

Party Militias in Ghana: A Threat to Democratic Consolidation

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ABSTRACT

Party militias are rife in Ghanaian politics, and their activities have a negative impact on the consolidation of democracy in Ghana. Some of their activities have been violent acts on the electorate and members of other political parties. These activities tend to increase during and after the general election in Ghana, especially during the transfer of political power. In these elections, party militias have played several roles such as security agents, protecting ballot boxes, door-to-door campaigns, threatening political opponents, taking over state estates by forcing their opponents to leave after electoral defeat. Using democracy, democratic consolidation, electoral violence and militias as the conceptual framework, this paper seeks to assess the threat party militias have on democratic consolidation in Ghana. The paper discusses the nature and key characteristics of party militia, and the negative ways they have impacted democratic consolidation in Ghana. The main argument is that the activities of these party militias undermine democratic consolidation in Ghana behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally.

Keywords: Ghana; Party militia; Democratic consolidation; Elections

INTRODUCTION

Ghana is seen as one of the most stable democracies in Africa, as the country has gone through eight general elections the most recent one held on 7 December 2020. The 2016 general elections ended peacefully with the transfer of power from the incumbent President John Dramani Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) handing over power to Nana Akuffo Addo of the then opposition party New Patriotic Party (NPP). As a result of these transfers of power from one political party to another which in this case was the third transfer of political power from an incumbent to the opposition political party many scholars such as have argued that perhaps Ghana's democracy is consolidated having passed Huntington's "two turn-over" test [1,2]. Nonetheless, the 2016 general elections faced several challenges which were outlined by elections observers, including reported violence before, during and after the election [3,4]. Some level of violence has been evident in Ghana's general election especially when there is the transfer of power from one political party to another party [5-8].

This situation of violence by party militias appears to remain in the Ghanaian body politics. For example, in a by-election on the 31 January 2019, there were incidences of shooting and violence at the Ayawaso West Wuogon electoral district in Accra. In this incidence there were masked men in apparels with the inscription 'NSC' which is 'National Security Council', these men invaded the residence of the opposition candidate of the NDC Delali Kwesi Brempong and opened fire on the party activist who had assembled at the candidate's home. Another group also stormed the La Bawaleshie polling station and caused fear and panic amongst those who have gathered to cast their ballot [9]. It was reported that six persons were injured by the gunshot as a

result of these masked men's indiscriminate firing at party supporters of the NDC candidate and those believed to be NDC supporters [10,11]. Several NDC members were seen on video accusing the NPP government of orchestrating the attack and several videos that were circulating on social media and news media showed several injured persons being rushed to the hospital in a bizarre condition [12]. This brought the elections to a halt for some couple of hours with fear and panic moving in that electoral area. The Ghana police eventually went to calm the situation and voting resumed with calm restored and also stating that there were no reports of deaths [13].

METHODOLOGY

The activities of these party militia groups led many stakeholders in the country to express great concerns including civil society groups [14]. As a result, the government set up a Commission of Inquiry to probe the violence that occurred at Ayawaso by-elections in 2019 [15]. The Commission submitted their report to the government for further action to be taken on the matter. A key finding of the commission was the SWAT/NSC who was deployed at the pollen stations were in total disregard of laydown laid down official security rules and arrangement. Additionally, oral and video footage reviewed by the commission showed that there were gunshots by NSC men. This was done to control the crowd that had formed at the front of the NDC candidate's house which was close to the electoral grounds. Also, when the commission visited the site to locus in quo during its examinations the evidence gathered showed occurrences of gunshots which were marked by bullets holes and bullet shells inter alia [16]. Undeniably, the finding from the committee suggested that some of the members

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of NSC former party militias and party members of the incumbent NPP. It is from this background that this paper seeks to examine the impact of these party militias on Ghana's democratic consolidation. It investigates the nature and scope of these groups, their sources of funding, activities and location in the country. It examines the sources of weaponry and the kind of violence the party militia are engaged in and how they behave before, during and after elections in Ghana.

