to constitutional provisions, safeguarding the rule of law. The Constitution outlines the separation of powers among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, ensuring checks and balances.

The judiciary in Ghana is tasked with interpreting and applying the law, ensuring justice is administered impartially. The courts play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law by adjudicating disputes and protecting individual rights. Judicial independence is enshrined in the Constitution, ensuring that judges can make decisions free from political pressure. This independence is vital for maintaining public confidence in the legal system.

Despite this independence, participants believed that the judiciary is sometimes politicised, citing concerns about selective prosecution, where legal action is perceived to be influenced by political loyalty rather than justice. The response below reflects this view:

*The judiciary is very poor and is not going well. It's like any party that's winning, it's the one that controlling the judiciary while they are supposed to be neutral. An ordinary person can't get justice because he is not part of a particular group. With the EC, the previous one did good but the current one did not because some parts of the community in the Volta Region were denied the right to vote for a representative because you are there for the interest of the people not for their interest or a particular (Interview with participant, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

The findings also indicated that Ghana has a comprehensive set of laws governing various aspects of life; from civil and criminal law to commercial and administrative law. These laws provide a structured approach to maintaining order and justice. Institutions, such as the Ghana Police



Service, the Attorney General's Department, and other regulatory bodies are responsible for enforcing the law. Effective law enforcement is critical for the rule of law.

Participants also acknowledged the relevance of bodies like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), which are mandated to combat corruption and promote transparency but are sometimes faced with a hostile environment that makes it impossible for them to combat corruption to the fullest. Furthermore, the participant emphasised that access to justice is a key component of the rule of law. Legal aid services are provided to ensure that individuals, regardless of their financial status, can seek legal redress. Some participants applauded the government's ongoing reforms, which aim at enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of the judicial system. These include digitising court processes, increasing the number of courts, and improving case management systems.

Article 17 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds, such as gender, race, or political belief. Corruption remains a significant challenge, undermining the rule of law and public trust in institutions. According to Transparency International, Ghana's stagnation in justice delivery is attributed to the deteriorating justice system, which is reducing the accountability of public officials and allowing corruption to thrive. Ghana's score in the Rule of Law Index by the World Justice Project decreased from 0.60 in 2015 to 0.55 in 2023, with a corresponding drop in ranking from 34 to 61 (WJP Rule of Law Index 2023, 2022).

The findings, according to participants, reveal that the rule of law protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and the right to a fair trial. This ensures that individuals can live without fear of arbitrary interference or oppression. This finding





further indicates that, despite challenges and perceived corruption, the rule of law still ensures that all individuals are treated equally before the law, regardless of their status, wealth, or power in society.

The findings on research objective two further demonstrated that political polarisation permeates all levels of government in Ghana in the Fourth Republic. Political polarisation, a phenomenon where political attitudes and affiliations become divided and oppositional, is increasingly evident in Ghana's political landscape. This division impacts governance, social cohesion, and the overall stability of the nation. This was a response provided by a participant as follows:

*With political polarisation in the early 2000s, we used not to face that issue, but now the case of polarisation we have these days which doesn't help and this now becoming clear when a particular government is in power only people in his party get all the positions and all the appointments, other opposition members get nothing and this is not good for the country. Electoral malpractice, usually in elections losers always complain but EC needs to do more to gain confidence from all political parties and also have their credibility intact (Interview with participant, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

Ghana's political polarisation has roots in its history, particularly during periods of military rule and the transition to democratic governance in 1992. The establishment of a multiparty democracy saw the emergence of dominant political parties, notably the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Regular elections since 1992 have been characterised by intense competition between these two political parties. This rivalry has often led to heightened political tensions and a deeply polarised electorate. Strong party loyalty among supporters of the two political parties contributes to polarisation. This loyalty often goes beyond policy considerations, with individuals supporting their parties regardless of the issues at stake, and

participants stressing that party loyalties most of the time supersede national interests. This response by a participant reflects this view:

*The democratic institutions in Ghana are not as effective as they should have been in the fulfillment of their roles. This is because the power of appointment of the heads and deputies of some of these institutions is vested in the hands of the executive or the president who makes these appointments in consideration of political loyalty or affiliation. Therefore, the heads and deputies of these organisations in turn owe their allegiance to the appointing authority or to their parochial interest rather than the state. In the case of the legislature for example, where the executive doesn't have the appointing authority, members of this house, often than not, do their legislative business in partisan lines. On many occasions, the legislature is reported to have been taking bribes to pass bills from the cabinet or approve ministerial nominees without any recourse to national interest. Some media houses are set up to defend the rot of government of the day instead of holding it to accountability, and others are enterprise ones (Interview with participant, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

The findings also indicate that Ghana's ethnic and regional diversities deepen political polarisation. Specific political parties tend to align with certain regions and ethnic groups, resulting in a situation where political affiliation closely links to ethnic and regional identities. This polarisation undermines social cohesion by creating divisions within communities, exacerbates ethnic and regional tensions, and leads to social instability, as espoused by Arbatli & Rosenberg (2020) and Schedler (2023). Participants further emphasised that ethnic electoral patterns are pervasive within the current republic, where ethnic group-based voting has persisted as a significant concern, particularly in the heartlands of Ghana's two main political parties (Paalo & Gyampo, 2019). They also noted that political rhetoric in Ghana has become increasingly divisive, with parties often





appealing to ethnic and regional identities rather than national unity. This divisive rhetoric has fueled tensions and distrust between supporters of the two main parties, in accordance with the study of Paalo and Gyampo (2019).

The findings further indicate that, the Ghanaian media, including social media, frequently exacerbates polarisation by providing platforms for partisan commentary and debate. Media outlets are sometimes perceived as biased towards one political party, further deepening divisions within the democratic dispensation. Many of the participants believed that certain media outlets have ties to specific political parties, which in turn affects their capacity to deliver news impartially and transparently.

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion. Encouraging responsible journalism and ensuring media neutrality can reduce the inflammatory rhetoric that fuels polarisation, which may complicate governance and make it difficult to achieve consensus on national issues. Participants believed political polarisation was and still a significant challenge to Ghana's democratic stability.

Ghana's political landscape has become increasingly polarised between the two dominant political parties. This bipolar dynamic has marginalised smaller parties and reduced political competition, leading to legislative gridlock, hindering effective policy implementation, and heightening the risk of electoral violence. Elections in Ghana have sometimes been marred by conflicts between supporters of rival parties, threatening the peace and stability of the nation. The findings show that, while Ghana has made significant democratic progress, political polarisation remains a serious challenge that threatens the country's long-term stability and development.

The results of research objective two further indicated that participants bemoaned the impact of public corruption and its consequences on the country's democracy and governance. Public



corruption, according to participants, is a critical issue in Ghana, impacting governance, economic development, and public trust in institutions. Corruption in Ghana takes various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism and patronage. It affects different sectors, from public procurement to law enforcement. Public corruption is widespread, permeating various levels of government and public services. It is a significant impediment to national development, leading to unemployment and economic hardship, according to participants.

Corruption has deep historical roots in Ghana, exacerbated by periods of military rule and political instability (Adams & Asante, 2020). This legacy has created entrenched systems of patronage and impunity. The inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992 aimed to address corruption, but the problem persists despite efforts to establish robust democratic institutions (Asomah, 2019). Corruption undermines public confidence in government institutions (Adams & Asante, 2020). Participants asserted that when officials are perceived as corrupt, it significantly undermines the trust they have in these officials, which in turn affects their capacity to govern effectively. Corruption erodes public confidence in leadership, leading to skepticism about the motives and decisions of those in power. This lack of trust diminishes the legitimacy of government actions and weakens public support for policies and programmes. Additionally, perceived corruption hampers the effective implementation of policies, as it may result in the misallocation of resources, inefficiencies, and lack of accountability. The public may become disengaged, reducing cooperation with governmental initiatives, further impeding the successful execution of development programmes. Thus, corruption not only affects governance but also compromises the overall effectiveness of public administration and service delivery. The participants also unanimously believed that public corruption is a serious social and economic canker that, if allowed to fester as perceived in Ghana, could jeopardise Ghana's fledgling democracy, as espouse

by Kelleher & Kim (2014) and Boehm (2015) that corruption undermines the democratic notion. The deprivations that accompany high levels of public corruption have a devastating impact on the average Ghanaian citizen. Resources that are earmarked for the public's benefit are channeled into private pockets, and decision-making is based on the parochial interests of decision-makers as opposed to the public interest (Mwesigwa, 2021). This was reflected by a participant as follows:

*Corruption is a key thing that we are always concerned about because we expect that, we should be up to certain standards and if we realise our leaders are so corrupt, people become angry and unhappy about them. Because monies that could have been used for development ends up in someone's pocket and when it happens people with a lot of development and when you look at the global ranking over the years our performance is nothing to write home about, last time we did well was in 2014 or so but currently our position is very bad, that tell you that the fight against corruption it's not something we doing better, there is more work to be done in the fight against corruption (Participant in the Female FGD, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

According to the latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released by Transparency International in January, 2024, Ghana scored 43 out of 100 points, unchanged from the previous year. This marks the fourth consecutive year of stagnation in Ghana's anti-corruption efforts. Also, Ghana ranked 70th out of 180 countries and territories included in the CPI 2023. Also, the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) recommended that the government takes steps to pass the Conduct of Public Officers' Bill to ensure asset declaration requirements and severe sanctions for non-compliance. Overall, while Ghana's CPI score has remained unchanged, the country's ranking has slightly improved from 72nd place in 2022, to 70th in 2023. However, the lack of progress in fighting

corruption remains a significant challenge for Ghana's democratic stability and development, according to participants.

High levels of corruption, according to participants, may deter foreign and domestic investment and effective interaction with the international community, discouraging foreign investment and damaging the country's reputation abroad, which is in line with Wang (2016). Investors are reluctant to invest in an environment where corruption inflates costs and increases risks. Ghana has enacted several laws to combat corruption, including the Anti-Corruption Act, 2008 (Act 749) and the Whistleblower Act, 2006 (Act 720). These laws provide a legal framework for prosecuting corrupt activities. Institutions like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) Act, 1993 (Act 456), the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) Act, 2010 (Act 804), and the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959) are tasked with fighting corruption. Anti-corruption agencies often face resource constraints, limiting their capacity to investigate and prosecute cases effectively.

Participants are concerned about political interference in anti-corruption efforts, which in most cases undermines their ability to perform to the highest level, questioning and compromising the independence of those bodies, affecting their effectiveness. Allegations of selective prosecution, where legal action is perceived to be influenced by political loyalty, undermine the credibility of anti-corruption efforts. Public corruption in Ghana remains a significant challenge, undermining governance, economic development, and public trust. The findings show that public corruption remains a significant obstacle to Ghana's democratic consolidation, affecting economic growth, social equity, and political stability.





### **Discussion of Findings on Research Objective 3**

Research objective three sought to find out the aspirations of the ordinary Ghanaian on the country's democratic system. The participants revealed that their aspirations included participation in decision making, transparent and accountable governance, the rule of law, as well as economic and social transformation.

The findings showed that civil society recognised the importance of participation in democratic governance. Participation is fundamental for ensuring that civil society have a voice in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Kpessa-Whyte & Atuguba, 2013). The participants believed that participation encompasses a range of activities, including voting in elections, engaging in public consultations, joining civic organisations, and partaking in community development initiatives.

They emphasised that voting is the most direct form of participation, as it allows civil society to choose their representatives in local and national elections. This enables individuals to directly influence policy and governance. Some participants also noted that participation should go beyond mere voting and should include citizens' direct involvement in shaping policies and influencing political outcomes, which aligns with Carole Pateman's (1970) theory of participation. They further explained that participation is a pathway through which civil society contributes and exerts its influence on policy decisions. Activities, such as town hall meetings and public forums, enable citizens to contribute to policy discussions and provide input in government initiatives, which is consistent with Verba (1996). Joining and actively participating in civic organisations, such as





non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), and advocacy groups, is another important form of participation. These organisations play a crucial role in holding the government accountable and advocating for social justice. Participation in local governance structures, such as district assemblies and unit committees, is crucial for ensuring that local development reflects the needs and priorities of communities. This was reflected by a participant as follows:

*One fundamental reason we adopted democracy was or is, there was political unrest in the country and the voices of the people were not heard, so for participation and inclusiveness in the governance of the country (Interview with participant, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

The results, therefore, shows that participation ensures that elected leaders and public servants are accountable to the people. When civil society actively engages in governance, they can demand transparency and accountability, reducing the risk of corruption and mismanagement. Involving civil society in policy-making processes leads to more informed and effective decisions that truly represent the diverse needs of the people. Active participation is, therefore, essential for the health and sustainability of democracy. This fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens, encouraging them to protect and uphold democratic principles. The results further indicate that the robust nature of civil society participation has been a key factor in maintaining political stability and democratic governance. By bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds to work towards common goals, participation promotes mutual understanding and cooperation, which are essential for building strong and resilient communities. The findings also show that participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance and is crucial for ensuring accountability, effective policy-making, social cohesion, and the overall health of democracy.



As indicated earlier, the results also indicate that participants acknowledge the relevance and impact of transparency and accountability and their consequences for the country's democratic governance. Transparency and accountability are critical components of governance and are essential for building public trust and ensuring effective and equitable administration (Gabriel et al., 2019). Transparency involves openness of government operations and decision-making processes (Gabriel et al., 2019). It ensures that information is accessible to the public, enabling citizens to understand how decisions are made and how public resources are allocated. Almost all the participants emphasised that transparency is necessary to combat corruption, enhance public trust, and ensure that government's actions align with the interests of the citizens. Accountability, on the other hand, refers to the obligation of government officials and institutions to be answerable for their actions and decisions, ensuring that those in power are held responsible for their conduct.

The participants, therefore, emphasised that transparency and accountability promote public trust and confidence in government institutions. When civil society see that their leaders are accountable and transparent, they are more likely to support and participate in governance processes, ensuring that resources are used appropriately and policies are implemented as intended. They stated that this was one of the cardinal reasons why civil society support democracy as a system of government, as it can help in consolidating democracy in a country, a view which is in line with Gyimah-Boadi et al. (2021). This was reflected by a participant as follows:

*by ensuring accountability because it's a major foundation of democracy, whatever you do as a leader you should know that, at the end, you are going to be accountable for your actions. So, if we strengthen accountability, I think we can consolidate our democratic system (Interview with participant, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*



In Ghana, various mechanisms and institutions have been established to promote transparency and accountability. The 1992 Constitution provides a robust legal framework for these principles. Key institutions in this regard include the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Auditor-General's Department, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament, and the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO). These bodies are mandated by law to oversee government activities, auditing public accounts, investigate allegations of corruption, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations. A participant reflects their opinion on the functions of these organisations as follows:

*Those are the things that have made our democracy dysfunctional, because when you look at corruption, because there is no accountability, everybody does things the way they want because they know that, at the end of the day, they will not be accounted for their actions, so this affects the system. The Public Account Committees and other organised bodies we have seen are there to appease the public because they are things you will hear that they are going to the person but at the end of the day, you will not hear anything again. They are there alright but they are not functioning. They easily prosecute other party members but fail to prosecute their party members when they are involved in corrupt practices (Interview with participant, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

Thus, participants bemoaned lack of transparency and accountability in Ghana, which greatly undermines the country's democratic governance, economic development, and social justice. According to them, corruption is rampant in many sectors of the government, and officials often engage in corrupt practices under a veil of secrecy to avoid detection and punishment. A notable example is the "GYEEDA (Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency)" scandal in 2013. In this case, government officials and private contractors were



implicated in the mismanagement and embezzlement of funds allocated to the agency for youth development. Investigations revealed that contracts were awarded without transparency, and substantial sums were diverted through inflated invoices and fictitious services. Despite initial attempts to conceal these activities, a parliamentary report and subsequent investigations exposed the corrupt practices, leading to public outrage and calls for reform. Another example is the "Agyapa Royalties scandal" in 2020, where it was alleged that government officials attempted to secretly sell Ghana's future gold royalties through a special-purpose vehicle, with limited parliamentary oversight. Critics argued that the deal lacked transparency and was structured to benefit certain private individuals rather than the public. Although the government defended the transaction, the public perception of corruption and the lack of accountability intensified, causing widespread distrust.