Earlier research on Ghana's democracy, elections and democratic consolidation has looked into Ghana's journey to constitutional democracy from the perspective of various military interventions, or various general elections and the ethnic undercurrents in Ghana's electoral politics [17-32]. There are also several works on Ghana's democracy and elections [33-45]. But what has been missing is an assessment of the impact of party militia on the democratic gains and democratic consolidations in Ghana. It is due to this gap in the theoretical and empirical literature that this paper seeks to address. It will be an addition to already established research on the topic of party militia by adding fresh evidence to the topic. It will also set the foundation for future research on the literature gap. Recent work has looked at the role that vigilante groups or party militias play before and after elections [46]. However, there appears to be no work on the impact of party militias on Ghana's democracy and democratic consolidation, as such this paper hopes to fill in this research gap. The scope of the work would be from 1992 when Ghana returned to multiparty democracy.

This paper is theoretically situated in the democracy and democratic consolidation framework. The paper is using the framework of the minimalist and the maximalist view of democratic consolidation, it also used the consolidation of democracy "behaviourally, attitudinally, and constitutionally" [47-59]. The use of party militia in this paper is incumbent party militia and party militias from the opposition parties, who eventually become Pro Government Militia (PGM). This paper seeks to fill in this complete literature gap by answering the following research questions: Why party militias arose in Ghana; and why do party militias undermine or threatened democratic consolidation.

Further, the research objectives of the paper are to

- Examine, the nature and scope of party militia are in Ghana.
- Examine the impact of party militia on Ghana's democratic consolidation.
- Provide recommendations on how to deal with the negative impact of party militias on Ghana's democratic consolidation.

The paper is based on an analysis of primary and secondary data. The primary data will be from reports from various stakeholders such as government, political parties, and civil society organizations. The research will rely on speeches and interviews of key experts, government officials and others. Secondary data will be from books, journals, and online news outlets. As well, the paper utilizes the comparative country case study research method, by applying the framework of democratic consolidation, electoral violence and militias to the Ghanaian case study. This will enable understanding of the democratic consolidation in Ghana, as well as broader comparison of democratic consolidation and violence across other country cases in Africa and the Global South, to provide some broader conclusions.

Theoretical framework

Democracy and democratic consolidation: Democracy became the norm after the Cold War ended. The Cold War was a period after WWII when the world was divided along two blocs which were United

States (US) (The West) and the Soviet Union (The East). The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War, where liberalism (West) triumphed over socialism (East), and democracy became the dominant political framework for societies to organize themselves. The quest for democracy across the world remains a formidable force and unmatched degree with civil and political freedoms on the rise whilst authoritarian ideologies faded with democratic government seen as legitimate [60]. Democracy is the "rule of the people". The word democracy comes from two Greek words 'demos' meaning 'people' and 'kratos' meaning 'rule' [61]. Democracy in other words is a method of governance by which electorate select people to represent them in a free, fair and regular elections to be free, elections must be opened to competitions from different parties and candidates, as well as to the participations at least through voting of all citizens'. Schumpeter sees democracy as political competition and more so, open competition between competing political parties. Other scholars like posits that democracy involves competition within an atmosphere infused with associated right and freedoms such as right to free speech and association [47]. See democracy as when one party is able to transfer power to the winner of an election [62]. Although both present different perspectives, fundamentally they suggest that democratic governance is a political system in which interest of the people comes first and not the government.

Democracy's main components are:

- Voter or citizen participation in decisions.
- A structure of representation.
- The rule of law.
- Election process majority rule.
- Some level of equality between the voters or people.
- Liberty established for the people [55-59].

The key component for a minimalist understanding of democracy is elections. The minimalist's scholars suggest that elections and electoral systems are central to democracy. Przeworski, et al. suggests that democratization is "a system in which parties loses elections" after which these parties' hand over power to the winners of the elections peacefully [62]. More so Schumpeter asserts that democracy is a process whereby people who obtain power through competition make decisions for the electorate [53]. This notion has been contested by several scholars who are known as the maximalist. They argue that elections are a minute aspect of democracy and that democracy goes beyond elections. Dahl points to three core element of democracy such as:

- All-encompassing contest by politicians' political parties.
- Electoral involvements which gives the electorate an avenue to choose aspirants in free and fair polls.
- Freedom of speech and associations.

The consolidation of democracy can be said to be an apparent means through which norms structures and rules of democratic process become "the only game intown" as the only legitimate way of exercising power in a country. There are two schools of thought on democratic consolidation: the minimalists and the maximalist [47-59]. The maximalist posits that, for democratic consolidation to occur we must move past elections and the two-turnover test. To them, for democracy to become consolidated the following must be evident: the rule of law, respect of human right, freedom of speech and associations, active civil society, group freedoms, organization and opposition. On the other

hand, the minimalists such as Huntington focused on elections as an essential feature for democracy to be seen as consolidated [1]. He posits that democracy is consolidated when there is “two-turnover”, what he called power moving from one political party to another after it has lost power. In other words, the losing party hands over power to the winning party and this must occur at least two times.

Linz and Stepan suggest that democracy can only be consolidated when it is overlapping behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally [50-52]. In essence, when “democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life, as well as in political calculations for achieving success” (Ibid.). In other words, democracy becomes the norm “behaviourally, attitudinally, and constitutionally” [50-52]. Behaviourally, democracy is accepted by all, and no other groups seek to overthrow the government by all means especially through violence. In my view, the situation in Ghana’s fourth republic appears to show some stability whereby no political party or group seeks to overthrow the incumbent by military or violence means. Nonetheless, party militias seek to support political parties to come into power before elections, during elections and after elections by performing various functions, many of which are violent.

Attitudinally, democracy is not only accepted by all, but also that all accept the “belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most important appropriate way to govern collective life” [50-52]. Despite economic and social crises, the population accepts that any change should be done through democratic means rather than undemocratic means. Ghanaian electorates and political parties have come to accept, to a large extent, that democracy is the appropriate way to govern and request for accountability. Finally, constitutionally, democracy is consolidated when both government and non-governmental entities resort to laws, norms, procedures and institutions, and that the violations of the rule of the game of democracy have severe consequences [50-52]. After the 2012 general elections the opposition NPP’s vice-presidential candidate decided to contest the electoral results through the Supreme Court of Ghana. The proceeding was broadcasted for all to see for almost eight months. When the verdict was given the incumbent NDC remained president winning the case. The opposition accepted the verdict and there was peace [21]. This was one of the moments where democracy was seen as constitutionally accepted in Ghana, and both the incumbent and opposition leaders accepted democracy constitutionally.

Additionally, Diamond posits that democracy is consolidated when there is some important conditions or element such as elections, not just two-turnover during elections but beyond election there must be rule of law, respect and protections of liberties of groups and individuals, a vibrant civil society which has freedom to operate [56]. He posits that free and fair elections are essentially however it must accompany freedom of expression, association, organization and the availability of various avenues to express various different opinions without intimidations.

Also, Bratton and de Walle mention the following features as fundamental to democratic consolidation beyond elections [63].

- Competitive and regular election of the executive;
- Civilian control over the military.
- Independent legislature and courts.
- Viable opposition parties.
- Voluntary associations.
- Free press.

- Voice, transparency, accountability.

In my view, democracy is consolidated when there are free and fair elections, human right protection with civil liberty, the presence of rule of law (as situation whereby no one is above the law), the liberty of expression and the freedom of association, vibrant civil society, peace and security. All these must become behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally enshrined in the democratic culture of any country. In the Ghanaian context it could be argued that from the minimalist view which looks at elections and two turnover democracy has been consolidated [17]. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement in terms of the maximalist view with regards to independence of the legislature and courts. For example, 8 of 10 Ghanaians believe that there is inequality in the judiciary, whereby the rich pay bribes or use personal connections to avoid justice [64]. As well, with regards to freedom of the press, Ghana dropped from the 27th to 30th rank in World Press Freedom Index in 2020 [65]. There is also the problem of winner-takes-all which undermine the powers of the legislature-situation whereby the executive arm of government has the power to post all government officials, ministers, board of directors of corporations and schools [7,66]. Further, political party militias remain a major threat to democratic consolidation in Ghana.