This lack of openness creates an environment where corruption flourishes, reducing public trust in the system and leading to political apathy and social instability. When governmental operations and decision-making processes are concealed, it becomes easier for corrupt practices to go unnoticed, thus encouraging unethical behaviour among officials. This, in turn, erodes public trust in the system, as citizens lose confidence in the integrity and fairness of governmental institutions. Furthermore, the accumulation of unchecked corruption and declining trust often results in social instability, as disillusioned citizens may resort to protests or other forms of unrest in response to perceived injustices.

Limited access to information also remains a significant issue. Although the Right to Information Act was passed in 2019, its implementation has been slow and fraught with challenges, limiting its effectiveness in promoting transparency. A significant barrier to the implementation of the



Right to Information Act in Ghana is the bureaucratic resistance exhibited by numerous government agencies and public institutions. These entities are often reluctant to disclose information, either due to deeply entrenched cultural norms of secrecy or concerns about exposing inefficiencies and corrupt activities within their operations (Simpson et al., 2020).

Another challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources. Many public institutions lack the necessary systems and technology to efficiently manage and disseminate information (Dauda et al., 2020). This includes insufficient training for staff on how to handle information requests, resulting in delays and non-compliance with the RTI law.

Additionally, there is limited public awareness about the RTI Act and how to effectively utilise it. Without widespread knowledge of the law, many citizens are unaware of their rights to access information or the procedures for making formal requests. Lastly, political interference can also impede the full implementation of the RTI Act, particularly when information requests pertain to sensitive or controversial issues. Political actors may influence decision-making processes to protect their interests, thus further restricting access to vital information (Ghuman & Sohail, 2017; Adu, 2018)

Some participants are unaware of their rights and the importance of transparency and accountability, contributing to a lack of public demand for these principles. A 2020 Afrobarometer survey found that a significant proportion of Ghanaians lack familiarity with the Right to Information Act, with many participants demonstrating limited awareness of the legal channels available to request information from government entities (Anaman & Bukari, 2020; Bob-Milliar & Nyaaba, 2020). This suggests a need to improve public knowledge regarding the mechanisms in place to enhance transparency.



Additionally, a report by the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) highlighted that public understanding of the principles of accountability and transparency remains limited, especially in rural areas and among marginalised groups. Many citizens are either unaware of their rights under the constitution or lack the knowledge of how to utilise legal frameworks, such as the RTI Act, to demand transparency from government agencies. (Ghuman & Sohail, 2017)

Moreover, low civic education levels contribute to this problem. According to the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), public campaigns aimed at educating citizens about their rights and the importance of transparency and accountability have been insufficient and inconsistent (Gabriel, 2017). This lack of awareness limits their ability to hold officials accountable.

The effects of lack of transparency and accountability are profound. The erosion of public trust in government institutions results in disengagement from political processes and a decline in civic participation. Inefficiency and waste are direct outcomes of this problem. Without accountability, public officials are not motivated to perform their duties effectively. This can result in mismanagement and wastage of public resources, further hindering economic progress. A prominent example is the Public Expenditure Management Review (PEMR) conducted by the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank highlighted significant inefficiencies and inacquacies in the management of public resources in Ghana (Dauda et al., 2020; Forson, 2023). The report noted that without proper accountability mechanisms, there was a high incidence of waste and misallocation of funds across various sectors, including education and health. These inefficiencies hindered the delivery of essential services and stalled progress in critical areas that contribute to economic development.



Additionally, the Ghana Audit Service annual reports consistently identify issues of mismanagement and lack of accountability in public sector operations (Gumah & Aziabah, 2020; Bonsu et al., 2022). These reports reveal numerous instances of financial irregularities and misappropriation of funds, which not only waste public resources but also have a detrimental effect on service delivery and economic growth. These findings, therefore, show that lack of transparency and accountability engulfs all levels of the governance system within the Fourth Republic.