Electoral violence and democracy: Elections have become crucial in every democracy. Indeed, for democracy to become consolidated, Huntington posits that, there must be two-turnover [49]. This had not always been the case globally since several elections have ended up in conflict and misunderstanding. Elections have become norm in most parties of the world. The international community continues to promote voting in several parts of the world. However, elections have not always been peaceful. Elections in most countries in the Global South have been plagued with violence (pre-elections), (elections period) and post-elections era.

This paper adopts the definition of electoral violence by [67]. It suggests any type of ordered act and intimidations be it physical or psychological or operational with the goal of threatening, hurting, extorting from an electoral participant pre-election, during election and after election with the goal of influencing the polling process [67]. In essence, electoral violence is multidimensional. Physically it comprises of, but not limited, elimination of political challengers, firebombing, raiding, firing, hostage taking, and vigorous interruption of campaign assemblies, kidnapping, snatching of ballot, ballot box, papers at gunpoint and armed raids on voters [68]. The psychological violence involves formal and informal activities that bring about distress to the electorate, this maybe as a result of violence [68]. It may involve intimidation of the opposition parties by security agents of the incumbent party through calls, text messages and sometimes WhatsApp or social media messages. The structural dimension includes structural imbalances such as force of the electorate by the state to vote, or register, uneven chances of electoral contestants, falsification of electoral results, politicisations the security official and electoral officials and abuse of incumbency [69]. Political parties form their party militia based on mistrust of the incumbent government.

Additionally, electoral violence is perceived as part of an extreme scheme that is secretly shaping electoral results [70]. It can be done by the ruling government’s quest to hold onto power or by the opposition political group(s) looking for political influence. It could also be external forces or powers using local militias for their political interest. In several of these cases the violence is aimed at polling stakeholder like electorates, contestants, political party officials, election staffs, broadcasting and media agents; election material like voters register, pollen results, polls; electioneer resources such as, automobiles and

communication systems; election amenities like balloting and totalling locations; and election activities such as electoral conventions [71-74].

As discussed above it is apparent that electoral violence is detrimental to democratic consolidation. The reasons are that both incumbent and opposition are able to perpetuate violence before, during and after elections. It is a major menace to the consolidation of democracy in the world, particularly in Africa and other developing countries [68]. It can be said that democracy is consolidated when it gets rid of all kinds of threats to democratic consolidations structurally, behaviorally and attitudinally which are the core foundations of democratic consolidation [75]. These three fundamentals are lacking or under threats in African democracy [68]. He explained that structurally poverty is largest on the continent making it possible for manipulation of elections. Although elections are still being held consistently, they are not always free, fair and competitive. Electoral processes suffer many setbacks which lead to several boycotts and rejection of results by opposition's party(s), leading to deep-seated legitimacy crises for the incumbent government.

In this regard, scholars such as Höglund and Jarstad have suggested five ways of managing and preventing violence related to elections such as: monitoring, mediation, legal measures, law enforcement and self-regulating practices [73]. First, monitoring involves supervising and information-gathering. The core approach is a watchdog role of monitoring, identification and defaming in situation where electoral process was disturbed by violence. Second, mediation which involves trust creations in a situation of broken trust. Third, is the legal measures, this is making sure that elections are institutionalised and accepted. Fourth, is law enforcement, here those who violated the law must face the law, this allows for the rule of law to function, in this case the perpetrators of violence must be accountable by facing the penalties of the law. Five, self-regulating strategies, this includes upholding political morals like tolerance and non-violence approach to resolving electoral disputes [73].

Militias and democracy: Militias are commonly connected to conflict-affected and failed states, whereby "failed states" become "failed" due to internal and external cause's shows that from 1982 to 2007, governments in 61 states had connections to an unofficial armed group in the state which are separate from the legally recognised national security apparatus [76-80]. Others have described these groups as civil militias, which are different from the state arm or military [81].

There are various categories of militia in many countries and a lot of scholars have tried to make several distinctions on what is known generally as Non State Armed Groups (NSAGs):

- Rebels and guerrillas.
- Militias and paramilitaries.
- Clan chiefs and big men.
- Warlords.
- Terrorists.
- Criminals, mafia and gangs.
- Mercenaries, Private Military Companies (PMCs) and Private Security Companies (PSCs).
- Marauders and 'sobels'.

Examined another type of militias which is known as the Pro Government Militia (PGM) [80,82]. They see PGM as groups that: is identified as pro-government or sponsored by the government (national or subnational), is identified as not being part of the regular

security forces, is armed, and has some level of organization [83].

Further elaborate on this stating: the first criteria is pro-government; the second group is not part of the official state security; the third group is prepared for vehemence nevertheless it has to actually engage in violence become part; and the fourth group is organized such as having a leader, name, location, race, ethnic, political or perhaps religious foundations [83].

This paper uses the concept of PGM by Mitchell and the four criteria which will be applied to include "non-pro-government militias", which are all those party militias from the opposition parties; in fact, it is these same groups from the oppositions party that eventually become PGM. Therefore, the two could be said to have some similarities. Also, this MPR is mindful of the fact that the concept and role of militias are broad therefore the paper will only focus on those militias who are involved in electoral activities or those created for election purposes.

The threat of party militia's on democratic consolidation in Ghana

The two major political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), tend to recruit them from across the countries in all the sixteen regions in Ghana. As a result, they have representation from every region in Ghana and are well organized (Table 1). Party militias are negatively impacting the democratic consolidation process in Ghana behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally due to the following reasons: stealing of ballot boxes and election rigging; the use of arms during the electoral process; violence against citizen and the opposition; and forceful takeover and/or destruction of state property. Further, party militias become key actors in the security apparatus of their political party elites, and clash with other party militias, in particular, the NPP and NDC party militias. As well, after electoral victories, party militias make many requests to their political elites, and if the requests are unfulfilled may lead to further violence and instability.

Table 1: Spearman correlation results between work and moral ethics.

Region	New Patriotic Party (NPP)	National Democratic Congress (NDC)
Eastern Region	Invincible Forces	Eastern Mambas, Lions
Western Region	Western Crocodiles	Verandah Boys
Upper East Region	Bolga Bulldogs, Dazota	Aluta Boys
Bono Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers
Bono East Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers
Ashanti Region	Delta Force, Alidu Mafia, Maxwell Boys, Kandahar Boys	Cyborg Killers, Al-Qaeda, The Hawks
Ahafo Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	Salifu 11, Dragrons
Oti Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers
North East Region	Kandahar Boys	NDC Foot Soldiers
Savannah Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers
Western North Region	Anointing Boys	No Weapon
Greater Accra Region	Invincible Forces,	Se Se Group, Rasta Boys
Volta Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	Taskforce
Upper West Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers
		Azoka Boys, 66
		Bench, Gbewa Youth,
Northern Region	Bamba Boys, Burma Camp, Kandahar	Pentagon, NATO, Forces, Bukurising, Tohazie, Al-Jazeera, Zabilla Ladies, Tohazie
Central Region	NPP Foot Soldiers	NDC Foot Soldiers

To begin with, a major threat to democratic consolidation in Ghana is the stealing of ballot boxes and election rigging. There have been several reports of ballot-box theft in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004 and subsequent elections of 2008, 2012 and 2016 [6,22-26]. For instance, in the 2012 elections, there were many reported cases of a stolen ballot-box, with violence in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale [84]. In the 2008 elections it was reported that several 'macho men' from both political parties caused fear and panic to rig the elections in their party strongholds [85]. In the 2016 general elections, several media reported cases of stolen ballot boxes in the strongholds of the two major political parties [86]. These party militias often plan how they would perpetuate their crime, and use motorbikes to invade electoral centre and snatch the ballot boxes to disrupt and interfere with voting in the political strongholds of their opponent [87]. Indeed, this is a major setback to democratic consolidation since elections are crucial to democratic consolidation from the minimalist point of view. It is opposite to the view of Schumpeter on democracy as political competition which is open competition between competing political parties [53]. The stealing of ballot boxes affects the level of competition needed in democracy. Additionally, Dahl has shown that democracy involves competition within an atmosphere infused with associated right and freedoms such as right to free speech and association [47]. The stealing of ballot is a threat to a freedom atmosphere and also a threat to the free and fairness of election in Ghana.