The findings further show that constitutional rule is one of the main reasons why civil society aspires to and accept democracy as a system of governance. They aspire for a type of government where the powers and operations of the government are outlined and constrained by documented guidelines on how the country is governed. This document should delineate the organisation of the government, the division of powers among the different branches of government and the basic liberties and rights of every person. A stable, just and democratic society depends on constitutional law (Mwesigwa, 2021).

The results indicate that a constitution establishes the legal framework that all other laws and policies must adhere to, making it the ultimate law of the state. It offers precise rules for how all agencies of government should operate to maintain the balance of power and prevent any one individual or group from becoming too powerful. The preservation of the rule of law and the defense of individual liberties depends on this division of powers, which affirms similar observations by Donkor (2020).

The results further show that the basic tenets of a constitution and its clauses dictate how the government operates, guaranteeing the legitimacy and legality of its activities. This encourages accountability and openness and helps avoid arbitrary or repressive governance. A check on the



misuse of power is provided by the ability of institutions and citizens to contest government actions that are unconstitutional.

The findings also indicate that constitutional rule creates a predictable and unambiguous legal framework, which promotes social order and political stability. Using established legitimate channels to resolve disputes and disagreements is preferable to using violence, which is essential for both economic growth and the general well-being of society. Furthermore, representation and diversity are encouraged by ensuring that every group in society has a say in how the country is run. This inclusiveness increases the legitimacy of the government and encourages citizen participation and ownership.

However, Participants also postulated that, though the constitutions dictate and protect the rights of the citizenry, it also sometime limits them and give undue powers to the president. The response below reflects:

*Yes, the Constitution is the major obstacle. Our constitution has a lot of limitations which hinder effective governance and representation of citizen's interests. It provides the president executive powers to do whatever they want and to appoint any number of persons to occupy any position without considering the meritocracy of the appointed (Interview with participant, March 22<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

All the participants called for a constitutional review for it to truly represent the actual interest of civil society and reduce some of the powers of the president. The following response reflects this view:



*Constitutional review, limitation of the powers of the executives and appointment of independent institutions, full and absolute independence of democratic institutions, elections of MMDCs, Board members and CEOs should be occupied development actors CSOs Membership of parliament should be extended to include traditional leaders and National development plan and mandatory for all political parties draw their manifesto (Interview with participant, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024).*

These findings, therefore, show that constitutional rule is based on fundamental freedoms and rights. A constitution enshrines a bill of rights or similar measures that protect citizens from unfair treatment and discrimination and guarantee civil liberties, including the freedom of expression, assembly, and religion. A democratic society is built on these rights, which are fundamental to people's liberty and sense of dignity.





## Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary

The study was conducted using qualitative case research approach with 20 participants with the Tamale metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana. This examined the perspectives of civil society with regard to how power is exercised in the management of the country based on the principles of democracy. Through an analysis of civil society experiences and opinions, this assessment aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the advantages and obstacles within Ghana's democratic system from the viewpoint of its intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, it has explored how Ghana's democratic model aligns with or diverges from global assessments of democracy and across Africa.

The study showed that, civil society have varied experience and views of democratic governance since the inception of the Fourth Republic. The study indicated that, civil society assessed Ghana's democracy base on the nature of the system couple with merits and demerits of the system and finally base on their aspiration of democracy as a system of governance.

The results further show that, multi-party system and periodic elections are fundamental to Ghana's democracy, providing a platform for diverse political voices and ensuring government accountability. The peaceful transitions of power and the active involvement of international partners in supporting democratic progress underscore Ghana's commitment to democratic principles. Despite issues such as political polarisation and resource disparities, Ghana's multi-party system and periodic elections reflect the public's diverse interests and aspirations, contributing to a resilient and responsive democratic society. The current democratic system in Ghana has notable strengths, particularly in its adherence to the rule of law, which ensures



accountability, equality, and protection of human rights. This commitment to the rule of law is critical for maintaining order, fostering economic and social development, and protecting individual rights. Civil societies recognise the importance of this principle in democratic governance, which is foundational for ensuring fairness and preventing arbitrary or discriminatory actions by the government.