Subsequently, a major impact of party militia on Ghana's democratic consolidation is the proliferation of arms, as party militias are heavily armed. In the by-elections at the Ayawaso West Wuogon [88]. The media reported cases of shooting and violence by masked men who were believed to be a member of the ruling NPP militia group. These party militias had weapons and wore face masks so it would be difficult to identify them. They wore khakis and black tops with the inscription (NSC) meaning 'National Security Council', as their security uniform. They invaded the residence of the opposition NDC candidate, Delali Kwesi Brempong, and fired on all who were at his residence. No one was killed but some suffered serious injuries. All these were captured on phone video by those who were present. Subsequently, another group of party militias attacked a polling station at the La Bawaleshie in Accra, and threatened voters who were queuing up to vote, which disrupted voting for several hours [9]. This confirms the notion of motive and the timing of electoral violence [74]. With regards to motives, Höglund suggests that the main goal of violence during the election period is to "influence the electoral process" [74]. He asserts that the goal of influencing the results of elections is by manipulating electoral procedures and participation, as this could be done through violence when contesting the electoral result. Secondly, on the issues of timing, Bjarnesen and Söderber agree that electoral violence could occur at various stages of the electoral process (pre-elections, during elections and post-elections) [85]. Electoral violence does not occur at the national level only, it can occur at the local and regional levels, during primaries and by-elections. Another important feature of elections and electoral violence is the actors involved. Höglund suggests that these actors are the incumbent political party and the opposition party/parties [72]. These actors vary and play different roles in a different context [89].

Further, President Nana Akufo-Addo revealed that weapons made in Ghana constitute about 95% of guns used by thieves and criminals during robberies across the country [90]. It was reported in the news that armed robbery, assassinations, murder, drug trafficking have increased in Ghana all these are closely related to the proliferation of small arms in Ghana [91]. The proliferations of these small arms pose a threat to the long-lasting peace and security in Ghana which

when tempered with will affect the consolidation of democracy in the country. What has contributed to the proliferating of small arms is the demand and supply of small arms which is a driving factor [92]. Since these arms are produced by small unlicensed manufactures, they are cheap and readily available in the black market. As a result, it has led to the upsurge in armed robbery, drug trafficking, kidnapping and assassinations [91]. A lot of the party militias who serve as security apparatus for their political parties rely on these locally manufactured weapons. With the availability of these weapons party militias are able to perpetuate violence with the goal of influencing electoral outcomes in their favour as argued by Höglund that the main goal of violence during election period is to "influence the electoral process" [72].

Consequently, another impact of party militias on Ghana's democratic consolidation is the continuous violence leashed on the ordinary citizen and the members of the opposition by the party militias of the incumbent political party. For example, the pro-NPP militia group known as the Delta Force attacked and battered the Ashanti Regional Council Coordinator. Their reason for this attack was that president Akufo Addo appointed someone who they did not know, and also that person in their view did not contribute to the electoral success of their party. This incident was recorded on a phone, and was widely circulated on social media [93]. Another example of political violence took place when two supporters of the opposition NDC were attacked and murdered by the party militias of the ruling NPP's at Sewi Wiawso and Dunkwa [94]. Further, in August 2017, a party militia of the ruling NPP based in Tema threatened the government that they would bring confusion and chaos to the community if they are not given jobs immediately, in their protest they destroyed some state properties [95].

On the other hand, during the regime of NDC, their party militias also fired at an NPP loyalist during an NPP political rally [6]. Also, according to the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers [84], there were many reported cases of aggravation and coercion after Ghana's 2012 general elections. These cases were in all the regions of Ghana, and in particular in the Ashanti and Northern regions which are the strongholds of the NPP and NDC respectively. Following the 2012 and 2016 general elections, there was a continuation of violent clashes between party militias of both NPP and NDC. For example, in the 2016 general elections, both NDC and NPP party militias clashed at Asokora in the Eastern regions and the clash occurred during their party campaign health walk by their parliamentary candidates [88]. In the Southern District of the northern part of Ghana, there was reported case of clashes between party militias of NPP and NDC over who has the permission to hold a rally in the region [96].

All these acts of violence are a major setback to Ghana's democratic gains. As discussed above it is evident that electoral violence is detrimental to democratic consolidation. This is because both incumbent party militias and opposition party militias can perpetuate violence before, during and after elections. Electoral violence is a major challenge to the consolidation of democracy in the world, particularly in Africa and the Global South [68]. It can be said that democracy is consolidated when all kinds of threats to democratic consolidations structurally, behaviorally and attitudinally are eliminated [75]. These three fundamentals of democratic consolidation are lacking or under threat in African states and in Ghana since the inception of the fourth republic [68]. He explained that structurally poverty is the largest on the continent making it possible for manipulation of elections. It is in this regard that these party militias are recruited and employed. Most of them are unemployed young men and women who are poor [6]. Although this is beyond the scope the paper, it is important to state that some of the reasons for economic challenges and high employment in

Ghana, Africa and Global South are due to various reasons ranging from poverty, external policies of international financial institutions, mismanagement of natural resources, poor governance, and lack of infrastructure. Their means of survival is to do the job of their political elites who promise them full time jobs after their electoral victory. It is due to this that the party militia work hard for their party to come to power. It also explains why when they are not employed, they resort to protest and violence and making demands on their party elite.

Although elections are still being held consistently and in a timely manner, they are not always free, fair and competitive because of report of various interference by party militia at targeted pollen stations across the country [9]. Electoral processes suffer many setbacks which lead to several boycotts and rejection of results by opposition's parties, leading to a crisis of legitimacy of the electoral process and the incumbent government. This is because when the opposition party and their supporters feel threatened and they have evidence of violence, electoral malpractices they challenge the entire electoral process. Therefore, if electoral violence takes place in a democracy like Ghana, it can be stated that Ghana's democracy is not consolidating attitudinally, constitutionally and behaviorally. It is important to point out that in all the elections held in Ghana since 1992, the ruling party has learnt to accept the result when they lose elections as has been argued by Wong and Friedman, however, the prevalence of party militias still continues [60]. Trust, legitimacy and non-violence in electoral processes can take time to be fully embedded in the political norms, practices and institutions, especially in post-colonial states.

Another threat of party militia to democratic consolidation in Ghana is the forcibly taken over of state property, and at times, the destruction of state properties after electoral victories. For instance, in 2008 NDC's party militias overtook several state properties and kicked out those who were working for the government tagging them as NPP and supporters of former administration. In March 2010, NDC party militias in the Western part of Ghana demonstrated for the removal of a municipal officer. In their view, he was not capable and was misleading the people in the community (ibid). In Ghana's last general election in 2016, there were many cases reported by-elections observers on NPP party militias taking over state property thought to be in the hands of the past government's party militias [3]. For instance, in the Northern and Western Regions, some party militias of the NPP took over the National Health Insurance office and the education office when their party won political power. They also forced the resignation of the Chief Officer of the district and replaced him with a more favoured individual (ibid).

Also, with regards to the destruction of state property by both party militias of NPP and NDC, in May 2011 NDC party militias attacked the mayor office in Tamale and crushed state properties [6]. Similarly, after the 2016 general elections, numerous NPP party militias demolished state property [97]. They attacked the opposition NDC party militias and followers and destroyed their properties with several of them chanting "it is our time to rule" (ibid). In 2017, party militia members of the ruling NPP, the Delta Force, entered a court in Kumasi during a session for militia members who were arrested for destruction of state property and subsequently set them free. There was an attempt to assault the sitting judge who managed to escape this attack [97]. Also, NPP militia group, known as the Kandaha Boys, damaged the office of the District Chief Executive of Sangnariagu and shattered the windows and doors, and damaged furniture. They accused the officer of giving school feeding contracts to people who were close to her and therefore neglecting those who helped the party to win power in 2016 [95].

Party militias are used as a security apparatus for the protection of their

political party leaders and elites. The reason is the lack of trust of the state security apparatus, including the state police and military. This is a threat to democratic consolidation in Ghana because these security personnel are not registered or licenced and not well trained for such functions. The fact remains that they are used by the opposition party since they do not trust the state's security apparatus. In the view of the opposition, state security favours the governing political party [95]. In 2016, the youth leader of the NPP admitted that they had taken the required actions to protect the presidential candidate and his vice-presidential; this was done through private security who was reported to have been mercenaries from South Africa [98]. Similarly, in 2012 the ruling NDC sent their party militias to go and guard the ballot box in numerous voting centres across Ghana, exclusively NDC's strongholds. They were successful at protecting the ballot for their party. This threatens the security of the nation since some of their party security apparatus are not legally mandate to provide such services for their political parties.