The aspirations of civil society regarding the current democratic system are deeply rooted in the principles of Participation, Transparency and Accountability, Constitutional Rule. Again transparency and accountability are seen as essential for building public trust and ensuring effective governance. The study emphasised the need for government operations to be open and officials to be answerable for their actions, which helps combat corruption and enhance public trust. Additionally, while constitutional rule provides a legal framework for governance and protects individual liberties, the study called for a review to address limitations and reduce excessive presidential powers.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that Ghana's democratic system, established during the Fourth Republic, has largely remained stable, characterised by regular elections, peaceful transitions of power, and a commitment to democratic principles. The multi-party system has been pivotal in fostering political competition, representation, and accountability, allowing citizens to hold political leaders accountable and ensuring the stability of democratic institutions. However, ongoing challenges such as political polarisation, corruption, and economic inequalities must be addressed to further strengthen democratic stability. Although issues like occasional electoral violence persist, the consistent practice of free and fair elections serves as a cornerstone of Ghana's



democratic governance. The resilience and adaptability of the system, which reflects diverse voices and encourages public participation, underpin its effectiveness within a dynamic democratic framework.

Moreover, the rule of law remains a fundamental pillar of democratic governance in Ghana, ensuring accountability, equality, and justice. While the legal framework continues to protect individual rights and maintain order fostering an environment conducive to sustainable development and social stability significant challenges persist. Political polarisation and public corruption pose serious threats to Ghana's democratic stability and development, as deeply entrenched divisions within political institutions and society hinder effective governance. Additionally, widespread corruption erodes public trust and undermines economic growth.

Therefore, addressing these critical issues is essential for ensuring long-term stability, social cohesion, and the consolidation of democracy in Ghana. The findings highlight the crucial role of civil society participation, transparency, and accountability in this process. Active engagement from civil society ensures effective policy-making, while transparency fosters public trust. However, persistent issues such as lack of access to information and weak accountability mechanisms undermine governance and social stability.

Finally, constitutional rule is vital for civil society's aspiration for democracy, as it provides a structured framework that safeguards individual rights and maintains a balance of power. Nonetheless, the limitations and excessive presidential powers within the current constitution necessitate a review to enhance representation and accountability, ensuring that it genuinely reflects the interests of all citizens. Addressing these interconnected challenges is crucial for reinforcing democratic principles, fostering inclusivity, and promoting sustainable development in

Ghana. The role of civil society, international support, and continued efforts to enhance transparency and accountability will be essential in sustaining and advancing Ghana's democratic progress.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the study, a number of recommendations were made.

First, to enhance Ghana's democratic governance, it is crucial for the central government to strengthen judicial independence by allocating increased resources and building capacity within the legal system to ensure fair and impartial proceedings.

Second, to solidify Ghana's multi-party system, it is vital to enhance the impartiality and capacity of the Electoral Commission. This can be achieved through increased funding by government through the finance ministry, ensuring that elections remain free, fair, and credible. Facilitating dialogue among political parties, such as through the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), can mitigate political polarisation and foster cooperation on national issues. Addressing ethnic divisions and ensuring the inclusive representation of smaller parties will enhance national cohesion. Continued international support, in the form of technical assistance and election monitoring, will bolster institutional integrity, allowing Ghana to solidify its reputation as a stable democracy in West Africa and set a positive precedent for other nations facing similar challenges.

Third, public corruption poses a significant threat to Ghana's democracy and governance, eroding trust in public institutions. To combat this issue, it is essential for the government to prioritise anti-corruption reforms, including the urgent passage of the Conduct of Public Officers' Bill to enforce asset declaration and impose strict sanctions for non-compliance. Strengthening anti-corruption





agencies like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) is vital for effective investigations and prosecutions free from political interference. Promoting transparency and accountability at all levels of government will help restore public confidence in leadership, while fostering a culture of integrity and civic engagement empowers citizens to hold their leaders accountable.

Fourth, the findings underscore the vital role of civil society participation in Ghana's democratic governance. To enhance this engagement, the government must implement comprehensive civic education initiatives that inform citizens about their rights and the significance of transparency and accountability. Such efforts should aim to increase awareness of the Right to Information Act, thereby empowering citizens to actively demand openness in government processes.