Furthermore, a threat to democrat consolidation by party militias is the unreasonable demands and request they make on their political elites after electoral victories. According to Bob-Milliar, militia groups expect that their political party will give them benefits after electoral victories since they contributed to their victories, and failure to do so only leads to party militia making significant demands [35]. This is not democratic and since militias are not elected official and are not accountability to anyone. Therefore, their demands on political elites are unconstitutional as aspect of democratic consolidations. Their demands on their elites are not legal and their actions are not legal therefore threatening violence and destruction of state properties if their wishes are not done are dangerous to democratic consolidation in Ghana. In Ghana, there are reported instances of party militias unleashing violence on the general country, after being neglected by their political party elite. For instance, when NPP won the 2016 general elections some party militias in Tema demonstrated to the political elites of their parties for not providing jobs as they promised them during the election campaigns [95]. Another issue is that a lot of these young men are not employed so they see working in a militia as a job - before, during and after elections. Research has shown that the absence of authentic employment availabilities causes these youth to join these party militia for survival. Unfortunately, what these youth do is to threaten their parties that they will join the opposition and cause destructions if they do not give them jobs. For example, this happened in 2015 when party militias of the incumbent NDC joined the opposition NPP because the party failed to give them jobs after they had helped them come into political power [99]. All these demand and actions are related to post election action of these groups. The danger here is the continuous threats and destruction of properties is threat to the peace and security of Ghana. If these behaviours are not handled with care they may go out of hand and the consequence may get out of control.

RESULTS

Lastly, a threat to democratic consolidation in Ghana is the constant clashes between party militias of NPP and NDC. The issue is that these clashes and confrontation can proliferate and create an unstable political environment since party militias are heavily armed. There are many cases where this happened, for example in 2004 it was reported in the news that there were clashed between NPP and NDC party militias at in Tamale during the commissioning of an event [100]. In 2016, party militias of NPP and NDC clashed during campaigning in the northern regions [101]. Additionally, there were reports of clashes between NPP and NDC party militias during a voter's registration

activity, and three people were wounded and hospitalized [102]. A similar clash happened in Asawase in Ashanti region [103]. The troubling part of all this is the upcoming 2020 general elections and the impact these party militias could have on the general elections and Ghana's democratic consolidations [104-124]. All these corroborate the notion of Albert, that acts of intimidations be it physical or psychological or operational with the goal of threatening, hurting, and extorting from an electoral participant pre-election, during election and after election with the goal of influencing the polling process. Indeed, the motive of all these is to seek political gains and electoral victories by all means [67].

CONCLUSION

This chapter has revealed how party militias remain a threat to Ghana's democratic consolidation. It has pointed out how they become active before, during and after elections in Ghana. Some of their activities that undermine democratic consolidation behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally are: stealing of ballot box and rigging of elections; the use of arms; violence against citizens and the opposition; forceful takeover of state property; destruction of state property; security role in political parties; placing significant demands on political elites; and the continuous clashes between party militias of the two major political parties of NPP and NDC.

In the view of Linz and Stepan democracy is consolidated behaviourally when democracy is accepted by all parties involved be it the incumbent or no one tries to overthrow the government by all means especially through violence, this is similar to the views of Wong and Friedman. Although Ghana's cases illustrate that no political group has tried to overthrow the incumbent by military or violence mean. Yet, party militia support their party to come into power during before, during and after elections by performing various role, some of which are violent which affects democratic consolidation. Attitudinally, although the Ghanaian electorates and political parties have accepted democracy as the main political system, the violent activities of these militias are having a negative impact. Finally, constitutionally, democracy is consolidated when both government and non-governmental entities resort to laws, norms, procedures, and institutions. Although Ghanaians have accepted democracy constitutionally, party militia poses a threat to this since these groups are law breakers and seek political power by all means.

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