Fifth, to ensure that the constitution genuinely reflects the interests of the populace, a comprehensive constitutional review is imperative. This review should limit excessive presidential powers while enhancing checks and balances among government branches. Incorporating mechanisms for the direct election of local representatives and extending parliamentary membership to traditional leaders will facilitate diverse voices in governance. These measures will collectively build a democratic society rooted in fundamental freedoms, ensuring governance is responsive to the needs and rights of all citizens.

### **Suggestions for further study**

The current study was conducted within Tamale metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana, further research should widen the scope to the whole country.

Again, given that, the study was conducted using qualitative method further research should consider using mixed method. This will enable the researcher to increase the number of participants of the study.

Finally, future study should also consider assessing the contribution of Civil Society Organisation on fourth republican democracy





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**Appendix 1**

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ASSESSING THE PERSPECTIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON  
GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLICAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM:**

**Date:**

**Location:**

**Name of Interviewer:**

**Name of Interviewee:**

**The Nature of Ghana's Current Democratic System**

1. How would **you** define democracy?
  2. How would **you** describe the current state of democracy in Ghana?
  3. What do you believe are the foundational principles of Ghana's democracy?
  4. How effective do you believe Ghana's democratic institutions (e.g., Parliament, Judiciary, and Electoral Commission) are fulfilling their roles?
  5. How satisfied do you think Ghanaians are with the functioning of the current democratic system?
  6. What future developments or reforms do you anticipate (or hope to see) in Ghana's democratic system? How can Ghana further consolidate its democracy?
  7. Is there anything else you would like to share about the nature of Ghana's democracy that we haven't covered?
- 
1. What do you consider to be the most significant strengths of Ghana's current democratic system?
  2. What are the benefits of democracy to you?





3. Can you provide examples of how Ghana's democracy has positively affected you and the country?
4. How do issues such as corruption, political polarization, or electoral malpractices affect the integrity of Ghana's democracy?
5. Are there aspects of Ghana's democratic system that you believe limit effective governance or the representation of citizens' interests?
6. How do you think the current democratic system affects the daily lives of Ghanaians?

#### **Aspirations of Ghanaian Citizens on the Current Democratic System of Ghana**

1. What role do you believe government institutions should play in achieving the democratic aspirations of Ghanaian citizens?
2. How would you assess the current state of democracy in Ghana?
3. What were or are the reasons for choosing democracy as a system of governance?
4. What are your expectations of democracy as a system of governance? Are those expectations met? If YES how? If NO, why?
5. Any other information or comments that you like to provide, that might be of help

## Appendix 2

### UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

#### FACULTY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ASSESSING THE PERSPECTIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLICAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM:

**Date:**

#### **The Nature of Ghana's Current Democratic System**

8. How would **you** describe the current state of democracy in Ghana?
9. What do you believe are the foundational principles of Ghana's democracy?
10. How effective do you believe Ghana's democratic institutions (e.g., Parliament, Judiciary, and Electoral Commission) are fulfilling their roles?
11. How satisfied do you think Ghanaians are with the functioning of the current democratic system?
12. What future developments or reforms do you anticipate (or hope to see) in Ghana's democratic system? How can Ghana further consolidate its democracy?

#### **Merits and Demerits of the Current Democratic System of Ghana?**

7. What do you consider to be the most significant strengths of Ghana's current democratic system?
8. Can you provide examples of how Ghana's democracy has positively affected you and the country?
9. How do issues such as corruption, political polarization, or electoral malpractices affect the integrity of Ghana's democracy?



10. Are there aspects of Ghana's democratic system that you believe limit effective governance or the representation of citizens' interests?

**Aspirations of Ghanaian Citizens on the Current Democratic System of Ghana**

6. What role do you believe government institutions should play in achieving the democratic aspirations of Ghanaian citizens?
7. How would you assess the current state of democracy in Ghana?
8. What were or are the reasons for choosing democracy as a system of governance?
9. What are your expectations of democracy as a system of governance? Are those expectations met? If YES how? If NO, why?
10. Any other information or comments that you like to provide, that might be of help

